

Stimulated by the trend towards globalization, a number of authors in recent years have tried to de-mystify the cultural challenges of doing business around the world. Most of them focused on summarizing different academic models that describe cultural characteristics. Many such models are based on intercultural research findings; unfortunately, they often overlap and/or disagree with each other. A few writers reached even higher by proposing their own categorizations and criteria on how to describe and negotiate cultural differences.

Smartly, Barry Tomalin, well traveled practitioner and the director of a intercultural training organization in London, and Mike Nicks, British journalist and media coach, chose a more hands-on approach. Their book, *The World's Business Cultures - and How to Unlock Them*, wastes little time reviewing and discussing theoretical models. This is not to say that the authors don't borrow from the work of others in this field, which would be a mistake. For instance, they introduce a tool called the Personal Cultural Profile that is based on intercultural models and aims to identify gaps between personal preferences and the values that are common in a given culture. Most chapters focus on practi-

cal implications, though: which practices help in achieving clarity of communication and building trust, which strategies may be effective when trying to influence others' decisions, which behaviors should one adopt to be respected as an effective leader, et cetera.

Tomalin and Nicks include individual sections for each member of the list of "Top 10 countries in 2050," predicted to include Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These cover aspects such as communication, meetings, negotiations, teamwork, leadership, or decision making. Also included is a small sample of etiquette rules, addressing areas such as gift giving. Unfortunately, each of these sections is written from a decidedly British perspective, which makes it harder than necessary for members of other cultures to identify how to adjust their own practices and behaviors in cross-cultural interactions. Another small nuisance is that the book would have benefited from more careful editing: some of the cross-references just don't seem to match.

In spite of these shortcomings, *The World's Business Cultures* is valuable. More than a collection of cultural do's and don'ts, it gives clear and practical advice on how to navigate the numerous cliffs of working with clients and vendors, with familiar colleagues and near-strangers, in today's world.



Leadership Crossroads™ 10865-B Hazelhurst Dr. #11793, Houston, TX 77043  
469-522-3389

info@leadershipcrossroads.com www.leadershipcrossroads.com

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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 Fortune 500 company Texas Instruments, he regularly interacted with employees, customers, outsourcing partners, and third parties in numerous countries around the world, including many parts of Asia. Mr. Katz is the author of "Negotiating International Business – The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries Around the World".

