

Including earlier titles such as "Riding the Waves of Culture", "The Seven Cultures of Capitalism", and several others, well-known Dutch interculturalist Fons Trompenaars and his business partners Peter Woolliams and Charles Hampden-Turner have built an impressive body of literature. Their publisher calls *Business Across Cultures* "a keystone book" in a new, broad series of cross-cultural publications by the same authors. They explore many of the complex challenges of conducting international business, leveraging the authors' experience from working with numerous multinationals and their database of cross-cultural profiles with inputs from over 60,000 managers around the globe.



Business Across Cultures' pedigree is surely impressive. Nevertheless, the book itself disappoints. It seems to suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder, apparently caused by the authors' desire to create a comprehensive compilation of their collective wisdom. The result leaves too many complex aspects short-changed and too many questions unanswered. An overly brief summary of cultural value dimensions fails to do them justice and might do little for those unfamiliar with the authors' previous works. The long list of subjects covered in the chapters that

follow, such as corporate cultures, managing change and continuity, marketing, managing HR, finance and accounting, and international leadership seem at best loosely connected. Each of them warrants deeper exploration, which is confirmed by the fact that the other titles in the book series do exactly that for several of the subjects addressed in *Business Across Cultures*.

Make no mistake: in spite of these issues, the book is not without merit. Trompenaars and Woolliams present a useful framework to help readers develop a new mindset when working across diverse cultures. Based on the three principles of "recognize, respect, and reconcile", they offer a practical approach to resolving cross-cultural dilemmas, such as those expressed in behavior, communication, attitudes, and key decision making. Their use of numerous stories and accounts of global leaders and companies is insightful as it helps readers recognize cultural dilemmas, teaches them the importance of respecting underlying value differences, and shows them ways to reconcile these dilemmas in constructive ways.

As business continues to become more global and diverse, cultural savvy emerges as a major performance differentiator for leaders and managers. *Business Across Cultures* provides them with a framework and gives them several pointers but falls short of its goal to serve as a comprehensive, practical toolkit for global executives.

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