



GlobalExchange

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Letter from the President: Global Virtual Team Management

By Neal Goodman



According to *Business Week*, virtual workforces are estimated to be 16 percent more productive ("[Virtual Workplace Do & Don'ts](#)"). So, it's no wonder that in today's small world and in our current economic situation, global virtual teams are becoming far more commonplace than ever before.

While the expansion of global virtual teams has proven to be of great value to an increasing number of companies, it is critical to understand the unique set of challenges that may be a part of virtual team management.

In response to this growing need, Global Dynamics Inc. is pleased to announce our new Webinar series: Leading, Managing and/or Participating in a Multi-Cultural Virtual Workforce. In its initial roll-out, GDI provided this series to Citi. The series is now widely available to organizations across all industries.

The objective for the series is to raise awareness and understanding of the dynamics of operating in a virtual environment and to provide participants with tools, techniques and strategies for becoming effective leaders and communicators. Participants will learn the important skills necessary for leading and working with colleagues in a virtual environment.

The goal is to provide consistent, quality training to the widest possible audience in the most effective, efficient manner possible.

Currently available content-specific modules include:

Module 1: Enhancing Virtual Communication Skills – what is different about virtual communicating – ensuring that the message sent is the message received.

Module 2: Leading and Managing a Virtual Workforce - what is different from the traditional organizational structure – understanding critical leadership strategies and competencies with emphasis on establishing and maintaining relationships.

Module 3: Effective Virtual Team Working – this program will be modeled after Module 5 (Virtual Workflow Effectiveness) but will focus on the specific needs of intact teams.

Module 4: Managing Virtual Meetings – how do virtual meetings differ from face-to-face sessions – learning the skills necessary for successful, multi-cultural, virtual meetings.

Module 5: Virtual Workflow Effectiveness – what is expected of the participants – enhancing mutual trust and respect; rewarding and recognizing; negotiating and influencing; decision-making and alignment.

Module 6: Developing Cross-Cultural Skills and Competencies for the Virtual Workforce – what is it and why is it so important for business success – learning essential intercultural dimensions.

KEY TIPS FOR MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL TEAM:

- Articulate a clear, well understood vision, mission and attainable goal
- Establish guiding principles/organization charter
- Identify and define roles, responsibilities and accountability
- Determine the most appropriate collaborative technology
- Establish trust and maintain effective working relationships
- Establish a virtual communication plan, providing continuous feedback loops
- Establish a conflict resolution process
- Establish a decision making process
- Establish guidelines and expectations for productive meetings
- Establish a reward and recognition process

May 2009 bring you unprecedented success, and may your team – be it down the hall or across the world – be as close as ever.

Neal

Neal Goodman is the president of Global Dynamics Inc.

Case Study: Schindler Elevators Not “Going Down” in Japan



On Feb. 3, *Financial Times* [reported](#) that Schindler’s sales in Japan are suffering due to a cross-cultural mishap.

After a fatal incident involving one of its elevators in Japan, Schindler claims that its sales in Japan have been hurt by a “witch hunt.” As the article explains, the Swiss company did not immediately apologize because it did not believe the cause of the malfunction had been determined. While it is common globally for companies to avoid apologies prior to investigations and clear determination of fault, apologies typically precede such analysis in Japanese business culture.

Moral of the story: When in Japan, do as the Japanese do: Apologize first; investigate later.

Tip: International Dating

2-18-09

...or is it 18-2-09?

what about 2009-02-18?

With countries having their own protocols for showing dates, it is easy to imagine the consequences for business. It has happened: medication taken off the shelves because it appeared to be expired due to varying dating protocols; people taking international trips for a meeting – on the wrong day!

To avoid this type of confusion we suggest using the ISO (International Standards Organization) 8601. The ISO 8601 protocol for the calendar date is: YYYY-MM-DD. For global clarity, this article was distributed on 2009-02-18.

The ISO 8601 also provides solutions for international standard presentation of the week date, time of day and date and time. As described on [ISO's 8601 FAQ Web page](#), the protocol "represents elements from the largest to the smallest element."

Trend Watch: Will We See North Americans Off-Shoring Themselves?

Last week *Information Week* [reported](#) that IBM is planning to offer its laid off "satisfactory performers" from America and Canada the opportunity to apply for jobs in developing markets. These employees will not live as typical expatriates. The article states that an IBM document on the program, Project Match, stipulates that employees must be "willing to work on local terms and conditions" and will be paid according to local standards in the countries to which they relocate.

IBM seeks to relocate these workers to India, China, Brazil, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Russia, South Africa, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates.

Cross-Cultural Quiz

What is meant by the term "iron rice bowl"?



"Iron rice bowl" is a Chinese term for a (typically public) occupation with guaranteed lifetime job security, housing, healthcare and education.

In the 1980s one-third of China's workforce was affected by Deng Xiaoping's elimination of government iron rice bowl jobs. Today, very few people in China have this protection.

News from Global Dynamics Inc.

Neal Goodman to Speak at FIGT International Conference

Neal Goodman will lead a session called "Promoting the International Assignment Experience through Knowledge Management" in the [Families in Global Transition International Conference](#) in Houston, Texas on Mar. 6. The session will demonstrate an innovative model to achieve global competency developing a knowledge management system. Forward-thinking corporations are employing knowledge management systems to significantly improve productivity and profitability but often fail to fully leverage the knowledge and expertise of their international assignees. This session will provide practical steps for organizations and international assignees to implement and utilize this knowledge management model.

Neal Goodman to Speak at 2009 SIETAR USA Conference

Neal Goodman will lead a workshop called "Best Practices in Consultant-Client Relationships" in the [2009 Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research USA Conference: Intercultural Solutions for Challenging Times](#) in Cary, N.C. (Apr. 1-4). Little attention is paid to the interactions between cross-cultural training organizations and their clients. The session will be an interactive examination of the best and worst conditions between cross-cultural consulting organizations and their clients with a focus on developing strategies and tactics for best practices. This workshop will review the process of delivering cross-cultural training *from the perspectives of both the training organization and the client*. Specific issues will be examined including conceptualizing project needs, RFP's, contracting, needs assessment, evaluations, follow-up and building the relationship.

GDI to Exhibit at ASTD 2009 International Conference & Exposition

Global Dynamics Inc. will be exhibiting at [American Society for Training & Development 2009 International Conference & Exposition](#) in Washington, D.C. (June 1-3). Please stop by to visit. If you would like a complimentary pass to the Expo, please email Jennifer Horowitz at jhorowitz@global-dynamics.com.

GDI Hires Vice President of Communications



On Feb. 2, Global Dynamics Inc. welcomed Jennifer Horowitz as Vice President of Communications. Ms. Horowitz brings GDI over a decade of international communications experience. Prior to joining GDI Jennifer was an Assistant Vice President at FD Dittus Communications, a subsidiary of FTI Consulting, where she led account teams in support of international communications initiatives for global companies, such as SAP AG, Foley & Lardner and Rivada Networks. Previously, Ms. Horowitz led the Northern Virginia office of CorpComm, a change management communications firm specializing in the federal government. Earlier in her career she oversaw all communications initiatives for the WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) Forum, the organization for the early de-facto worldwide standard for the mobile Internet. Among her successful cross-cultural communications efforts on behalf of the WAP Forum, Jennifer met with executives from several major Japanese technology companies to negotiate changes to their own core "mobile Internet" marketing messages in order to better manage consumer expectations of the WAP standard. As the technology matured, Jennifer created a hugely successful global campaign among the WAP Forum's member companies aimed at folding the work of the Forum into a larger wireless technology organization. Jennifer's earliest cross-cultural communications experience was a London-based assignment with the Labour Party's public relations firm, Hobsbawm Macaulay. In this role, she supported the Labour Party's public relations campaign in the months leading up to Tony Blair's victory. Ms. Horowitz graduated from American University in 1998 with a major in public communications and a minor in cross-cultural communications.

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Interested in sharing your experiences and lessons learned? We are looking for articles from cross-cultural experts that describe best practices, discuss significant cultural trends, or offer new solutions to management challenges. [Learn more about how you can contribute to GlobalExchange™.](#)

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