PREFACE

Coming into the turbulent twenty-first century has confronted us all with the challenge of globalization. But rather than coming together, united by common business practices, companies struggle with national, regional, and local differences among their employees, shareholders, and customers. Our focus in this book is to provide a consistent and new way of thinking about these cultural differences from a personal standpoint.

In this book we introduce an idea we call "cultural intelligence" and discuss its implications for managing in diverse work environments. Simply stated, cultural intelligence refers to a manager's capability to adapt to new cultural environments. This adjustment may be necessary if a manager is transferred overseas, but it is just as likely to be relevant to someone who is moving from one region to another of his or her home country (e.g., from San Diego to Atlanta), changing business units within a large company (e.g., from Chevrolet trucks to Saturn), or moving across functional areas (e.g., from accounting to sales).

Culture is, simply defined, a group of people's worldview, or what Geert Hofstede calls the software of the mind. Dealing with people who have radically different views of the world around them requires cultural intelligence.

The basic idea that people have different facets of intelligence is not new; it dates back to the early 1900s in the field of psychology. What has remained hotly debated among scholars is the forms these facets might take and how they are acquired. Some people suggest that our basic intelligence is formed at a very early age and only changes marginally thereafter. Others go even further and suggest a strong genetic and inherited facet of intelligence. Our position is that while some of a person's intelligence may be "hardwired" at birth and through their early developmental

experiences, there is still a great deal that a person can do to shape and refine his or her cultural intelligence. The focus of our book is to describe cultural intelligence and provide a self-assessment so that the reader may focus on weak areas and seek to improve them. Additionally, we describe the way to make use of cultural intelligence in a variety of business settings, including leadership roles, teams, and expatriate work assignments in general.

Our book was inspired by a number of influences that were both practical and academic. For example, we noticed in our work with various clients that some managers who were found by their subordinates to be highly effective within their own cultural setting would flounder during an overseas work assignment. In odd contrast, a manager who seemed misanthropic in his own culture sometimes blossomed overseas, for reasons unknown. This led us to consider that very different capabilities may be involved in working with other people in one's own culture than in new cultures. From an academic perspective, our work in this book builds upon that of a number of giants in the fields of business, psychology, and cross-cultural management, including Robert Sternberg, Howard Gardner, Daniel Goleman, and Harry Triandis, as well as of colleagues working on similar trends, including Lynn Offerman, David Thomas, and Kerr Inkson, among others. We are grateful as well to numerous colleagues who have worked on this topic and provided invaluable critiques and suggestions, including James Bailey, John Berry, Deepak Bhawuk, Richard Brislin, Chay Hoon Lee, Elaine Mosakowski, Kok Yee Ng, Randall Peterson, Klaus Templer, and Linn Van Dyne.

We are grateful to many individuals and to our universities for their support during the preparation of this book. The first author wishes to thank the Nanyang Business School for support through the Nanyang professorship he received during the writing of this book, as well as the Cycle and Carriage Chair at the National University of Singapore business school and an appointment at the London Business School. The second author wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Anand Chandrasekar, Pam Steel, Klaus Templer, Harry Triandis, Linn Van Dyne, and Kok Yee Ng for sharing their experiences in working and interacting with people across cultures. The second author dedicates this book to S. D. G., "who maketh us same yet different." The third author wishes to thank Chris Earley and Soon Ang, whose indefatigable enthusiasm and energy made this enterprise possible.

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