UNEARTHING THE GLOBAL LEADER
An Exploratory Review Of Global Leadership: The Example Of French And British Leadership Styles

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the often under-looked behavioural and organisational implications of effective global leadership. It begins by outlining current developments in the field and proceeds to give a literature review of recent research carried out in this area. We emphasize the profile of the emerging global leader, highlighting the competencies that are necessary to succeed on the international markets. Then, as an example, we focus more specifically on the difficulties involved in leading multicultural teams in Franco-British collaborative ventures. A survey of 200 companies and 3 major case studies (BP, Eurotunnel and Viviendi) in both countries were carried out and the information from the respondents used to validate a number of hypotheses on the impact of cultural difference on international leadership styles. In an era where managing diversity has come to the forefront of business thinking, it is our contention that cross cultural teams, although they may experience serious problems in the initial stages and providing they overcome them, do, in fact, produce better results and respond in a more complete way to the leadership challenges of our time.

INTRODUCTION

Whether it be among academics or top corporate executives, the word globalisation conjures up a myriad of images and connotes either positive or negative feelings and attitudes. No matter what standpoint is taken, the leaders of the corporate world have to come to terms with this reality and preferably see it more as an opportunity than a threat to their national or corporate identities.

When studying the concept of global leadership, there is the added difficulty of a lack of standardized definitions of global and leadership, as is the case also for multinational and trans-national corporations. Although distinctions have been made between these terms (Bartlett & Ghoshal 1989), they are very often used interchangeably. The concept of the global leader can also be defined in terms of hierarchy in the corporation, in which case it normally applies to high-flying CEOs, thus perpetuating the myth that they can only be found at that level. Alternatively, it can be defined in terms of the level of internationalisation of their responsibilities and missions.

Research, over the past 12 years has honed in on this phenomenon, and has endeavoured to highlight the multiple leadership competencies necessary to operate effectively on the world's markets. It has indeed focused on the mixed fortunes of international joint ventures, emphasising factors such as cultural sensitivity and awareness, acquiring a global mindset, being multi-site, multi-company, multi-country, and developing the ability to adapt quickly to challenging new environments.

During this same period, we have witnessed an unprecedented surge in mergers, acquisitions, international joint ventures and strategic alliances in Europe (if not the world). Indeed, cross-border mergers and acquisitions have become one of the most frequently utilized forms of European market entry, representing approximately 45% of total annual outlay on European M&A's (Norburn & Schoenberg 1994). Naturally, some of these collaborative ventures succeed, but many do not, and this inability on the part of corporations and leaders to adjust to the demands of the global marketplace has been identified as of one of the overriding causes of early failure (Tung 1982, Ricks 1999).

Putting aside all the technical and financial complications of IJVs, the fundamental, decisive factor in achieving high performance in an international context is an individual's ability to function effectively in another culture. The consequences of failure in international assignments can not only be costly to the company and harmful to managers' career paths but can also give rise to lost opportunities, lower

productivity and damaged corporate relations that, in the long term, can greatly diminish the company image. (Storti 2001).

With these major considerations in mind, our aim in this paper is therefore to shed light on the salient qualities and experience required for a leader to operate effectively in the new global arena. As an illustration of new emerging leadership styles, we draw a comparison between France and the UK. The information is based on a survey carried out by the author in 2002, where 200 middle and senior managers were contacted in the two countries. The selected companies were taken from different areas of industry (engineering, services, public sector). The results obtained are highlighted and reinforced by a series of in-depth, semi-directive interviews with senior executives in both countries.

Literature review

As the concept of global leadership shifts gradually to centre stage, more in-depth studies have been conducted to determine the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that may foster or impede the emergence of this new breed of leader. Some examples of this can be found in the field of cross cultural conflict and expatriate manager adjustment (Jassawalla, Truglia and Garvey 2004) or in developing leadership capability (Conger 2004) as well as in the extremely comprehensive review carried out by Tiina Jokinen (Jokinen 2005) on global leadership competencies. It is clear from this research that increasing understanding of the different facets of globalisation coupled with cultural competency will greatly assist organisations to meet the new management challenges of the 21st century (Drucker 2003). The notion of cultural competency is analysed in depth (Johnson, Lenartowitz and Apud 2006) and the authors identify, from previous research, 3 principal categories that global leaders often need to excel in :

    1.International business
    2.Workplace diversity
    3.Intercultural communications

Their ability to function and perform in a different cultural context also demands specific personality traits and attitudes, a cognitive dimension (i.e. how they process and classify information) and a communicative, behavioural dimension (Gertsen 1990). This, in turn, can be influenced by the level of training provided by companies prior to departure on international assignments. This training is organized essentially to enable managers to minimize the effects and consequences of culture shock and to reduce misunderstandings and incongruous behaviours by heightening their awareness in these areas. Training or a general lack of it may have a considerable impact on global performance.

Other decisive personality traits, such as ambition, courage, decisiveness, enthusiasm, optimism, integrity, perseverance and tolerance for ambiguity and complexity have proved to be vital antecedents (Bass 1990) in acquiring global leadership competencies. Undoubtedly in the final count, certain individuals may have an aptitude for developing cultural competence, whereas others may not.

In spite of the significant increase in international strategic alliances, international joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries, it has been estimated that between 30% and 70% of alliances fail in the early stages (Bleeke & Ernst 1991; Inkpen & Li 1999). Recent research has also indicated that in certain cases, cross cultural collaboration, although difficult and challenging at the outset, is not a hindrance to corporate performance (Evans 2002). On the contrary, if it is construed as "an opportunity for better performance as well as personal and professional enrichment, it is a source of added value for organisations". The whole challenge of global leadership resides in recognising differences, then learning to blend them, always with a common perspective in mind, thus creating an atmosphere where differences are respected and utilised to the benefit of corporations. Managing diversity has become one of the key issues in this regard. By diversity, we include all of its different manifestations ; not only the most obvious form of cultural diversity but also diversity of competence, gender, generation, background and training, religion and expertise.

We notice that more technical and quantitative research has been carried out in recent years in the field of leading the international organisation. These different studies have tended to focus more on objective factors such as partner choice, product synergy and strategic fits (Parkhe 93). It was not until roughly 5 years ago that the importance of a behavioural approach to global leadership has been fully comprehended. Our contention is that the effective global leader will instil a spirit of international cooperation in the organisation, which, in turn, will motivate potential leaders to acquire a more multi-facet approach to strategic management with an aim to fostering innovation, creativity and tolerance in the workplace.

A study by Kauser and Shaw (2001) presents the findings of 114 international strategic alliances between UK firms and their European, US and Japanese partners. Four main attributes were highlighted in

terms of leadership style i.e. co-ordination, interdependence, commitment and trust (Parkhe 1993; Mohr and Spekman 1994,). Their observations tend to suggest that if these attribute levels are high then performance and team cohesion are enhanced. The level of interpersonal trust and commitment of managers working for newly acquired companies can be significantly influenced by their national origin (Doney, Cannon & Mullen 1998). The results of Sun Dai Hwang's research (Sun Dai Hwang, Hoon Park & Mary Gowan 2002) focus on the fact that HCN managers (host company nationals) and PCN managers (parent company nationals) working in an international joint venture appear to be less committed to the organisation and have lower levels of interpersonal trust towards peers when compared to HCN and PCN managers operating in a wholly-owned subsidiary. These findings underline the importance of leadership style in international joint ventures and it is clear that the ability to trust, respect, empower, and communicate with co-workers as well as having a high degree of personal commitment are key factors of success in international operations (Bennis & Nanus 1997).

Parallel to this, the effective management of organisational knowledge has been increasingly linked to effective leadership, competitive advantage and the development of international joint ventures (Grant & Spender, 1996, Holden, 2002).

Global leadership competencies

Acquiring a global mindset is a long-term process and perhaps not within everybody's reach. Of course, curiosity, sensitivity, knowledge of other cultures, and cross-cultural communication ability are important traits for the global leader whether operating in the national or international markets (Harris and Moran, 2004). This also pre-supposes that global leadership skills are apart from domestic leadership competencies. This thesis was refuted by Bartlett and Goshal (1992) who did not give credence to the concept of a global leader. They saw such a person as a coordinator of specialists - "business managers, country managers and functional managers" - their main task being to manage the complex interactions between the three parties. Global leadership competencies are "universal competencies that enable individuals to perform their job outside their own national as well as organisational culture, no matter what their educational or ethnical background may be, what functional area their job description represents, or what organisation they come from" (Jokinen, 2005). In a lot of the research conducted recently, the gap between management education and the reality of leadership appears disturbing (Bennis and Nanus, 1997. Mintzberg

2004). Personal characteristics such as vision, passion, integrity, self knowledge, empowerment, negotiation skills, the ability to manage change and harness diversity, charisma, cultural sensitivity and ability to exploit networks all remain crucial factors of effective global leadership; curiously the most prized trait in Bennis and Nanus's survey of over 50 American CEOs was authenticity, well ahead of natural charisma. We can observe, however, new competencies such as diversity awareness, cultural empathy and emotional intelligence which need to be nurtured in the international arena. "Leaders will have to be architects for change - true visionaries who are able to point to destinations that are so desirable and credible that workers will enthusiastically sign on to become partners in making it happen"

The pressures of international travel and the challenge of capturing new foreign markets have also meant that linguistic ability and cultural awareness have become a real added advantage in international dealings.

The example of Carlos Ghosn, CEO of Renault/Nissan, is clearly indicative of the requisites of future global leaders- the ability to manage across borders, to adapt to different countries or continents, to be able to communicate first hand with the local employees, to manage complexity and to instigate change in cultures which are traditionally resistant to it.

In terms of global leadership effectiveness, it is also important to take into account considerations such as adaptability of spouse, promotability and interest in the host culture when assessing the success of global leaders. Harris and Moran (2004) stress other criteria such as open-mindedness, respect and interest for co-workers, ability to manage uncertainty and tolerance for ambiguity. Self-awareness i.e. the ability to recognize one's own strengths, compensate for weaknesses and understand one's own emotions is emphasized in previous research (Schein 1978. Goleman 2000. Spreitzer et al. 1997) : these authors stress the proactive approach in acquiring cognitive skills and managing one's own learning curve. Different leadership theories over the last 3-4 decades have evolved from traits and behavioural approaches, through contingency style to the most dominant contemporary leadership style i.e the transformational/inspirational/ charismatic style and its potential to transform the workers of a given organisation.

Acceptance of complexity and contradiction (Srinivas 1995) explains this process as seeing opportunities in adversity and using diversity to foster creativity and innovation.

Research in this area has tended to suggest that transformational leadership is linked to higher effort and performance amongst employees and greater effectiveness amongst leaders (George 2000) ; it is also interesting to note that women, due to their different emotional make-up, are generally more likely to adopt a transformational leadership style (Sarros et al 2001, Downey, Papageorgiou&Stough 2006)

An example of global leadership styles in Franco-British collaborative ventures

One of the principal focus points in our research (Evans 2002) was to analyse the impact of culturally oriented leadership styles on corporate performance in Franco-British subsidiaries, joint ventures and affiliates. This inevitably led us, at the same time, to emphasize the major contrasts in terms of national psychology, working practices, and propensity to change.

Education-a decisive factor in the training of future international leaders

In Michel Bauer's survey in 1987, the training background of the top 200 managers in France was broken down as follows;

Grandes Ecoles (highest ranking i.e. Polytechnique, ENA, Ecole Centrale)	51,5%
Grandes Ecoles (second category i.e. Provincial ESC Business Schools)	21,9%
State Universities	6,6%
Foreign diplomas	6,3%
Self-taught managers	13,7%

In a more recent Economist survey of the CAC 40 index, it is clear that an even bigger percentage of Grandes Ecoles graduates (roughly 50% compared to 24% two decades ago) are occupying the key positions in the top 40 industrial corporations in France.

Increasing globalisation has brought about a general overhaul of the curricula that are on offer in French Business Schools, with a greater emphasis being placed on personal development skills, international experience and working in cross-cultural teams.
In spite of these recent developments, there is still a heavy emphasis in France on acquiring sound technical skills; mathematics still occupy an important place in the weekly academic schedule. In contrast, many more British managers tend to have fewer qualifications and

less technical know-how than their French counterparts. To many French directors this was an incomprehensible feature of management recruitment in Great Britain. A far higher proportion of Great Britain's top 200 companies are inclined to be run by non-technical or self-taught managers.

Field study

In our original sample, over two hundred companies were contacted in France and the UK. We targeted mainly middle management and specifically HR managers. Generally speaking, we dealt with companies having vested interests in each other's country in a variety of fields including the industrial, manufacturing, retail and service sectors. The questionnaire, that we sent out , presented a series of open-ended questions covering ; problems of adjusting to the other country, stereotyped perception and prejudices, language difficulties, the impact of the education systems on leader profiles and perceived leadership styles. The response rate (35 French managers living in the UK and 20 British senior executives in France) represented roughly 26%.

After we collated and processed the data supplied via the questionnaires, the results of this study indicated that, providing French and British leaders succeeded in overcoming their initial cultural adjustment period, there was no substantial evidence to suggest that it was any more difficult to manage a bi-national team than a purely national, mono-cultural team. On the contrary, historical, political and cultural differences, coupled with a geometrically opposed approach to problem solving and decision-making, were factors that provided added value and complementary working practices in the view of many managers. The ability to see problem-solving from a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-functional angle was perceived as a necessary quality of the international manager and tended to produce more creativity and innovation in team meetings.

The original sample of 200 companies was reinforced by a series of semi-directive interviews and focus group sessions conducted in very targeted sectors (BP and Eurotunnel in France, Vivendi in the UK).These in-depth interviews were conducted in 2000 and were held with HR managers and senior executives both in France and the UK. We noticed from the results of these interviews that leaders had to have the ability to adapt their leadership style to the differing situations they found themselves in. One Corsican HR manager from Eurotunnel working in London pointed out that if he had started his management assignment with a

hard-handed, directive and hierarchical style that he was used to in France, he wouldn't have lasted very long on the job.

As far as effective leadership of multi-cultural teams is concerned, it has also been pointed out recognised (Barsoux & Schneider, 1997) that intercultural difficulties are the single most complicated factor in international mergers, well beyond financial and technical considerations. This observation was borne out in the sample interviews, which emphasized the necessity for leaders to communicate clearly and effectively across different nationality groups.

In pursuing our study, we tried to establish whether our findings correlated with the Hofstedian criteria established some 25 years earlier. The comparative scores at the time of his original survey in 1978 were as follows;

FIGURE 1

	France	Great Britain
Power distance	68	35
Individualism	71	89
Masculinity	43	66
Uncertainty avoidance	86	35
Long-term orientation	**39**	**25**

At first sight we can observe some very contrasted results. France scored higher on power distance and uncertainty avoidance. These two indicators suggest that organisational structure and leadership style in France are deeply anchored in high centralisation and hierarchical position. The high uncertainty avoidance index in France denotes the apparent need for protection against the uncertainties of everyday living ; this was manifest in areas such as job security, social welfare, health provision, where benefits were far greater on the French side. Great Britain's higher score indicates a greater tolerance for inequality in society and a tendency to run more risks in everyday situations. In terms of the perception of respective national leaders, the following results were obtained from our respondents.

By extrapolating these different perceptions and supplementing them with the results of our interviews at BP, EUROTUNNEL and VIVENDI we were able to validate some of Hofstede's main assertions namely that French leadership style is considerably more top to bottom, centralised and bureaucratic. British managers, in this regard, were seen as having a more pragmatic, "hands on" approach. Subsequent results

of the semi-directive interviews corroborated these findings and brought to light the fact that French managers were sometimes more reticent to delegate responsibility and had the tendency to withhold information more readily. British managers were perceived as being more polite, less bureaucratic and more apt to delegate responsibility, albeit occasionally to excessive proportions (Evans 2002). On the whole, British managers were seen to be far less open to Europe than their French counterparts, although recent figures indicate that this is not necessarily the case in the Business sector, indicating that the majority of British businesses would be in favour of adopting the Euro sooner rather than later.

On the other hand, we observed at BP that British managers were not seen as men of action and often sought new ideas by calling upon consultants. This practice is apparently more wide-spread and systematic than in France.

FIGURE 2

	French managers viewed by British (in % terms)	British managers viewed by French (in% terms)
Disciplined	50	95
Bureaucratic	95	56
Polite at work	40	75
Anxious	95	35
Dynamic	85	55
Egalitarian	17	38
Hierarchical	100	29
Open to Europe	95	12
Hard working	95	38
Commercially oriented	68	33
Organized	50	63
Efficiency at work	83	67

The main problems experienced by British managers, who had recently teamed up with their French counterparts or who were teamleaders outside their own country, were mainly in the areas of :
- ✔ Communication flow
- ✔ Organisational complications-reporting lines
- ✔ Leadership style - lack of autonomy from the French parent companies and reticence to delegate responsibility; the latter was often construed as a lack of trust. Hierarchical status and academic background carry more weight in France

Throughout the study, we endeavoured to collate accurately information received from our respondents and to thus avoid over-generalizing or stereotyping. Our main concern was to judge to what extent national leadership styles impacted on corporate performance.

The results in this regard were very contrasted. The principal differences were observed in the areas of long-term planning, human resources policies and management style. The French leadership style was more directive compared to their British counterparts, who in general tended to be more laissez-faire. To overcome the initial obstacles of leading multi-cultural teams it was necessary to sensitize employees, at least at middle management level, to fundamental cultural differences. Middle managers received extensive training in this field and learnt how to adapt their style and approach when working with the two national teams. Leaders were expected to recognize differences, decode them and learn how to bridge them for the benefit of the two companies concerned.

This is just one example, in the field, of how critical certain key leadership competencies can be, when it comes to succeeding in the international marketplace. Leadership style in France and Great Britain is very much steeped in national tradition and it is therefore delicate, from this research, to suggest that one style is more effective than another. One of the striking factors, however, was the importance of in-house training for the managers on both sides. This factor is also emphasized in recent research (Johnson, Lenartowitz and Apud 2006) where a distinct correlation between adequate training and the acquisition of cultural competence can be observed. Surprisingly, initial language difficulties were not regarded as major obstacles, and provided each person's national identity was preserved, efforts were made to communicate in English and French.

General conclusions and limitations

In this paper, we have sought to juxtapose recent research in the field of global leadership in order to ascertain whether a number of 'key success factors' can be established. We have highlighted the skills and personalities that are necessary to become an effective global leader. Naturally, writers will have their divergences in this regard, some emphasizing the importance of "the human factor and the capacity to build and develop the self-esteem of the workforce". "These leaders lead by pulling rather than pushing; by inspiring rather than ordering; by creating

achievable, although challenging expectations; by enabling people to use their own initiative and experiences rather than denying or constraining their expectations and actions (Bennis and Nanus 1997)." Some, such as Goleman (Goleman 2000), tending to focus more on the social skills of effectiveness in leading change, visionary leadership, teamwork, collaboration, conflict management and the ability to deal with contradiction and ambiguity. Others underline the importance of cross-cultural training-"the notable difference in planning horizons and the more extensive training firms provide to their expatriate managers are identified as the chief reason for Japanese and European expatriates to succeed more with cross-cultural adaptation than their American counterparts" (Tung 1987). A great deal of conflict and frustration in international management appears to stem from differences in attitude towards taking action or an exaggeratedly ethnocentric approach to team leadership. Traits such as flexibility, optimism, enthusiasm, determination and humility help the global leader to adjust quicker and better manage interpersonal conflict. In this respect, individual personality is seen by some researchers (Jassawalla et al 2004) as being a crucial part of the leader's make-up. Conger (Conger 2004) argues that versatility in leadership style should not be underestimated, but the question remains whether we can develop "accurate contingency models of leadership that reflect today's complex world of managers"

The list of qualities and competencies is extensive and we can only speculate to date on the possible combinations that might produce better and more effective leaders in the global marketplace. In addition, there has been no real longitudinal research which validates the pertinence of all the competencies and profiles mentioned in this paper. Consequently there is little agreement among researchers on the actual definition of global competence, its effectiveness and outcomes (Beechler et al., 1999)

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