

Engaging the Next Generation

What differentiates Truly Global Leader



Continuing the investigation of what differentiates Truly Global Leaders, this article focuses on another one of the key characteristics that defines their success.

A substantial portion of the workforce who are the 'doers' in organisations today are part of what is referred to as generation Y (born mid 1970s to the mid 1990s). Global leaders focused on future success are rightfully and pro-actively shifting their attention on to this next generation of managers and leaders.

*In order for them to successfully engage and retain generation Y, there is one key characteristic of a Global Mindset that is required most - **being open minded.***

As simple as it sounds, evidence shows that it is in fact very difficult to master and can be the key limiting factor that makes a leader who is very

successful in one setting, very ineffective as a global leader.

In China generation Y is also referred to as the '**Young Emperors**' who were born after the one child policy in China was implemented. These young, educated Chinese not only make up a significant portion of the workforce, but their spending power has grown significantly in recent years and will grow substantially in the coming decade, making them one of the most important consumer groups to focus attention on as well. A recent Accenture study highlights data suggesting that both multinational and domestic companies who want to be successful in China should be focusing their efforts on young consumers in 2nd and 3rd tier Chinese cities and must be very creative with distribution, use of internet channels, and methods of engagement that will truly resonate with this particular group.

Surely attracting this population both as employees and as consumers will require a radically different approach than the approach that worked with the previous two generations.

In recent interviews conducted with over 30 young, Chinese managers they themselves mention open mindedness as the most important characteristic of a Global Mindset. Interestingly only 25% of those interviewed actually felt that they already had a global mindset, however 100% felt it was important to have a global mindset for future success.

So what level of open mindedness differentiates truly global leaders and will be required for success in emerging markets like China?



Currently there is no clear answer in terms of a measured level, however what is clear is that much higher levels of open mindedness are required for global success. Having the ability to suspend judgment in the initial phases of exposure to new people, environments and ideas in order to understand new perspectives and objectively consider new possibilities is key.

Powerful coaching questions to consider in assessing your own level of open mindedness in the context of Global Leadership:

- How open minded do you feel you currently are (from 1 to 10)? How open minded would you like to be (from 1 to 10)?
- What would it be like to be more open minded as a leader?
- What could you achieve by being more open minded that you struggle with today?
- What are the activities that bring you into a state of open mindedness?

Consider some actions you can take today to become more open minded:

- **Replace** the tendency to hastily judge a new person, solution, or situation with the habit of active listening and clarifying questions. Make an effort to pay full attention to and understand the facts and overall context, rather than allowing your voice of evaluation to begin speaking too soon. Practice on a daily basis in meetings and discussions where new problems or ideas are being explored or presented. Pay attention to your thinking and bias that may be getting in the way of evaluation new information objectively and openly.
- **Move away** from "either/or" thinking. Our mental wiring has a tendency to stop once we have identified two solutions or possibilities related to any problem or issue. Often the first two solutions are not the best two. Pay attention to when you consider a situation with the thinking that there are only two possibilities – EITHER this OR that. Stop and try to come up with at least 3 to 5 more solutions. Ask yourself if the solution could actually be this AND that.
- **Make** a list of people who you consider very open minded. Consider some examples of things that they have said or done that exemplifies their open mindedness. Reflect on and list more ways that you can practice being open minded.

References:

Borchardt, Wayne, Daily, Jill, O'Harra Masamichi 2011. Young Chinese in the Hinterland: How to Tap this Blossoming Market, Accenture Outlook <http://www.accenture.com/usen/outlook/pages/index.aspx>

Future articles in the MDS Newsletter will continue to examine some of the other characteristics of successful global leaders – so please stay tuned!

Any comments or questions on this topic are welcomed – please send to elisa@mdsbeijing.com

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