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Moving Leadership Education to a Global Level

By F. Frank Ghannadian, Ph.D., Dean, Sykes College of Business



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Graduate business programs, executive education and leadership training programs have come a long way in the past 50 years. The growth of graduate and undergraduate business programs around the globe has been expanding at an astonishing rate with business schools growing to more than 15,000 worldwide. There is no doubt business schools have made a positive impact on economic growth and on business practices leading ultimately to improved efficiency and increased benefits to society. Executive education and training programs as extensions or proxies for MBA degrees have also expanded during the past five decades. However, discussions with many corporate executives and HR directors give an impression that traditional leadership programs no longer sufficiently prepare executives for the challenges of a global environment. Numerous surveys administered by consulting and educational firms have indicated that prospective employees need better skills and capabilities to succeed in their jobs.

What has changed in the past decade that prompts us to question executive leadership programs and where they are aiming? We must remember that in today's business world leadership is not limited to individuals with titles of manager or director—almost all individuals in an organization big or small need leadership training. For businesses to survive in today's uncertain, complex and ever-changing technological world, a new series of leadership skills are necessary for all in the organization. Almost all employees are bound to make decisions of importance that

may impact corporate strategy and the culture of the firm. Furthermore, in today's rapidly changing technological work environment, employees have laptops and mobile devices that make them virtually connected globally with no confinements to their geographical compounds.

Why is there a need for global leadership development?

Technology has changed the world, and leadership training cannot be isolated from its impact. We cannot deny that the nature of today's technological world has had an impact on global business practices, and many examples and cases exist that illustrate how not every successful manager has transitioned to this new environment of becoming a global leader. Successful strategies in leading a national corporation may not translate well in a global setting. It is possible this could be due to the fact that the rules of engagement may not work in another country or setting due to multiple complexities existing there.

How can global context be added to leadership development?

Given that most companies either have a global footprint or production facilities overseas, it is imperative that corporations identify, prepare and maintain highly skilled employees who are attuned to the needs of the global community. With the growth of technology and increasing globally interconnected business environments, there will be increases in demand for better and broader education and more culturally literate leaders in the world.

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