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Leading Global Teams

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Most work in organizations today is done by teams. A team is a defined group of people working together to accomplish a joint task (Hackman, 1990; Kozlowski & Bell, 2013). There are many types of teams, varying by the type of boundary around the group of people and the degree to which they must rely on each other to accomplish the joint task. For example, in a new product development team at Boeing or Airbus, team members represent different functions, such as basic engineering and production, and work together over years in a highly interdependent way to develop and test a new product. In a sales team for Panasonic or Novartis, each salesperson has his or her own territory; team members interact with each other to share ideas and best practices and to work on a limited number of joint accounts. In a global auditing team at Ernst & Young or Deloitte, one auditor from each subsidiary's country develops the accounts for that subsidiary and submits the accounts to a managing partner. The members of this large global audit team interact very little with each other. The managing partner uses a small and representative inner team to bring together all the subsidiary accounts and create a single picture of the global client's operations.

Although teams have always been part of the organizational landscape, they have become increasingly important in the last two decades. Previously, the most important tool for managing people was the hierarchy (Leavitt, 2003; Weber, 1946, 1947): a set of nested levels of authority and responsibility. In a traditional hierarchy, organizations are divided into separate units: each unit has a boss who divides the unit's work into several pieces with a subordinate in charge of each piece; each of those subordinates does the same with his or her part of the organization's work, and so on. The hierarchy is a very simple way of managing people and work. Everyone's task is clearly defined, and everyone knows with whom to communicate about what.

However, hierarchies are notoriously inflexible and in today's era of globalization, they fall increasingly short. If the work requirements change—for example, if a supplier changes the specifications on a key component—hierarchies may not clarify who should adapt to the change. If the environment changes—for example, if customer demands shift from one product group to another or a new competitor arrives on the scene—hierarchies may not detect the shift soon enough, and resources are unlikely to be allocated appropriately. And if the task requires high levels of interdependence—for example, if basic development of a new drug should take into account how to manufacture the drug—hierarchies fail as they discourage communication across separate business units or functions. The traditional hierarchy, perfected in the first half of the 20th century, does not manage people to achieve results well in the dynamic and competitive environment of the 21st century.

Hierarchies must be supplemented with more informal modes of organization (for further discussions, see also Pfeffer, 1995), especially teams. Teams can be more dynamic and adaptable to change. They can be temporary, formed quickly to achieve a specific task and then disbanded afterward. Their membership can be fluid, including important skills as they are needed. They can coexist with other forms of organization; members of teams can and usually do hold other organizational roles simultaneously.

Any leader today must be both a good team member and good at leading teams (Biermeier-Hanson, Liu, & Dickson, 2015). Leaders at all levels of the organization are key members of coordination teams, project teams,

joint-task teams, and so on. They also find themselves leading such teams at their own level and below. Helping teams perform well, whether as a member or a designated leader, requires a sophisticated understanding of today's teams. And just as leadership itself is more complex in today's global environment than it was previously, teams themselves are also more complex.

In this chapter, we begin by reviewing what we know about team effectiveness in general: how teams combine the efforts of individual members to create strong results. The goal here is not to review team research completely, but to provide a representative review highlighting variables relevant to global teams. Then we identify the specific characteristics that differentiate global teams from the more common local variety, and apply the research to show how leaders can effectively overcome the barriers to realize opportunities. Next we briefly look at global teams in the context of connected global organizations. Finally, we discuss the implications for leaders themselves.

Effective Teams—Conclusions from Teams Research

Team research has converged around a clear set of factors that influence team performance, commonly referred to as the Input-Mediator-Output model (Lepine, Piccolo, Jackson, Mathieu, & Saul, 2008). Inputs include individual characteristics of team members, group level characteristics such as the task type, and organizational elements such as the resources and support for teaming. Mediators are team processes that members engage in, such as communication and conflict resolution, and emergent states or important dynamic conditions within teams, such as trust and cohesion. Outputs are indicators of performance, including quality of decision-making and implementation, development of individual members, and members' engagement with the organization (Hackman, 1990).

Inputs: Setting Teams Up for Success

Team research has identified three main structural inputs that most affect how teams interact and perform: the configuration of people on the team, the specificity and type of task, and the way the team is organized (Bresman & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2013; Lepine et al., 2008; Stewart, 2006). The research is extensive; here we summarize the most robust findings that build a foundation for leading global teams, as illustrated in Figure 9.1.

Team Composition

Teams need the right combination of skills and knowledge among members. This includes the right technical and process skills, as well as task-related, functional and geographical knowledge. It is equally important to have a mix of skills related to managing tasks, such as planning and driving towards milestones, and social skills, such as facilitating participation and resolving conflicts. It is clear that team composition is related to team effectiveness, such as influencing the level of team creativity and innovation implementation (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013) and overall team performance (Woolley, Gerbasi, Chabris, Kosslyn, & Hackman, 2008). In reality, teams frequently have significant skill overlaps and skill gaps. Teams are often composed based on convenience rather than careful assignment, and sometimes the necessary skill combination is simply not available. Team members must assess the adequacy of their capabilities, and gaps should be closed by adding members or developing the skills or knowledge necessary through training or experience.

Defined Task and Objectives

It goes *almost* without saying that team members must know clearly what their tasks and objectives are, in order to achieve them (Kleingeld, van Mierlo, & Arends, 2011). Unfortunately, though, many teams do not understand their objectives well or do not agree on them. Sometimes this is due to lack of clear communication from leaders. The leader presents a briefing or mandate that is clear to him- or herself but is difficult or ambiguous to interpret from the point of view of the team. Often, team members have different interpretations of the task and objectives. For example, a marketing professional may think that a successful product launch is defined by high market share, while a finance professional may think it is defined by profitability; these two objectives are potentially conflicting, but many teams neglect to clarify common goals and definitions before working together.

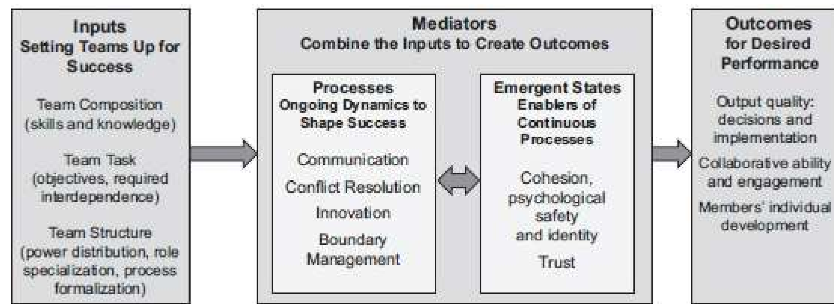

Figure 9.1 General Team Effectiveness Model, Highlighting Variables Salient for Global Teams

The degree of required (structural) task interdependence is one of the most important contingencies in effective teamwork. In a task with high structural interdependence, team members are obligated to rely on each other extensively. For example, this is necessary for creative marketing communications, product development and launch, systems implementation, and many other global team tasks. When high interdependence is in the task definition, team members tend to develop more collaborative processes and positive states (Pearce & Gregersen, 1991; Van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig, 1976; Van Der Vegt, Emans, & Van De Vliert, 2001). More important for leaders, structural interdependence amplifies the effect of other inputs on processes and internal states, such that different inputs are associated with more collaboration, learning, and positive affect when structural interdependence is high (Burke et al., 2006; Gully, Joshi, Incalcaterra, & Beaubien, 2002; Hu & Liden, 2015). Higher interdependence is particularly important in tasks with a need to combine information from different inputs (DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, 2010; Guillaume, Brodbeck, & Riketta, 2012), a ubiquitous condition in global teams. Team leaders in organizations often underestimate the degree of interdependence required to accomplish their team's task, and neglect to shape the necessary processes and states (see next section) for outcomes with higher interdependence. It is important at the outset to pay attention to these dimensions.

Team Structure

Like organizations, team structures vary along three dimensions (Zellmer-Bruhn & Gibson, 2006): distribution of power and responsibility, specialization of roles, and formalization of processes. With respect to hierarchy, some teams have formal leaders while others do not. Roles can be more or less specialized, and finally, processes can be more or less formalized. The three variables tend to be correlated, such that teams with a clear leader also tend to have more specialized roles and formal processes. Extensive research suggests that clear structure in teams is generally associated with positive outcomes (Hackman, 1990; Kozlowski & Bell, 2013; Stewart, 2006; Wageman, Hackman, & Lehman, 2005). A clear structure provides a context for psychological safety and effective processes, which supports basic team efficiency as well as more ambitious outcomes, such as learning and innovation (Bresman & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2013; Edmondson, 1999; West, 2012). Team leaders sometimes avoid implementing a clear structure, believing it goes against the notion of flexibility and fluid collaboration. However, it is much more effective for a team to have a clear structure and adapt it according to the needs of the moment than to have no structure at all.

Processes: Ongoing Dynamics to Shape Success

The two main categories of mediators that shape team success are processes and emergent states (Lepine et al., 2008; Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001; Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). Processes are patterns of behaviors that teams enact, such as communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and monitoring. Emergent states are the team's shared emotional and cognitive beliefs about the team itself, such as psychological safety and cohesion. Processes and emergent states affect each other in a reciprocal way. For example, effective communication increases team members' beliefs in their ability to complete the task effectively (efficacy), which in turn affects members' willingness to resolve conflict quickly. There are countless processes and states which have been researched. Here we identify ones which have received the

most attention and at the same time are critical to the more complex context of global teams.

Processes: Communication, Conflict Resolution, Innovation, and Boundary Management

These are four fundamental processes that facilitate achieving results. The first two are more basic and fundamental and have been studied for decades, while the importance of the latter two has emerged with the context of more complex teams, including global teams.

Effective communication is the transmission of meaning as it was intended (Maznevski, 1994). Team performance is higher to the extent that each member understands the others' perspectives and the information brought to the team, and to the extent that all members are kept informed of progress in the team in a continuous way (Kozlowski & Bell, 2013; Wageman et al., 2005). Team members can only act in a cooperative way if they know what they are cooperating *about* and what they are contributing *to*. To accomplish this, communication must be an active process, with extensive questioning, checking, and paraphrasing from all parties involved. Many teams find that having a member responsible for facilitating communication is extremely helpful in ensuring effective communication.

Conflict is the expression of differences in opinion or priority due to opposing needs or demands (Tjosvold, 1986). The effect of conflict on a team is complex and research has been unravelling its effects for decades (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995; Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Kostopoulos & Bozionelos, 2011). Conflict about the relationships in the team or about the team processes is almost always negatively related to the climate within the team and to team performance. Task-related conflict—disagreement and discussion about facts and priorities directly related to the task—is not necessarily negative, and can even enhance task performance (De Church, Mesmer-Magnus, & Doty, 2013; de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012), especially for tasks at more senior levels of the organization and that are more multidimensional. It seems that teams need "the right amount" of conflict. Not enough conflict decreases performance because perspectives are not questioned or improved upon. Many teams assign a formal role of "devil's advocate" to prevent such groupthink. Too much conflict decreases performance because it prevents convergence on a decision and implementation, and teams that experience too much conflict can enhance their performance by assigning someone to facilitate and even mediate such conflict. However, no research has been able to determine exactly how much is "the right amount" of conflict.

Innovation and Creativity . Innovation is the development and implementation of new, valuable solutions. Innovation requires a combination of creativity and deep understanding of the set of challenges the innovation is trying to address (Anderson, Potocnik, & Zhou, 2014; Hülsheger, Anderson, & Salgado, 2009; O'Reilly III, Williams, & Barsade, 1998; West, 2012). Creativity is the consideration of a wide variety of alternatives and criteria for evaluating alternatives, as well as the building of novel and useful ideas that were not originally part of the consideration set. While composition has some impact on innovation, with diverse teams having more ideas, the most important determinants of innovation are the effectiveness of other processes, including communication and conflict resolution, and the emergent states that evolve in the team, such as trust and psychological safety (Barczak, Lassk, & Mulki, 2010; Edmondson, 1999; Gong, Kim, Lee, & Zhu, 2013; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013) (see below). Many group techniques combine creativity with structured problem-solving to achieve high-quality innovation.

Managing Boundaries and Stakeholders. Most team tasks require extensive interaction between members and various parties outside the team. Effective teams must manage these boundaries well (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). The three most important aspects of boundary management are resourcing the team, gathering information, and implementing solutions. These activities are characterized by a high need for knowledge management and transfer (Ancona, Bresman, & Caldwell, 2009; Bresman & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2013), and boundaries and stakeholders must be managed carefully. Effective teams map out the external relationships they need and strategically assign members to be responsible for different relationships on behalf of the team. Effective team leaders play a mediating role between the team structure and the way the team manages across its boundaries (Somech & Khalaili, 2014).

Emergent States: Enablers of Continuous Processes

Emergent states are beliefs and attitudes that team members hold about the team itself (Marks et al., 2001). They evolve dynamically as the group works together, based on the effect of group experiences. Current research on teams examines a plethora of team states, sorting out which are more important in different situations. Here we summarize the research on two fundamental states which are also especially important to global teams: cohesion and its components of psychological safety and identity, and trust.

Cohesion, Psychological Safety, and Identity

Cohesion, often referred to as social integration, is "the attraction to the group, satisfaction with other members of the group, and social interaction among group members" (O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Barnett, 1989: 22). It is one of the first and most basic states identified in teams, and captures a set of dynamics associated with general group functioning, collaboration, and coordination (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Kozlowski & Bell, 2013; Mudrack, 1989; Mullen & Copper, 1994). Cohesion covers a broad set of dynamics and can even be associated with negative outcomes like groupthink (Janis, 1972), which occurs when team members have such high cohesion they do not question each other or their own assumptions. More recent research, therefore, has sought to identify the specific elements of cohesion most important for team performance. Two are particularly relevant for global team foundations. First, psychological safety is a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking, and is the cohesive sub-state most associated with both caring for each other and satisfaction, on the one hand, and questioning assumptions and challenging for higher performance, on the other (Edmondson, 1999). It is associated with high levels of team learning and innovation, and is developed through effective communication, careful conflict resolution, and boundary management (Bresman & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2013; Edmondson, 1999). Second, social identity is the degree to which team members believe that group membership is an important and positive aspect of their definition of self (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). When individuals identify more strongly with a group, they engage in more participation and cooperation, share information, and coordinate more within the group (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004). Like psychological safety, social identity is enhanced through effective communication, careful conflict resolution, and positive management of the boundaries.

Trust

Interpersonal trust is the extent to which a person is confident in and willing to act on the basis of, the words, actions, and decisions of another (McAllister, 1995). It is a positive attitude about other team members, specifically a belief that a team member would make decisions that optimize the team's interests, even in the absence of other team members. When team members trust each other, they allow themselves to be vulnerable; that is, they put themselves at risk of being hurt by the team because of their belief that team members would always try to act to help the team and its members. A long history of research on trust has identified two main forms. Cognitive trust is based on beliefs and expectations about reliability and dependability, while affective trust is based on emotional bonds and emotional reciprocity of care and concern (McAllister, 1995). When people trust each other, they are more likely to take risks for each other (Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Trust among team members tends to increase interpersonal cooperation and teamwork, thereby affecting team performance positively (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013; Jones & George, 1998; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011). Trust develops more easily among people who are more similar to each other, making it difficult to evolve as an emergent state in global teams (Chou, Wang, Wang, Huang, & Cheng, 2008; Hogg, Van Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012). It is important to remember that trust cannot be built without taking risks; team members can only demonstrate to each other that they will act in the team's interests if other team members let them take unsupervised actions.

Leading the Complex Dynamics of Teams

Team inputs, processes, and emergent states have been reviewed here in a relatively linear fashion. It may imply that a leader first designs the team according to structural inputs, then sets off initiating communication, resolving conflict, innovating, and managing boundaries, and inevitably positive emergent states such as psychological safety, identity, and trust evolve. Of course, the reality is much more complex. "Inputs" constantly change as membership, the task, and the environment change. Moreover, processes and emergent states affect each other in dynamic and sometimes surprising ways, especially as the team and environment change. Newer research captures these processes in more comprehensive ways (Hackman, 2012; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cohen, 2012; Wageman, Gardner, & Mortensen, 2012). At the same time, these input and mediator factors provide a powerful set of guidelines for team leaders, articulating the main priorities for shaping effective global team performance.

Global Teams: More Barriers, More Opportunities

Global teams represent a subset of “teams” in general. While teams are groups of people working together to accomplish tasks, global teams are groups whose members represent different countries and/or whose tasks are multinational in nature. Everything described above with respect to teams applies to global teams, but global teams are more extreme. Global teams face higher barriers to effective performance, and it is much more difficult for global teams to engage effective processes and attain effective emergent states (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Davison, 2012; Pauleen, 2003; Wildman & Griffith, 2015; Zander, Mockaitis, & Butler, 2012). On the other hand, the characteristics and contexts of global teams provide more potential for high performance and for creating an important impact within organizations, economies, and societies. Global teams that perform well make a big difference (Lane, Maznevski, & DiStefano, 2014).

Global Teams Are Diverse and Dispersed

Two characteristics of global teams particularly differentiate them from teams in general, and both of them are inputs to the team model: their composition and their dispersion. (Wildman & Griffith, 2015). Both of these characteristics raise barriers and provide opportunities, as summarized in Figure 9.2. The opportunities hold out the promise of global team performance; they are mainly related to inputs and resources available to the group, and contexts in which to implement the group’s output. The barriers are unfortunately mainly related to the mediators—both processes and emergent states—for turning inputs into performance. Below, each of these characteristics will be described and their implications for other inputs, processes, emergent states, and outcomes will be discussed.

Figure 9.2 Diversity and Dispersion: Overcome Barriers to Take Advantage of Opportunities

	Barriers	***Opportunities***
Diversity	Tendency towards: • Less effective communication • Increased conflict • Lower alignment on task	Potential for: • Increased creativity and innovation • More complete and comprehensive perspectives, stakeholder coverage
Dispersion	Difficult to achieve and maintain basic team conditions, due to: • Limited communication • Invisible relationships • Logistical challenges	Potential for: • More complete and comprehensive perspectives, stakeholder coverage • Focused, objective, balanced communication

Diverse Composition

Global teams, on average, have much more diverse composition than teams in general do (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). This diverse composition has substantial implications: it provides great potential for higher performance by promoting creativity and innovation (Albrecht & Hall, 1991; Payne, 1990) and by bringing in new perspectives and a broader set of external stakeholders; at the same time, it makes smooth team interactions much more difficult. Empirical research has shown that while work team diversity influences communication behaviors that can have negative effects on internal team dynamics, it is also beneficial to team performance (see Jackson & Joshi, 2011 for a review). Diverse teams therefore tend to perform either better or worse than homogeneous teams, depending on how they are managed (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; Earley &

Mosakowski, 2000; Staples & Zhao, 2006; Thomas, 1999). Interestingly, the most common reaction to diversity is to suppress it (Richard & Johnson, 2001; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989), that is, to focus only on similarities. This moves a team from low-performing or value-destroying, to the medium performance of homogeneous teams—an improvement, but still misses the potential offered from diversity. In a meta-analysis, Stahl and colleagues found no direct impact of cultural diversity on team performance; however, they found several significant mediators and moderators such that cultural diversity had both a positive and a negative impact on mediators and therefore outputs (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010).

The Profound Effect of Cultural Diversity

Although all types of individual differences affect teams, cultural diversity has a profound impact on many different aspects of teamwork (Thatcher & Patel, 2011). We learn about our culture through years of experiences in families, schools, communities, and other cultural institutions, and people tend not even to be aware that they hold these norms related to their cultural identity. Different cultures even use different metaphors to describe teams; for example, some cultures think of teams as families, while other cultures compare business teams to sports teams. Quite simply, people from different cultures bring different expectations to the team, and they are often unaware that they do so. Comparative research shows us that although all cultures use teams, cultures differ from each other quite widely in terms of how they tend to work in teams (Zellmer-Bruhn & Gibson, 2006; Zhou & Shi, 2011).

Global Teams Are Also Diverse in Other Ways, Resulting in Faultlines

Global teams are diverse in terms of nationality, but because they are generally created to address strategic tasks, they are also usually diverse in terms of function, and their members often represent business units with different priorities and needs. This multifaceted diversity means the potential for high performance is even greater than for teams with less diversity, although it is difficult to achieve. Gender, race, function, and other differences that have both surface- and deeper-level implications combine with culture to create complex team dynamics (Stahl et al., 2010). These differences can be exacerbated by what is called faultlines (Lau & Murnighan, 1998): rifts in teams that are created by alignment of different types of differences. For example, a global team may consist of two production engineers, two marketers, and two R&D scientists, from the US, Japan, and Germany. If the engineers are from the US, the marketers from Japan, and the scientists from Germany, then the functional and cultural divisions are aligned and there are likely to be three sub-groups within the team who find it very difficult to collaborate. On the other hand, if each of the functions is represented by people from different countries, the sub-groups will be less evident and differences will be easier to bridge (Lau & Murnighan, 2005). The strength of a team's faultlines affects its performance above and beyond the impact of diversity itself, although empirical research in this area is still emerging (Thatcher & Patel, 2011, 2012).

Diverse composition is an obvious characteristic of global teams, and in fact these teams are usually created to take advantage of at least one aspect of diversity, whether geography, function, or some combination. But global teams are usually even more diverse than intended, and the combinations create nonlinear and challenging effects. The impacts of this input on processes and emergent states are often underestimated or misunderstood by managers.

Dispersed Configuration

In addition to diverse composition, global teams are typically characterized by dispersed distribution: their members are usually based in different locations, often spanning many time zones and climates, and many members travel frequently. Communication and coordination, therefore, present major challenges for global teams. On the other hand, due to their dispersion and travel, members have access to a wide variety of resources and networks, and therefore can provide a broader variety of inputs to the team and links with its

stakeholders.

Dispersed teams, who rely on information and communications technology to conduct much of their work together, are often referred to as "virtual teams." Although research in this field is relatively new (compared with teams research in general), it has been extensive. Early research compared virtual teams with face-to-face teams and, in laboratory situations, generally found that face-to-face teams outperform virtual ones. This research identified barriers raised by communications technology and how to overcome them. Later research has accepted that virtual teams are inevitable and valuable. And because companies create virtual teams whenever there is a need to bring together people who are geographically distributed, the tasks are often different from those assigned to face-to-face teams. Most of the body of research on virtual teams examines their dynamics without comparison to face-to-face, and identifies the key factors contributing to their performance (see Jonsen et al., 2012 for a review).

Global Team Inputs: Challenges of Role Agreement and Task Complexity

Diversity and dispersion are team inputs, of course. But because both affect so many aspects of social norms and interaction, they also influence other more immediate inputs of teams in significant ways.

Cultural Diversity and Role Agreement

One of the most important differences among cultures is related to how team roles are defined and managed (Maznevski & Zander, 2001). For instance, in more hierarchical cultures, such as Japan and Brazil, it is generally assumed that a team must have a single leader and that the leader must have decision-making authority within the team. If the team is not managed this way, it is believed, then the team will devolve into chaos and inefficiency. In other cultures, such as Scandinavian cultures, it is assumed that team leadership should be more emergent, fluid, and shared, with different people taking the lead at different points in the team's task. It seems that members of all cultures prefer that team leadership is shared among members, but members of cultures that are less hierarchical have a stronger preference for broad sharing (Herbert, Mockaitis, & Zander, 2014). More individualistic cultures, such as America and France, tend to define specific task-related roles clearly so as to identify individual areas of accountability. In these cultures, team members are comfortable differentiating individual performance within the team, rewarding some more than others. More collective cultures, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, tend to define roles more fluidly, with people contributing to the team as they can and with higher accountability for the group than for individuals. In these cultures, teams prefer to reward everyone on the team the same. These differences, of course, affect the ease with which team members from different cultures agree on roles within the team. The agreement on roles, in turn, influences significant processes such as communication and conflict resolution, and provides context for assessing emergent states such as cohesion and trust.

Team Dispersion and Task Complexity

Global teams generally work on more complex tasks with less structure and high interdependence requirements (Gluesing & Gibson, 2004). When team members are also dispersed, these task inputs present strong challenges. One critical role of leaders is to provide structure for the task, so team members have a more clear frame in which to engage in processes and build emergent states (Zayani, 2008). The structure of the task affects how work relationships develop, and how frequently team members communicate with each other. This in turn influences trust and shared culture (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Hinds, Liu, & Lyon, 2011). Members' very different knowledge contexts can diverge from each other further over time, hindering the task, or can converge in ways that help the task (Baba, Gluesing, Ratner, & Wagner, 2004). Leaders can counteract the dispersion effect by helping team members get to know each other, and interact in a way that is consistent with the level of interdependence and structure required by the task (Lampshire, 2009). The negative effect of faultlines created by dispersion can be ameliorated if the team is structured with a strong results orientation

(Bezrukova, Thatcher, Jehn, & Spell, 2012), and when leaders pay attention to the diverse contexts in which members are located (Baba et al., 2004). These leadership behaviors improve team processes such as communication and conflict resolution, and facilitate the development of emergent states, such as cohesion and trust.

Global Team Processes: Barriers to Effective Team Dynamics

Global teams are complex, and there are many barriers to effective processes and emergent states, as well as many opportunities. Active leadership, therefore, is critical for facilitating the processes and states (Small, 2011).

Communication: Understanding Differences, Restricted Modes

Cultural diversity and dispersion's most obvious impacts are on communication in teams, and indeed most research on global teams examines this dynamic.

Naturally, people from different cultures speak different languages. Even if there is a common business language—likely English—team members have different levels of fluency, and not everything they are thinking in their native language can be translated into the linear structures and often comparatively imprecise vocabulary of English. Recent research has begun to study the impact of language diversity on communication in global teams. When team members use different languages, subgroups are created and faultlines are reinforced (Kulkarni, 2015). Apart from potential misunderstandings, negative emotions can be provoked by language barriers, including anxiety and resentment (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2015). Power dynamics can be reflected in language dominance, leading to subgroup imbalances in task input (Hinds, Neeley, & Cramton, 2014). Leaders can reduce the impact of language barriers by reducing attention away from them, reducing the negative appraisal of people who speak different languages, and counteracting the power imbalances with other sources of power.

Aside from language differences, people from different cultures expect and engage in different norms for communication. In some cultures, such as many Latin cultures, it is acceptable to express one's ideas at any time, even speaking at the same time as others and with openly expressed emotion; in other cultures, such as many East Asian cultures, it is only acceptable to speak when asked a question, and it is never acceptable to speak at the same time as others—silence is preferable. In many cultures, showing excessive emotion is considered inappropriate. For example, members of collective cultures tend to be more sensitive toward the affective influence of their team members than those in individualistic cultures (Ilies, Wagner, & Morgeson, 2007). With such widely varying norms for communication, it is difficult for culturally diverse teams to communicate effectively, to send and receive meaning as it was intended.

Communication over technology is much less rich than face-to-face communication, even if visual technology such as video conferencing or webcams are used. Subtle nonverbal communication, such as body language and tone of voice, is greatly constrained by technology. Virtual teams therefore find it more difficult to communicate effectively, especially complex and context-sensitive information regarding the task itself, and emotional information regarding team processes (Cash-Baskett, 2011; Cramton & Webber, 2005). And even though most managers conduct a high proportion of their teamwork virtually, most report that they do not like or prefer this mode of communication. It is a "necessary evil."

More specifically, tacit knowledge is extremely difficult to share over technology (Cramton & Webber, 2005; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000). Tacit knowledge is the type of knowledge that is contextually embedded and cannot be articulated explicitly. Explicit knowledge can be written down in manuals, spreadsheets, patent applications, and so on, and can be transferred relatively easily from one person to another in such forms. Explicit knowledge is copyable and inexpensive; in fact, it can be found free of charge all through the Internet. Tacit knowledge takes explicit knowledge and puts it in context, in use. Tacit knowledge comes from experience and incorporates wisdom and judgment. It is not copyable, and it tends to be expensive. For

example, a chemical engineer just graduated from university has high levels of explicit knowledge: he knows all the latest techniques and applications for combining elements; but he has less knowledge of the complex contexts of different applications. A chemical engineer who has been working on field applications for fifteen years may have less explicit knowledge than the young graduate (that is, she may not know all the latest techniques), but she has more tacit knowledge about how different compounds react to the multitude of variables in different manufacturing contexts. Tacit knowledge is best transferred during face-to-face interactions, which allow for questions, dialogue, and the richness of nonverbal communication. Therefore, if a global team's task requires high levels of tacit knowledge transfer and development, the team will find it challenging without meeting face-to-face (Sarker, Ajuja, Sarker, & Kirkeby, 2011).

More Conflict, More Difficult to Resolve

Global teams do experience more conflict (Stahl et al., 2010), and both cultural diversity and dispersion influence how global teams detect and address conflict. For example, the different perception of power across cultures can influence the type of conflict resolution strategies used (Kaushal & Kwantes, 2006). Some cultures, such as many Nordic cultures, show respect for each other by expressing conflict only indirectly (it is important not to hurt each others' face or feelings); while others, such as the neighboring Dutch, show respect by expressing disagreement openly (it is important not to waste each others' time on trivial agreement). With such widely varying norms for showing respect in conflict resolution, it is difficult to resolve conflicts constructively. However, when global teams face differences openly and constructively, their different perspectives can be instrumental to resolving conflict (Tjosvold & Yu, 2007).

Creativity and Innovation—Optimism for Diversity and Dispersion

Diverse teams are more creative than teams with low diversity—the former identify more ideas, and more criteria for evaluating the ideas (Stahl et al., 2010). Moreover, collaborative technologies can also lead to increased creativity and innovation in dispersed teams (Cramton & Webber, 2005; Hinds et al., 2011). Achieving innovation in global teams has the same foundation as "normal" teams, although it is more challenging. Global teams who work toward a clear and compelling challenge with involvement and strong information flow achieve strong innovation results (Kerber & Buono, 2004). Teams whose members have more of a global mindset are more innovative and perform better, and transformational leadership in the team is an important predictor of this global mindset and innovation (Gagnon, 2013). Just as for co-located teams, psychological safety is a strong predictor of innovation in global teams (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006). Global innovation teams that manage communication and conflict well in a cycle that creates learning achieve high levels of innovation success (Bouncken & Winkler, 2010).

Boundary Management and Other Processes—the Bright Side of Global Teams

Global teams, by definition, span boundaries already within the team, and face more boundaries outside the team, than "normal" co-located teams. Much of the research on global teams explicitly or implicitly addresses boundary-spanning within the team. However, very little research examines the role of boundary management outside the team, and this is a field where more research is needed (Butler, Zander, Mockaitis, & Sutton, 2012; Zander et al., 2012).

Processes in global teams reinforce each other for higher performance. For example, teams are characterized by learning and adaptability when their leaders facilitate strong communication, boundary-spanning, goal-setting, and task-related skills in the context of managing cultural differences (Furukawa, 2010). Given the complexity of global teams, leaders must deal with paradox and contradiction in team members' expectations and norms, exhibiting a variety of leadership styles simultaneously to facilitate strong processes (Leidner, 2002).

Global Team Emergent States: Developing Positive Attitudes and Beliefs

Positive emergent states are more difficult to build in multicultural teams, and global leadership is critical for enabling good processes to build the states (Stahl et al., 2010). Nevertheless, social integration and trust can be built over time, with predictable positive effect on performance (Kiely, 2001).

Cohesion, Identity, and Psychological Safety Are Threatened by Diversity and Dispersion

Members of multicultural teams tend to be very motivated to work in these teams and enjoy the team experience, yet still find it difficult to develop strong cohesion, identity, or psychological safety. Global teams inevitably feel tensions around which norms to adopt, and this affects their cohesion, identity, and psychological safety. During crisis, cohesion and psychological safety are especially important for global team motivation and cohesiveness, which in turn leads to motivation to engage with the team (Jenster & Steiler, 2011). Fortunately, culturally intelligent leaders leverage their abilities to develop a synergistic cultural strategy to bring people together for higher-level goals and objectives, which increases team integration and shared identity (Dean, 2007). Global teams that develop a "hybrid culture" seem to develop more cohesion and social integration. A hybrid culture is a shared identity and set of norms that is specific to the team and results from the combination of different norms from team members' "home" cultures (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; Hinds et al., 2011).

Trust—Starts Fast, Builds Slowly

Global teams experience great challenges overcoming the barriers to trust raised by diversity and dispersion. At the same time, trust is imperative in global teams, because of the need to operate separately in different contexts most of the time (Mach & Baruch, 2015).

Interestingly, dispersed teams often begin with "swift trust," or a willingness to act based on cognitive trust even without experience (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1998; Jarvenpaa, Shaw, & Staples, 2004). Reliability and predictability can be developed virtually through task experiences, and global teams should set quick deliverables and communication norms in order to build trust. The deep trust that allows a team member to be vulnerable to others is extremely difficult to build without personal contact.

Multilanguage teams face massive barriers to the development of trust, and the negative emotions and power imbalances associated with language differences (see above) can even prevent the development of trust (Tenzer, Pudelko, & Harzing, 2014). In global teams with high diversity and broad dispersion, consensus-oriented communication and conflict resolution and a collective team orientation can help to overcome diversity and dispersion to build trust (Mach & Baruch, 2015). It is helpful for global teams to experience pieces of the task quickly, to develop reliability and create a foundation for trust. For example, the more quickly team members are assigned different aspects of information-gathering then come together to share initial results, the more "data" team members have about each other to build roles, processes, and eventually trust.

Enabling Positive Outcomes in Global Teams

When global teams overcome the challenges inherent in their composition and dispersion with strong processes and emergent states, they perform well and achieve outcomes beyond what co-located, less diverse teams could do (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000). Research shows that multicultural teams who develop a collaborative and cohesive climate outperform homogeneous teams (Stahl et al., 2010).

Realizing the Potential from Diversity Through Knowledge and Communication

To turn the input of diversity into high performance, global teams must explicitly address and manage both their similarities and their differences; they must both create social cohesion and acknowledge and respect individual differences (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; Lane et al., 2014). Synergy takes enormous energy from

the leader, clarifying processes and engaging in discussion around differences (Stumpf & Zeutschel, 2001). Diverse teams that focus only on their differences create great rifts within the team and find it difficult to converge or align. Teams that focus only on their similarities, though, in an effort to maximize social cohesion, also under-perform—they do not take advantage of their differences. Moreover, their suppressed differences eventually arise in the context of deep and personal conflicts, hurting the team and its performance.

To enable effective processes and high-quality emergent states, it is helpful for team members to map out their similarities and differences, especially with respect to culture, function, or expertise, and business unit perspective. Mapping is creating a picture of the team's diversity, using charts and where possible, data from personality or cultural dimension assessments. If done with an open mindset and motivation, this mapping process itself helps to create cohesion and trust as team members explore their different perspectives and common connections. The team can then identify in which areas it is easily aligned and areas where different members will contribute differently. Teams should develop tight alignment around task-related issues, such as the definition of the task and objectives, while encouraging and respecting diverse perspectives around contributions to the task and ways of getting it done and social needs within the group.

Once the differences are mapped, then team members must bridge these differences using effective communication techniques. Especially important is decentering, or speaking and listening from the others' points of view. For example, an American, through mapping, may understand that her teammates from East Asia prefer to express conflict indirectly. However, she may not be able to bridge that difference by decentering: she may say, "I know you find it difficult to be direct in conflict, but it's okay to do it with me, I won't be offended." If the American were truly decentering, she would find ways to ask questions and check for agreement that allow the East Asians to express conflict indirectly. Referring to a decision about direction, for example, she might ask a teammate "How do you think people in your office would react to this decision?" This question would allow a teammate to express his own disagreement indirectly as a hypothetical third person's opinion and not his own. Equally important in bridging is refraining from blame. Problems and miscommunication in diverse teams are inevitable, and it is a natural reaction to blame others for the problem, or to attribute low motivation or other negative characteristics to them. In effective multicultural teams, team members do not blame each other when such problems arise but engage in creative dialogue to try and understand which types of differences contributed to the misunderstanding. In this way, effective teams turn problems into opportunities for learning about each other.

Leveraging Dispersion by Structuring the Task and Process

When working over technology, one important implication of the research findings is to maintain discipline and focus around the task and processes. Face-to-face teams can use the immediacy of personal contact to create a sense of urgency and momentum; virtual teams must create it deliberately themselves. Identifying roles, developing a project plan, monitoring progress—all the processes discussed earlier in this chapter—must be accomplished with great deliberation in virtual teams. Interestingly, teams who develop good discipline and focus find that working over technology can actually facilitate team performance, rather than hinder it. When meeting times are limited, people tend to prepare more effectively and stay focused throughout the meeting. When nonverbal cues are limited, people focus on the spoken or written word and remain much more task focused. Because of this, virtual teams often have lower levels of personal conflict than face-to-face teams. The use of structured communication tools such as conference calls, emails, and web meetings tends to decrease the dominance of extraverts and native language speakers, giving each member more of a chance to participate in a way he or she feels comfortable. This "performance bonus" can only be achieved, though, when the team has built relationships, shared tacit knowledge, and developed discipline and focus (Malhotra, Majchrzak, & Rosen, 2007).

The question is not, then, "should we meet face-to-face?" but "when should we meet face-to-face, and what should we do with that time?" Most teams believe they should get together at the team's launch, then whenever there is a crisis, conflict, or a major decision point: "This team is important, and so whenever we

really need to see each other, when things aren't going well, we take the effort to jump on a plane and see each other." In fact, high-performing teams do something quite different. They schedule regular meetings and stick to the schedule, for example meeting once every three to four months for two days each time. They create a team heartbeat with a regular rhythm. During their face-to-face meetings, they do not present sales reports or simple updates; instead, they engage in discussions and actions to build shared tacit knowledge and strong relationships. They might visit customers or suppliers together, work on an innovation process, or share cases about best practices or reviews of failures. These activities pump the team equivalent of oxygen through the team. Research has shown that teams who have a strong heartbeat can manage all other tasks virtually in between their face-to-face meetings and that this is both less expensive and more effective than getting together "whenever we need to" (Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000).

Which technology is most effective? Virtual teams often search for the "one best technology" that will solve all the members' challenges. So far, though, that technology has not yet emerged. Some recent advances such as voice and video over broadband Internet hold promise, as they add richness to normally sparse electronic communication. However, global teams usually face different infrastructures in different countries, company firewalls, people traveling, and other complications that make it difficult for them to rely on these advances.

Effective virtual teams use a range of technology, matching different technologies to different aspects of the team's task. Collaboration technologies facilitate work together and range from straightforward emails to shared document and virtual meeting applications. Interestingly, high-performing virtual teams that use collaboration technologies well can outperform face-to-face teams, by using the features to leverage diversity and dispersion (Hinds et al., 2011).

For example, such global teams might use email for asynchronous communication, phone for one-to-one discussions, web meetings for joint discussions (some members using the phone and others using the Internet for the voice aspect), and a shared workspace for keeping documents. They might also combine or sequence technologies in specific ways; for example, a good technique for communicating effectively across cultures is to first exchange email background about a topic, then to discuss it on the phone to develop a dialogue with questions and answers in real-time, then to follow up on email to ensure that the main points were shared. In addition, high-performance teams also take team members' personality characteristics into account and match technology with personal preferences well (Jonsen et al., 2012). Recent research shows a relationship between technological communication, personality characteristics, and performance (Jacques, Garger, Brown, & Deale, 2009; Turel & Zhang, 2010). More practically, when choosing technologies, teams should select ones (and provide training if necessary) that all team members can use and that will be supported as needed.

Connected Teams Create Global Organizations

Today's multinational organizations typically share some negative characteristics, including impersonality and heavy complexity. Multinationals are large and distributed, and it is often difficult for their members—especially those outside of headquarters—to relate to other parts of the company. Moreover, the use of virtual workers is becoming much more common, such as salespeople with independent territories who only see another member of their own company a couple of times a month or even less. The complexity also makes these organizations heavy and unwieldy, and managers have difficulty getting information where it is needed, when it is needed. Many senior managers today are trying to learn how to motivate people and share information in this difficult situation, to maintain commitment and collaboration so that the opportunities of globalization will not be lost under the burdens. Effective global teams have some important "side effects" related to creating global organizations. "Connected teams" refers to global teams who pay attention to and nurture these higher-order benefits.

First, members of effective global teams tend to feel more committed to the organization as a whole than do people who are not members of such teams. When people have personal and performance-related connections with others in different parts of the organization, those other parts of the organization seem less distant and more real. Team members make the organization more tangible for each other. This may seem trivial, but for a leader trying to enhance and coordinate performance in a multinational organization, this commitment to the

company and the individuals within it goes a very long way.

Second, most managers today are members of two or more global teams. As we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, global teams often cross the hierarchy and join people from different parts of the organization. Because of this, the multiple global teams that each manager is part of tend to cross different parts of the company. Each manager (team member), therefore, is a potential conveyor of knowledge across boundaries, and global teams can be conduits for knowledge sharing and organizational learning. This perspective is summarized in Figure 9.3. As for all other potential benefits of global teams, this knowledge sharing does not happen automatically. In fact, members of global teams tend to focus on the task at hand—which is difficult enough—and not pay attention to passing on knowledge about other aspects of company performance. But as global teams start to master their own task their conversations often turn to “what else is happening at your end?” Effective global leaders and teams encourage this learning, and in fact sophisticated multinational companies see its advantages and facilitate it deliberately.

Most managers are on two or more distributed teams, but tend to see these as separate teams or matrixed teams. This is typically how connected teams are shown, emphasizing the distinct nature of the different teams:

For example, person A is on the “USA and Canada” team, and also on the “Marketing” team.

	USA and Canada	*Latin America*	*Europe*	*Asia*	*Middle East and Africa*
Marketing	A	F			S
Production	B		J	N	
Logistics	C	G	K		T
R&D	D		L	P	
Finance	E	H	M	Q	U
Call Centers				R	V

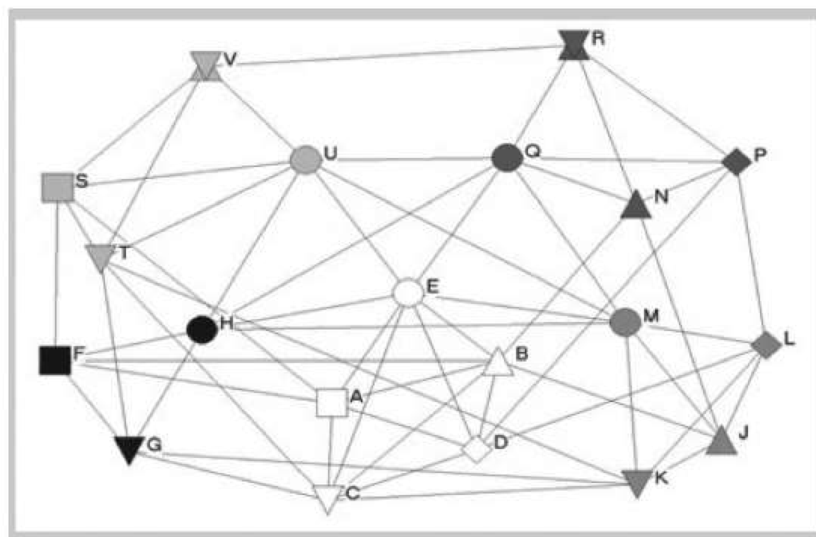

Figure 9.3 Connected Teams

Here are the same teams shown as a network. Shapes the same shade of gray are in the same geographical team, and the same shape are in the same functional team. This network emphasizes the interconnections between team members and highlights the opportunities for learning and distribution of knowledge.

Global Teams: Worth the Effort

In sum, diverse composition and dispersed configuration raises enormous barriers and opportunities for global teams. Team members are often motivated by this extra challenge, especially at the beginning of a team's life. Working with people in different locations adds variety and new perspectives, and many people find it inspiring to connect with people in other places. By connecting global teams with each other, a large organization can become more human and meaningful, while also learning from this broader configuration. Effective global team leaders can take advantage of momentum to get the team working well together and, using the findings discovered by research about global teams, can turn the challenges into opportunities for high performance.

Leading Global Teams: Advice to Leaders

We began this chapter by arguing that effective global leaders must be good both at being global team members and at leading global teams. Throughout this chapter we have identified the characteristics of effective global teams, and global leaders can use the ideas in the chapter as somewhat of a checklist:

- Is the leader paying attention to basic inputs, processes, and emergent states?
- Does the leader have a good understanding of the team's diversity (especially cultural) and dispersion, and the implications of both?
- Is the team overcoming barriers to communication and other processes, to capture the opportunities inherent in its composition and configuration?
- Are team members building cohesion and trust through experiences working together, whether face-to-face or virtual?
- Are the members leveraging the team as a connected team throughout the organization?

Every global team is different, and therein lies the importance of leadership (Curry, 2015). There are no hard and fast rules about global teams. All global teams should develop trust and respect, and the path for doing that in each team is different. All global teams should be innovative, but the focus of their innovation, the end-user, is different. All global teams must manage external stakeholder relationships, but all have different sets of stakeholders. And so on.

Global and multinational leaders are generally seen to be responsible for defining the goals and direction of the team, organizing and supporting the team in accomplishing their goals, and guiding the implementation of their goals (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2002). They must help the team adapt to the environmental constraints including globalization, the different local contexts, and usually a matrix organization (Tworoger, Ruppel, Gong, & Pohlman, 2013). Team leaders who communicate well can mitigate the negative effects of geographical differences, and research suggests that team leaders should communicate more regularly with their globally dispersed teams as well as create team norms that encourage communication among team members.

In global teams, the traditional leadership role tends to be distributed across more people than in traditional teams (Jonsen et al., 2012). In traditional teams, the "leader" tends to be the hierarchical head of the team, the meeting chairperson, the discussion facilitator, the decision-maker, the discipline enforcer, the direction-setter, and often other roles as well. Global teams are too complex and dynamic for one person to take on all of these roles. Experienced leaders of global teams either assign some of these roles to others or facilitate the emergence of multiple leadership roles within the team. This is yet another complexity for leaders of global teams, but as with diversity and distribution, it creates an opportunity for higher performance if well-managed.

This infinite variety of teams and the ambiguity of leadership roles prevent the checklist from being applied like a recipe. It is more like a field guide of which characteristics to pay attention to and which leadership tools might be most effective in different situations. The application is up to the leader, who must match the tools with the situation, including the combination of members, task, and external stakeholders. This implies that leaders of global teams must constantly observe and check the condition of the team, monitoring also its context (which includes cultural contextual awareness) and situation.

As emphasized elsewhere in this book, cultural competency is important to global team leadership. Studies have shown a positive relationship between multinational team performance and the degree of cross-cultural competency of their leader (Matveev & Nelson, 2004). For example, individuals who are high on cultural

intelligence, global identity, and openness to cultural diversity were found to emerge as global leaders on global student team projects (Lisak & Erez, 2015). One way of increasing cultural awareness is international experience: team leaders who have had international experience are likely to possess a higher level of cultural competence and empathy (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2011). A team leader's cultural intelligence has been shown to influence team members' perceptions of leader performance and team performance (Groves & Feyerherm, 2011). Naturally, leaders who can communicate better with their global followers will be better able to influence the motivation of their team members to exploit, explore, and transfer knowledge within the team.

Importantly, global teams are excellent arenas for developing global leadership skills (Maznevski & DiStefano, 2000). Just as all the global leadership competences and perspectives are important for leading global teams, so they can be developed through experience in global teams. Global leaders encourage meaningful engagement, capture knowledge, and disseminate it while the team is working (Caligiuri, 2015). High-performing global organizations assign emerging global leaders to global teams to support their learning journeys through stretch challenges, peer-level collaborations, and feedback and support (Caligiuri, 2015).

Like global leadership in general, leading global teams is a craft that combines the science of conditions and opportunities in teams—the checklist—with the art of applying the right processes at the right time. Leaders who are open to and careful about learning will develop the skills needed for this craft.