

Effective Organizational Consulting Across Cultural Boundaries: A Case Focusing on Leadership Styles and Team-Building

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Abstract

Today's globalized environment is strongly influenced by the issues and perspectives of cross-cultural endeavors. Therefore, consultants must often provide a special cross-cultural focus on their constituents' use of appropriate leadership styles to achieve effective results in the success of their organizational endeavors. Effective organizational consulting implies a mentoring and enhancement-based process by which consultants nurture and develop their clients in using appropriate means within their organizations, with a focus on team-building. A key element of this organizational-related process is the paradigm of leadership styles which, in turn, determines many different ways by which individuals behave, communicate, adjust and respond to their associates and others. Two primary dimensions of an individual's behavior—assertiveness and responsiveness—are foundations of their leadership style, and thereby form the two axes of the framework of the leadership styles paradigm, the four primary quadrants of which represent four styles—Analyzer, Achiever, Creator and Relater. Having identified these four basic leadership styles, this treatise then focuses on an organizational consultative case situation within which the strengths and weaknesses of each style are identified, primary behaviors that comes into focus due to high levels of stress are analyzed, and the all-important skill of style flex is described. It is not enough for a consultant just to understand and respond to a client's style; one must also seek to assist the client to adapt the skills of style flex to function in a beneficial situation congruent with the needs of the client(s) and the organization. These dimensions will be illustrated in association with the consulting case of GlobeTek, Inc. (a pseudonym), and two of its major operational



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Introduction

The attitudes, thoughts, feelings, words and actions of successful organizational consultants are like individual notes that work together in concert to help create “the footprints” that are left behind in the fulfillment of professional responsibilities. Their primary purpose (mission, dream) in fulfilling professional responsibilities as responsive and focused consultants is that to which they individually choose and agree, and to which they are aligned. Thus, one’s consulting endeavors are what a person creates them as, and no one else can create them or legitimately stand in judgment of them, without that person’s permission. The journey of helping to create organizational meaning and fulfillment in consulting endeavors will also be more successful if service to others is the focus. After all, one’s fundamental rewards in life (e.g., income, position, recognition, etc.) come from that which is first given—and for one to really win, others must also win. Implementing that as a primary purpose in life is paramount to enhancing one’s footprints on a journey of successful organizational consulting. The foundation of this treatise resides within the enhancement of meaningful consulting that occurs when one serves to effectively change the foundation of an organization by focusing on the client’s values, sense of a meaningful purpose, fundamental cultural styles of interactions, and commitment to successful leadership relationships and transformational team-building. This was achieved in the present case by the success of a consultant who helped to assist his clients in adapting a new perspective of a more positive relationship for their future team-based endeavors across cultural boundaries.

In today's world, cultural boundary crossings have so permeated the underpinnings of organizational operations that they cannot be escaped by one who is engaged in organizational consulting, with an influence in domestic as well as international arenas. In fact, the reality of globalized cultural influences is more than a business phenomenon—it has become a social, cultural and political factor in addition to economic (Friedman, 2005). That reality is represented in the foods that are eaten, music that is played, theatre performances that are attended, television programs that are watched, clothes that are worn, and virtually every other aspect of the human experience that continually crosses, in one way or another, cultural boundaries. Therefore, international consultants are often required to simultaneously interface with multiple clients within one firm who represent different cultural distinctions as firms expand business operations into various markets.

Concept of Leadership

The purpose of this article is to inter-relate leadership and national culture dimensions, and particularly to explore one aspect of the organizational consulting client-development process—application of the paradigm of leadership style balance and support, along with team development, within the parameters of transformational leadership. This will be done with the recognition that for the global-oriented firm of today that must be a primary competitive advantage accomplished with precision and expertise—and often a major responsibility of involved consulting endeavors (Day, 1999; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). Team development and the commensurate leadership styles within and among the members of a client organization are reflected by the manner in which individuals think, interact,

communicate and adjust to one another—thereby developing a supportive, mutually beneficial and interactive team that effectively builds and helps to facilitate the accomplishments of the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.

In this context, organizational consulting implies a mentoring and enhancement process whereby members of an operational team are nurtured and developed in important ways. Together, these result in an enhanced trust, respect and support of the overall organizational milieu, improved individual and collective performance behaviors that contribute to the achievement of organizational goals, commitment to work together within an organization, and individual and team-based motivation to perform at high levels (George & Jones, 2011). A key consultative element of this process is the paradigm of individual leadership styles represented in the team, because it is that paradigm that indelibly affects the many different ways by which the individuals involved deal with each other.

Globetek Case Study

The dimensions introduced above are illustrated through the actual case of GlobeTek, Inc. (a pseudonym). This analysis also includes observations from the authors' consulting experiences in other corporate venues. Relevant for this case illustration, Casimir and Keats (1996) studied the preferences for leadership styles of Anglo-Australian and Chinese-Australian managers and found that in a low-stress environment the Chinese respondents preferred a leader who showed concern for group relations. In a study by Tinsley and Pillutla (1998), U.S. respondents rated self-interest and joint problem-solving as more appropriate than their Hong Kong

counterparts. Further, in a study by Morris et al. (1998), Chinese managers preferred an avoiding style, with societal conservatism, and U.S. managers preferred a competing style of conflict, with self-enhancement (or individualism) mediating the effects of country on conflict style. Moreover, in a study of business students by Tinsley and Brett (2001), U.S. students were found to be more self-directed, less hierarchical, and less tradition-bound than Hong Kong students, and the U.S. students placed greater emphasis on discussing interests and synthesizing multiple interests than did Hong Kong students. As for matching national culture with management practices, a study of 176 work units of a U.S. based multinational firm in 18 European and Asian countries by Newman and Nollen (1996) found that when managers adapted practices to fit within a country's values, the units had a higher return on assets and sales. Add to these various studies, the consulting activities of the authors, and there is a very extensive array of reference-based studies applicable to these concepts.

Following its founding in 1992, GlobeTek (GT), located in Atlanta, Georgia quickly established itself as a major competitor in the global positioning system (GPS) markets of North America and Europe. Using this competitive strength as a major advantage, the firm made a decision to enter the Chinese market with relatively inexpensive GPS equipment, priced to appeal to first-time buyers in that country. Zhen Wang (a pseudonym), a Chinese native educated in Great Britain, was appointed to the position of Vice President for Chinese Operations. He was viewed as a very competent addition to the firm's international leadership team due, in large part, to his history of success as a sales manager for the company in Great Britain, technical expertise,

meaningful interactive personality, and responsiveness in working with associates. He enjoyed the introductory two-week leadership training program, led by Joann Emerson, President of GT, during which he and the other vice presidents focused on the responsibilities that were of primary importance to achieving the goals of GT in the various international markets in which the firm was operating or was planning to operate. Emerson had been promoted from Vice President for Product Development, and had served as President for two years. She was well-liked, but viewed as quite precise in her interactions with associates and members of her leadership team. About two months following the training program, and Wang's assumption of his vice presidential responsibilities and move to Beijing, Emerson began to realize that something was not quite right. The problem was not Wang's position itself—he seemed to enjoy the initial opening of the Chinese market, recruitment of personnel, and his many other responsibilities. In fact, as a successful sales manager in Great Britain, he had said that he often dreamed of some day returning to his native country and helping to open up that market for GT. He seemed to particularly enjoy his new opportunities to directly affect the growth and development of the organization. In fact, his perception of the position of Vice President for Chinese Operations was fine. However, Emerson felt that the communications and interactions between the two of them were not as effective as they needed to be, and Wang's follow-through on various operational issues was not as precise and timely as she would like—although they had remained friendly with one another during this initial period.

During the initial leadership training program, Wang had met with Emerson to discuss

development of the overall marketing plan for China. Soon after relocating to Beijing and opening GT's office there, he was to develop the plan and submit it to Emerson. In an effort to enhance and further develop her international leadership team, Emerson made a special visit to Beijing to, among other concerns, again discuss with Wang the details that were to be in the marketing plan: targeted prospective customers, product inventory investment and control, sales personnel needed, promotional support necessary, and various other issues. Emerson reminded Wang the plan needed to be developed as soon as possible because its implementation promised to be both difficult and time-consuming in a new market like China. Throughout their discussions, Wang listened very intently reflecting a great deal of interest and expectation, commented occasionally, and seemed to understand each aspect of the plan. That was a little over a month ago. On one occasion when Emerson recently pointed this out, Wang seemed somewhat upset and said he would contact her as soon as he completed the plan. At that point in the relationship, Emerson began to feel that the team-building in GT needed some special attention, and she and her colleagues were in need of an international consultant to join them in helping to bring the two of them together with a common understanding of what they needed to do to facilitate their success in the Chinese market operations, as well as to set an example for their other colleagues.

To help resolve this apparent interpersonal conflict with Wang, Emerson contacted a close associate, Donald Jenkins, partner in the internationally known consulting firm of Anderson, Madison and Jenkins, LLC. (all pseudonyms), specialists in team-building and organizational consulting. In their meeting together, Jenkins explained to Emerson

that social scientists might refer to the incident between her and Wang as a communication problem or difference in personality. Others might view it as a lack of sensitivity or understanding on the part of one or both individuals. However, following his meeting with Emerson and an introductory meeting with Wang, Jenkins concluded that the apparent conflict could probably best be viewed as a possible difference in interactive leadership styles. Jenkins noted that in a setting like this case, differences in styles can often cause frustration and resentment in cross-cultural organizations, adding to the cultural differences that already exist, and even leading to an individual's possible resignation and untimely departure (Shelton et al., 2002). For example, Jenkins mentioned that in a classic study of characteristics that make leaders successful, the inability to adapt to individuals with different styles was identified as a major contributor to failure in leadership interactions and team-building (McCall & Lombardo, 1983). Jenkins noted that leadership styles are very important determinants of the quality of interactions between leaders, and in the team-building leadership styles can play a very valuable role in facilitating positive organizational relationships.

Major Interactive Dimensions

Jenkins pointed out to Emerson and Wang that researchers generally agree that two interactive dimensions in human behavior—assertiveness and responsiveness—determine one's leadership style (Bolton & Bolton, 1984; Merrill & Reid, 1981). Assertiveness is the degree to which behaviors are seen by others as being nondirective or directive. Responsiveness is the degree to which behaviors are seen as emotionally controlled or emotionally expressive. Less assertive people generally refrain

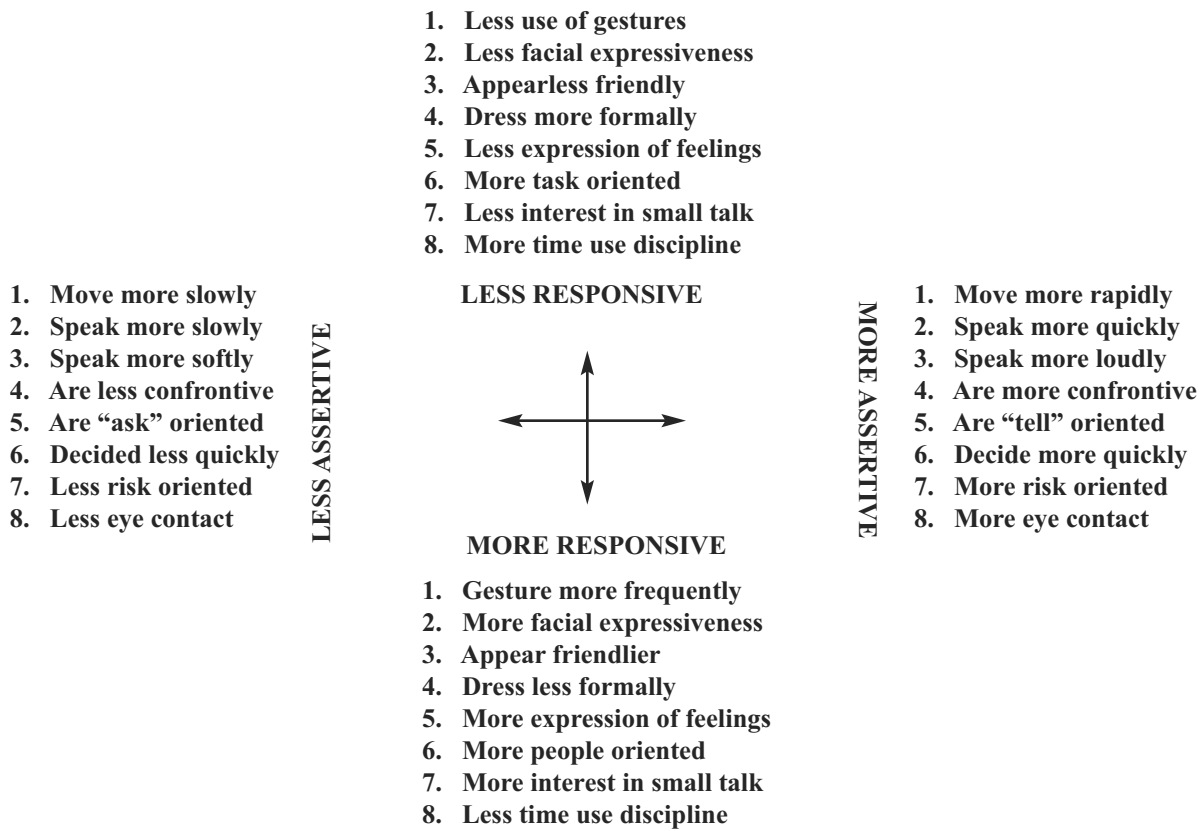


Figure 1. Examples of Major Interactive Dimensions in Leadership Style

from expressing opinions and taking control of situations, while more assertive individuals tend to be more active in these types of situations. Less responsive people are rather guarded in expressing their basic feelings, while more responsive individuals tend to react noticeably to their own emotions and to those of others. See Figure 1 for examples of assertive and responsive dimensions.

The determination of leadership style is based almost exclusively on observable data from human relationships. Mehrabian's (1971) classic book emphasized that the types of behaviors of individuals can be grouped together in clusters. For example, a highly assertive individual exhibits not just one assertive type of interaction, but a pattern of interrelated behaviors. A highly

responsive person does likewise with an interrelated group of responsive interactions. Thus, the foundation for leadership style rests on the clusters of behaviors that people exhibit in interactive situations in most arenas of life. The two dimensions (assertiveness and responsiveness) of leadership styles can also be linked with country-based cultural characteristics. For example, the major dimensions of culture include, among others, individualism versus collectivism, short-term orientation versus long-term orientation, and masculinity versus femininity. Individualistic-oriented behaviors prevalent in the U.S. and other Western societies have similarities with the more assertive and less responsive leadership style. Similarly, the collectivistic group-based behaviors that are

prevalent in China and other Asian countries share many characteristics with the less assertive and more responsive leadership style. Furthermore, a short-term orientation parallels with the U.S. and Western societies' more assertive and more responsive leadership style, and a longer time-based orientation coincides with the less assertiveness and less responsiveness prevalent in Chinese and other Asian cultures. Masculinity versus femininity may also be considered to correlate with the assertiveness and responsiveness of the leadership styles. However, in respect to this dimension the link is not as obvious, and Chinese and Americans have been found to be very close to each other in this regard, with the Chinese tending to be more masculine-oriented (Chen, 1995; Hofstede, 1980; Stiglitz, 2006).

Basic Leadership Styles

The basic interactive dimensions of assertiveness and responsiveness form the two axes of the leadership styles paradigm. Each quadrant of the paradigm represents one of the four leadership styles—Analyzer, Achiever, Creator or Relater (see Figure 2). Although no single leadership style necessarily works better than any other, situational variables often call for different leadership styles, and the research on team-building and leadership styles has led to the conclusion that flexibility—the ability to get along with individuals whose styles differ from one's own—frequently distinguishes success or lack of success in a leadership team situation (Meyerson, 2001). Jenkins' advice was that Emerson basically needed to adjust (flex) her leadership style to more effectively work with Wang; however, in working with the other members of her leadership team, she may need to adjust (flex) her style quite differently. A leadership style adjustment (flex) by Wang was also

necessary to effectively interact with Emerson and thereby facilitate appropriate team-building in the GT organization. To explain more precisely to Emerson and Wang, Jenkins chose to briefly characterize each of the four leadership styles.

A low level of assertiveness and low level of responsiveness is characteristic of the Analyzer leadership style. Analyzer types tend to take precise, deliberate and systematic approaches to their leadership responsibilities, and usually gather and evaluate a great deal of data before taking action. Analyzers are generally industrious, objective and well-organized, particularly in team-building endeavors, and are self-controlled and generally cautious leaders who prefer analysis over emotion. They also prefer clarity and order, often are viewed as being a bit formal, and tend to resist compromise in problem situations. Achiever type leaders blend a high level of assertiveness with a relatively low level of emotional responsiveness. Such leaders tend to be task-oriented, know where they want the organization to go and what they personally want to achieve in the process. They express themselves succinctly, and get to the point quickly in the communication milieu. Achievers are typically pragmatic, results-oriented and objective, usually quite independent, willing to take risks, and are valued for their ability to get things done. They are firm and forceful leaders, confident as well as competitive, decisive, and generally determined in interactive leadership team-building situations.

The Creator leadership style reflects generally high levels of both assertiveness and emotional responsiveness. Creator types tend to look at the big picture, often take fresh, novel and innovative approaches to leadership issues, and are willing to take risks in order to seize opportunities,

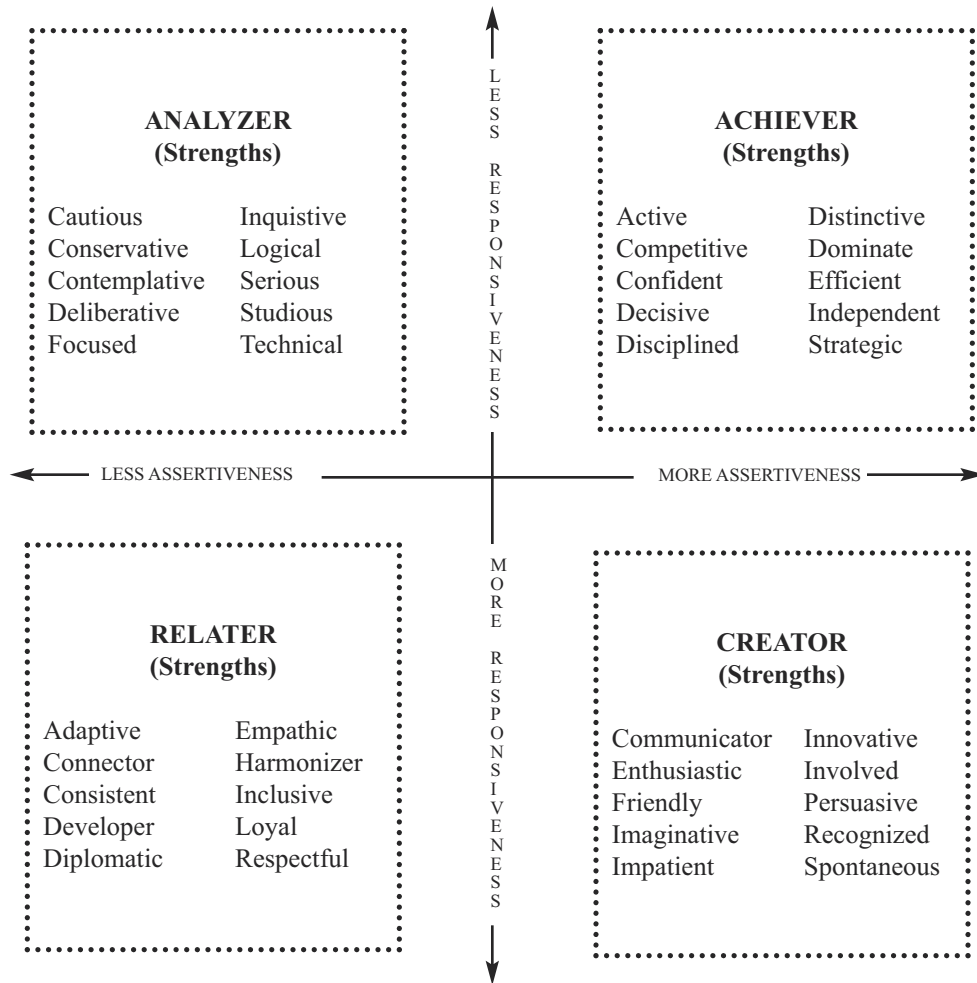


Figure 2. Interactive Dimensions and Characteristic Strength Tendencies of Leadership Styles

particularly in interactive leadership situations. A Creator’s ability to charm, persuade, excite and inspire people with visions of the future can be a strong motivating force. In leadership positions, these individuals are outgoing, optimistic and enthusiastic, and like to be at the center of things as they relate to organizational team-building. The Relater style combines a comparatively low level of assertiveness with a high degree of responsiveness. Leaders reflecting this style tend to be sympathetic to the needs of others and are quite sensitive to what lies below someone’s surface behavior. Of the various leadership styles, Relater types are most likely to use empathy and understanding in leadership problem-solving situations. In addition,

the Relater’s trust in others often brings out the best in their colleagues. Relaters are genial team members who like stability in interpersonal relationships more than risk, and who care greatly about relationships with others. They are likeable, occasionally somewhat timid and slow to change, and generally resist direct confrontational involvement.

Styles within Leadership Teams

In his organizational consulting responsibilities with Emerson and Wang, Jenkins also felt that he needed to provide some special focus on the importance of team-building as it related to

leadership styles and this particular situation with the GT organization. He therefore focused on the fact that effective leadership teams are typically made up of and value all four types of styles, and the most productive leadership team in a firm will usually have a balance of individuals who reflect each style. According to management consultant Peter Drucker (1973), management leadership tasks require at least four different kinds of human beings: the thought person, the action person, the front person, and the people person—thus the Analyzer, Achiever, Creator and Relater, as reflected in Figure 2. Drucker also suggested that finding the strengths of all four styles in one person is virtually impossible. However, it is very important to note that the composition of a group of individuals who together represent all of the styles will typically enable a leadership team to reflect the various strengths of all four styles in its decision-making.

Within the GT organization, President Joann Emerson reflects an Achiever leadership style, encompassing high levels of assertiveness and low levels of responsiveness. Such individuals readily reflect their emotions and tend to reach conclusions more quickly. They also quickly gather facts, ask questions and review data. However, they tend to be cautious about extending friendship and showing personal warmth. Achievers are often thought of as being more confrontational and competitive, goal-focused, and strategic-oriented persons—as individuals who are more interested in “getting things done” than necessarily considering issues in detail, more concerned with making decisions than with study and analysis and, because of this, may contribute to misunderstandings and stress in organizations. On the other hand, such individuals as Zhen Wang, who reflect the Relater style, typically encompass

low levels of assertiveness and relatively high levels of responsiveness. They are reluctant to take risks and to quickly seize opportunities, as well as make decisions and act quickly within leadership teams. Relaters are connector types and empathic-oriented people, and not accustomed to focusing on quick decision-making. Because Relaters are diplomatic, loyal and respectful, due to their low level of assertiveness and high level of responsiveness, they often generate very reserved but understandable levels of conservativeness within organizations and leadership teams. In this situation, Emerson needed to recognize that her leadership style existed in the opposite quadrant from that of Wang (see Figure 2), and quite different with regard to strengths and weaknesses. Wang should also have recognized this situation regarding the opposite aspects of his leadership style in comparison to Emerson.

Jenkins advised Emerson that, in reality, she should have identified Wang’s leadership style as a key aspect of his success as a development-related sales representative for GT, and should have been reminded of it at the time Wang was appointed as Vice President for Chinese Operations. Therefore, Emerson should not have been surprised at Wang’s delay in addressing a detail-oriented marketing plan for the firm’s operations in China. When Emerson did realize this basic difference in styles, however, she adjusted (flexed) from her own style to better interact with Wang, and thereby helped to fulfill her transformational leadership mentoring opportunity by means of greater charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. This also helped to improve his performance and nurture the interactive situation more effectively. This phenomenon can best be referred to as style flex. Wang may have noticed that things are going more

smoothly and that the apparent friction between Emerson and himself had subsided, but he may not have been aware of what Emerson is doing. He may even have functioned under the belief that Emerson had adjusted and become a more skilled leader in her various responsibilities, not just better at getting along and communicating effectively with him.

The responsibility for leadership, and its effectiveness in an organization, lies with all members of the team. The functional dynamics of a team are greatly affected by the styles of its members (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Kofodimos, 1991), and thereby impact effective leadership. Social scientists have developed new terms for the ability to successfully relate with other people, particularly within leadership teams. These terms are “social intelligence” and “emotional intelligence.” It has recently been concluded that one’s social intelligence or emotional intelligence may be just as important as one’s intelligence quotient (IQ) for being successful in leadership teams and organizational team development. In some cases, these different concepts of intelligence may be more important than IQ. Goleman (1998) discusses the importance of emotional intelligence in leading others. He defines emotional intelligence as managing one’s own feelings to enable colleagues to work together more effectively and successfully. An imperative to effectiveness in leadership team development is therefore the ability to manage one’s personal feelings in a manner that facilitates achievement of the organization’s goals while, at the same time, minimizing interpersonal conflict among those individuals involved in the leadership team (Meyerson, 2001).

Strength and Weakness Tendencies of Styles

Each leadership style’s strength tendencies are summarized in Figure 2. In addition to strengths, however, each style also has characteristic weakness tendencies, primarily because a given leadership style tends to be less developed in the areas in which other styles are more developed. Normally, an individual lacks the strengths of the style diagonally across the grid from his or her own style (see Figure 2), as was true in the case involving Joann Emerson and Zhen Wang. For example, contagious enthusiasm, a strength tendency of the Creator, is rarely an asset of an Analyzer. Consistency is one of the Relater’s greatest strength tendencies, but one of the Achiever’s weak points. Likewise, the decisiveness of an Achiever is typically lacking in a Relater, just as the deliberativeness of the Analyzer is seldom as well-developed in a Creator.

Successful leaders capitalize on their strengths and develop strategies for minimizing possible damage from their weaknesses (Drucker, 1999, 1973). One way to minimize or offset their weaknesses, as noted by Jenkins, is to ensure that a leadership team is selected and thereby composed of individuals whose dominant styles represent the entire leadership style grid. There must also be a willingness on the part of all members of a leadership team to work together for the benefit of the team and organization as a total entity and interactive system. An understanding of the leadership styles paradigm on the part of all those involved assists greatly with this interaction and facilitates a greater appreciation of the diversity within a successful leadership team among all of those involved. Jenkins also noted that for each of the four leadership styles, there are 10

characteristic strengths shown, but any one individual will seldom possess all ten strengths equally—more typical will be a dominant importance of four or five of the strengths (Buckingham, 2007).

In addition, for each leadership style reflected in Figure 2, Jenkins hastened to say that the strengths noted are characteristic strengths. These characteristic strengths should be more appropriately referred to as strength tendencies, which become genuine basic strengths when they are recognized, nurtured and developed by the individual possessing them (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). The more effective and successful leadership teams not only accommodate the fact that members of the team are different, particularly in terms of style, but those teams capitalize on the strengths within styles as well as differences in styles. Significantly effective and successful leadership teams also typically recognize two basic strength fundamentals in each of their members: Each individual's characteristic strengths are enduring and unique; and each individual's most important room for growth and development is in the areas of his or her greatest characteristic strengths.

Jenkins further shared with Emerson and Wang that rather than focusing on recognizing and seeking to improve on weaknesses, as is typically advocated in the popular press, leaders will achieve more success by focusing on the improvement of their leadership style strengths—thus converting them from characteristic strength tendencies to increasingly more basic strengths (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

Successful leaders do not ignore their weaknesses—rather they do something much more

effective. They find ways to manage around their weaknesses, and thereby develop their capabilities—for example, by means of style flex (noted later). Thus, to enhance their own development and improve their abilities and talents to lead, they capitalize on the strengths of their leadership styles, whatever they may be, and manage around weaknesses, whatever they may be. Over time the general portrait of one's leadership style remains relatively constant. Although leaders do change and adapt to a degree, and personalities do adjust somewhat, research indicates that one's leadership style is relatively stable throughout life, and strengths remain (Rath, 2007).

Primary High Stress-Based Behaviors

In his consultative meetings with Emerson and Wang, Jenkins also cautioned them to be sensitive to the possibility of excessive stress emerging into their team-based relationships involving interactions and communications. He noted that high levels of stress within the dynamics of a leadership team often bring into focus high stress-based behaviors of team members. An individual's primary stress-based behavior is a predictable yet unconscious shift to more extreme, rigid and non-negotiable conditions. These styles are usually counter-productive for the individuals using them, and are very trying on the interpersonal relationships within a leadership team. Therefore, these behaviors serve as major contributors to interpersonal conflict in leadership teams and in organizational dynamics. These conditions offer a way of focusing on personal needs and relieving tensions caused by high stress. At the same time, these conditions tend to increase the stress levels of other members of a leadership team.

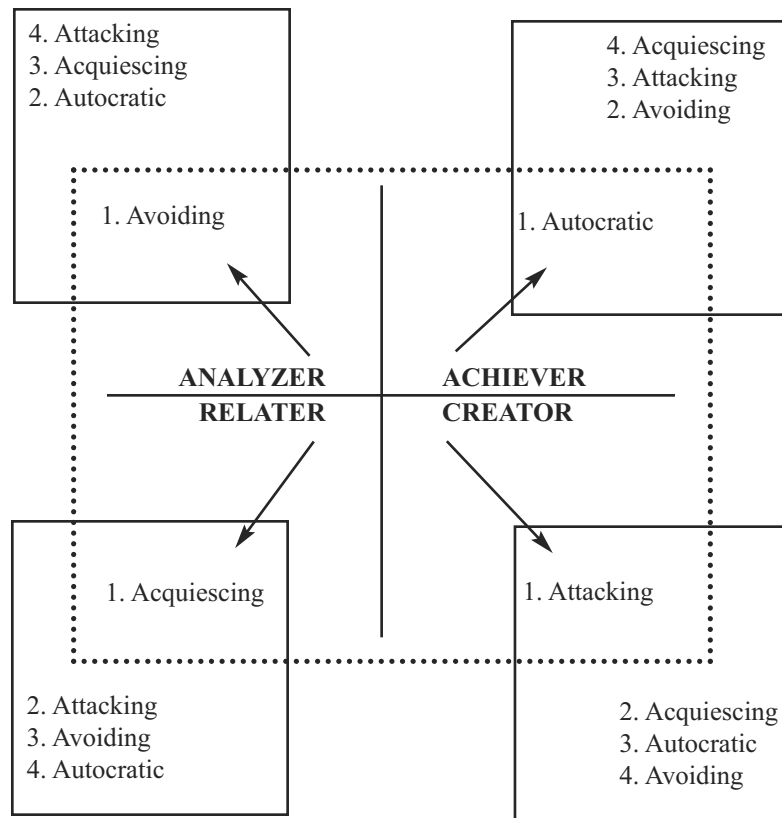


Figure 3. Primary and Sequential High Stress-Based Leadership Behaviors

These behaviors are not the only ways to relieve stress, but they require little initial effort and often provide quick relief. Seldom can a person avoid moving into this condition in response to high levels of stress, but once within it, actions can be taken to recognize what has happened and the appropriate corrective actions that should be taken. As shown in Figure 3, leaders under high stress tend to move further out on the assertiveness and responsiveness scales. Behaviors characteristic of their dominant leadership style become exaggerated, transforming their strengths into weaknesses. The tendency toward the initial acquiescing backup style of Wang (see Figure 3 for example) reflected the stress generated in the interaction regarding the new marketing plan for the Chinese market. Emerson must exercise

caution that she does not respond to Wang with an autocratic or unnecessarily assertive response, thereby creating a non-productive cycle of stress and countervailing stress, and failure to bring a reasonable closure to the important responsibility of appropriate planning for the new market.

These leadership behavior characteristics are, in essence, not leadership styles at all, but merely temporary behaviors in response to high levels of stress and therefore they are not conducive to leadership team-building in an organization. Therefore, if Emerson is to fulfill her leadership role in team-building at GT, she must address this interactive conflict with skill and with a transformational commitment that will facilitate an appropriate resolution and team-building outcome. High stress-based behavior is often a response

more to pressures inside the person than to the interpersonal situation. In a primary stress mode, an individual typically takes a non-negotiable stance toward the interaction. Regardless of the needs of the other parties, the demands of the situation, or other factors, the person involved tends to interact in a single characteristic way and no other.

The shift to primary stress-based behaviors usually occurs without conscious choice, thought or premeditation. However, once an individual senses that a shift has occurred to that condition, a change back to his/her normal leadership style will typically emerge. Further, stress-based behaviors are predictable; that is, persons of the same leadership style typically employ the same characteristic behaviors in response to stressful situations. Stress-based behaviors are therefore counterproductive and usually create interactive and communication blockages. Extreme, rigid or non-negotiable conditions undermine motivation and tend to raise other people's stress conditions and levels of misunderstanding, thereby reducing their productivity. Usually, after an individual has moved into his or her primary stress-based behavior, tensions within the individual are reduced or actions are taken by that person to directly address the tensions, and thereby typically returns to his or her normal leadership style. However, if tension continues to build in a given situation, the individual may move into a second stress-based type behavior, and perhaps even a third or fourth behavior type, as noted in Figure 3.

Importance of Style Flex

Jenkins advised Emerson and Wang that the use of style flex is an extremely important tool for effectiveness in facilitating leadership team-

building across cultural boundaries; and very important regarding this interaction between the two of them. Jenkins emphasized that the concept of leadership style and a consideration of its elements are very useful in helping to understand ones' self and the interactive styles of others. However, it is not enough just to understand ones' leadership style or the style of others in the leadership team; one must often seek to adapt the skills of style flex that can enable the parties to function in a comfort zone congruent with the situation. Style flex provides a way of interacting and communicating in ways that create more positive thought patterns within the leadership team (Hawkins, 2002), and this perspective is very important to successful organizational leadership and consequent team-building. In essence, style flex is a foundation to the process of influencing more effectively in a leadership team.

There were a number of alternative actions (style flex possibilities) available to Emerson that she could have used in order to facilitate successful interaction and communication with Wang. These included flexing from her own style, increasing or decreasing assertiveness, increasing or decreasing responsiveness, or flexing to the specific leadership style of Wang. All of these different flexing techniques have validity when used appropriately. Identifying and using the interactive dimensions that individuals have in common (see Figure 1) is also a very important type of successful style flex. However, due to the opposing differences in leadership styles between Emerson and Wang (Achiever versus Relater), Jenkins advised that this was not a viable alternative in this particular case. It is often helpful to think of style flex not simply as flexing toward another person's style, but as flexing away from one's own style (see Figure 4). Each style tends to have at least one major weakness,

If an Analyzer, DECIDE

A slow, systematic fact-gathering process and cautious decision-making can create stress in others. When flexing, make a real effort to decide. Don't let fact-gathering and review of various alternatives be a hindrance to the progress of others.

If an Achiever, LISTEN

A fast-paced, active goal-oriented approach can cause stress in others. When flexing, make a real effort to listen to others. Try to clearly understand their ideas and suggestions. Equally important, listen until the nature and strength of their

If a Relater, STRETCH

A slower-paced, people-oriented, cooperative, low risk approach to issues can create stress in others. When flexing, be sure to stretch. Demonstrate self-direction. Set and strive to achieve attainable stretch goals. Don't dodge the issues, in

If a Creator, RESTRAIN

A general tendency toward quick, impulsive decisions and actions can cause stress in others. A high energy level and verbal fluency may intimidate others. When flexing, be sure to restrain impulsiveness. Also, restrain talkativeness, and when oth-

Figure 4. Flexing from a Particular Leadership Style

and an awareness of this weakness may enable an individual to adjust away from his or her dominant leadership style (Bolton & Bolton, 1984). For example, Analyzers should make appropriate decisions and act with reasonable haste and deliberation; Achievers, concentrate on listening carefully to others and understanding them; Creators, restrain their impulsiveness and desire to be talkative and persuasive; and Relaters, stretch and reach toward challenging goals and demonstrate their commitment to self-determination and a results orientation.

Increasing or decreasing assertiveness may be an appropriate style flex technique to facilitate successful leadership interaction. For example, when an Analyzer or Relater temporarily flexes his or her style toward the comfort zone of an Achiever or a Creator, assertiveness should be increased. Likewise, when an Achiever or a Creator temporarily flexes his or her style toward the comfort zone of an Analyzer or a Relater,

assertiveness should be decreased accordingly. Increasing or decreasing responsiveness may also be an appropriate manner in which to flex one's style. For example, when an Analyzer or Achiever temporarily flexes his or her style toward the comfort zone of a Creator or Relater, responsiveness should be increased. Likewise, when a Creator or Relater temporarily flexes his or her style toward the comfort zone of an Analyzer or Achiever, responsiveness should be decreased. Essentially, this style flex technique involves adding or subtracting a few key behaviors to increase or decrease assertiveness or responsiveness. Table 1 lists preferences of each style as well as guidelines for flexing toward the style of another person.

In reality, style flex is a very valuable technique for use in consulting and team-building across the cultural boundaries in an organization. Style flex basically involves sensing another person's leadership style and preferred ways of relating and

Table 1. Flexing to Different Leadership Styles.

Flexing to Analyzers	Flexing to Achievers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time. • Be moderately paced; lean back somewhat; avoid loud voice. • It is better to be more rather than less formal in clothing, speech and manners. • Get to business quickly; be prepared, systematic, factual, logical and exact. • List the pros and cons of proposal and alternatives. • Show why approach is best and has relatively little risk. Don't exaggerate the advantages. • When possible, allow to proceed deliberately, even slowly. • When too indecisive, encourage a decision. • Follow up in writing. • See that milestone dates are in action plan; and set up progress reports. • Be relaxed and moderately paced; have a comfortable posture; speak softly and avoid harshness in voice. • Invite conversation; draw out opinions. Listen reflectively; don't judge ideas, counter them with logic or manipulate. • Communicate patiently; encourage expression of doubts, fears or misgivings. Facilitate decision-making without excessive pressure. • Mutually agree on goals; negotiate action plans with completion dates; offer cooperative support where desirable; be sure to follow through on responsibilities. • Offer assurance that decisions will have minimum risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time. • Be energetic and fast paced; have erect posture and direct eye contact. • Get to business quickly. Use time efficiently. • Be specific, clear and brief. Don't over explain, ramble or be disorganized. • From the beginning to the end, focus on results. • Select the key facts, and use them when making a case. Present facts logically and quickly. • Provide a limited number of options in order of importance. • Stay on topic; keep the pace up; and honor time limits. • If at all appropriate, ask directly for a decision. • Depart quickly but graciously. • Be energetic and fast paced; and have direct eye contact. • Allow time for socializing. Talk about experiences, opinions and people. To a degree, reflect a joyful-type behavior. • Creators like arguments-to-a-point. Avoid becoming too dogmatic. • Discover dreams and intuitions. • In support of ideas, use testimonials from people seen as prominent. • Keep a balance between flowing with the creator and getting back on track. • Focus first on the "big picture." • Follow up with action plans and details. • Ensure that action plans are made and followed, and that details are taken care of.

communicating, modifying one's style to achieve congruence with some of those preferred ways of interacting, carefully monitoring the interaction, and then evaluating and responding to the feedback one receives from the other individual. If two individuals share the same leadership style, it may require a flexing from the strengths of their style (see Figure 2) because leaders functioning within the same style will often encounter greater conflict between themselves than with leaders functioning from different styles. This is so because individuals with the same leadership style, in many cases, unconsciously participate in similar interactive games based on the characteristic similarities of styles (Birkman, 1995). In style flexing, Jenkins counseled Emerson and Wang that it must be based on respect, fairness and honesty in leadership situations.

One's ability to flex leadership style at crucial times will help to contribute to effective and compatible relations in a leadership team, as well as lead to increased productivity and satisfaction among the individuals involved in the team. In essence, Emerson made a genuine effort to restrain her presidential inclination to actively require action on the part of Wang, thereby implementing a flexing mode in the direction of her colleague's leadership style. Emerson also took additional actions to assist Wang in carefully discussing, analyzing and understanding the importance of a new marketing plan for the Chinese market, a strategy that eventually facilitated his commitment and action to the expeditious development and implementation of the plan. She also arranged a meeting and additional time to discuss the financial implications of the plan and the objectives to be achieved by implementing the plan. That marketing plan subsequently proved quite successful for GT in the Chinese market, and enabled the firm to gain a

significant competitive advantage and commensurate market share within a relatively short period of time. With committed mentoring by Joann Emerson, Zhen Wang also became one of GT's very successful vice presidents.

Transformational Consulting

Meaningful transformational consulting occurs when the consultant involved serves to effectively change the status quo of an organization by focusing on a client's values and sense of higher purpose. Jenkins helped to achieve this paradigm adjustment by assisting Emerson and Wang in adapting a new transformational perspective focusing on a more positive relationship for their future team-based endeavors, thereby enhancing GT in its cross-cultural Chinese operations. In order to accomplish this, Jenkins' interactions with Emerson and Wang in his consulting endeavors had to be conscious of the importance of the leadership values of trust, commitment and caring as a critical part of the endeavors—trust in doing what is right, commitment in doing the best possible, and caring in treating others as they would like to be treated. Jenkins' transformational success was achieved by his ability to energize and excite both of his clients in this endeavor, to bring a focus to the extreme importance of their effective incorporation of awareness, to understand and apply the concept of leadership styles in their team-building endeavors, and to enhance their footprints within GT. It is very important to note that Donald Jenkins' success in this consulting endeavor was also influenced by his ability to articulate a compelling vision of the future brought about by the organizational perspective founded upon a more meaningful and supportive relationship within the leadership team of the GT organization. The firm has continued to grow and develop, and

successfully position itself in the vast Chinese market.

Summary and Conclusions

In the present contemporary world order heavily influenced by the forces of globalization, organizations must increasingly be involved in effective cross-cultural leadership team-development. A focus on leadership style can be very important in this development. The paradigm of leadership styles herein described and analyzed is developed on the basis of two major interactive dimensions—assertiveness and responsiveness. On the basis of those dimensions, the paradigm focuses on four primary leadership styles—Analyzer, Achiever, Creator and Relater. Use of this paradigm enables leaders to have a point of reference whereby improved interactional behavior can be achieved, communications enhanced, leadership behavior that occurs due to high levels of stress dealt with, and effective style flex implemented as an important tool in leadership dynamics.

The leadership styles paradigm can therefore be a very important reference point in the process of organizational consulting and team-building across cultural boundaries. To incorporate leadership style awareness in team-building, the idea is neither to change one's basic leadership style nor to imitate another person's style. The best and perhaps most productive interpersonal relationships and communications occur when two styles become complementary, with each individual's strengths compensating for the weaknesses of the other. In the case of GlobeTek, Inc., the consultancy of Donald Jenkins helped to resolve the interactional cross cultural issue that existed between President Joann Emerson and

Zhen Wang, the firm's new Vice President for Chinese Operations. As Emerson learned from Jenkins how to understand and be more sensitive to the leadership style of her vice president, she began to use Wang's strengths to help make their interpersonal interactions and communications more effective with fewer misunderstandings. A Chinese marketing plan was developed and the firm subsequently achieved a very strong market position in that cross-cultural setting.

The paradigm of leadership styles can be a valuable tool for the further research and understanding of the process of organizational consulting and team-building across cultural boundaries. An interesting view and contribution of this article is the way that the leadership styles and cultural dimensions can often be linked. This does not suggest that a more assertive leadership style would be prevalent with all Asian leaders and that Americans would always be less assertive. Neither does it suggest that the responsive style dimension can always be attributed to a particular cultural setting. However, it does suggest that when the leadership styles and the cultural values do coincide, the careful and skillful orientation to the importance of leadership styles can become paramount for success.

The strengths and weaknesses of the various leadership styles, successes achieved through an improved understanding of those strengths and weaknesses within organizational settings, procedures used by leadership teams in dealing with high stress-based behaviors, and techniques developed and implemented in facilitating style flex provide valuable bases for further research on effective transformational consulting. Comments and suggestions of other consultants, scholars and practitioners who have an interest in pursuing further the ideas regarding organizational development, and the paradigms of team-

development and the leadership styles herein described as foundations for organizational development across cultural boundaries, are welcomed by the authors.

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