

Book Review

by Lothar Katz

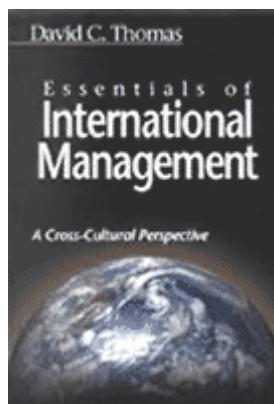
David C. Thomas



ESSENTIALS OF INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Adjusting leadership styles and business practices in order to succeed in today's global economy and multicultural work environment is a necessity for many of us. However, finding good advice on how to master these challenges is anything but easy. David C. Thomas, professor of international management at Simon Fraser University, aims to help with his book *Essentials of International Management*. He casts a wide net, covering numerous aspects of cross-cultural management while focusing on interactions between people from different cultures in organizational settings.

Essentials of International Management is divided into four sections. It starts with an analysis of the legal, political, economic, and cultural context of international management, discussing concepts such as selective perception, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, differential attributions, behavioral scripts, and cultural differences in motivation. Included are brief but comprehensive summaries of important findings by intercultural 'gurus' such as Hofstede, Schwartz, Trompenaars, and others. The next section investigates roles dominating the activities of international managers: decision maker, negotiator, and organizational leader. A central element of this part is a discussion of cross-cultural



communication, analyzing the challenge of transferring meaning across cultures in spite of differences in levels of directness, formality, or ways to deliver non-verbal messages. Thomas then contrasts Western concepts of leadership with theories indigenous to other cultures and presents an interesting cross-cultural model of leadership.

The third section of the book concentrates on organizational challenges such as multicultural work teams, design and structure of international organizations, organizational cultures of multinational corporations, and the difficulties of expatriating and repatriating individuals overseas. Each of these topics receives enough attention to provide a good overview without shortchanging the complexities of international management. The fourth and final section discusses current management theory and its limitations when applied to international and cross-cultural management.

While at times a bit too academic in style, *Essentials of International Management* provides a useful overview of challenges and success strategies for leaders and individual contributors working in a global environment. The biggest issue with this book is its price. At more than 100 dollars, it is quite outrageous. However, there is a simple workaround: buy it used on Amazon. You may be able to get it at a third of that price, making it a worthwhile investment.

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Lothar Katz is the founder of Leadership Crossroads. He has a wealth of experience in achieving productive cooperation across cultures and driving business success on a global scale.

A seasoned former executive of a Fortune 500 company, he regularly interacted with employees, customers, outsourcing partners, and third parties in more than 25 countries around the world. These included many parts of Asia, e.g., China, India, and Japan. Mr. Katz is the author of "Negotiating International Business – The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries Around the World".

