

Leading Global Innovation

Early Praise for Leading Global Innovation

“Karina Jensen has managed not only to give an up-to-date overview of the crucial aspects of the innovation process, but she has also given quite some attention to the multicultural environment as an incubator for innovation. A must-read for those interested in how diversity and inclusion can help your organization become more innovative.”

—Fons Trompenaars, Author of best-selling *Riding the Whirlwind: How to Create a Culture of Innovation*

“Based on case studies of multinationals, this book provides practical insights on driving innovation in a culturally diverse global environment. Timely book for trying times.”

—Vijay Govindarajan Coxe Distinguished Professor, *Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth and Marvin Bower Fellow, Harvard Business School*

“A thoroughly researched and insightful exposé of the challenges and means to drive a successful global innovation culture, agenda, and in-market success. Well done!!”

—Bryan Semkuley, Vice President, *Global Innovation, Kimberly-Clark Professional*

“A fascinating and welcome look at the merger of multicultural understanding and global innovation. Based on extensive research, this book captures the challenges and solutions for facilitating multicultural collaboration in the crucial realm of innovation.”

—Joyce Osland, Lucas Endowed Professor of Global Leadership and Executive Director, *Global Leadership Advancement Center, San Jose State University*

“In our global economy, one of the key success factors in sustaining global innovation requires organizations to provide a creative space and open environment that supports multicultural team collaboration. Karina Jensen’s book provides a framework and guideline supporting organizational goals and ambitions.”

—Sheryl Chamberlain, Vice President, *Group Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, Capgemini*

“If you are looking to transform your firm to become a truly global innovator this book is a must-read. The insights are extremely practical and useful and will help any organization looking to innovate.”

—Brian Lawley, *CEO and Founder, 280 Group*

“Innovation in the 21st century is being played out across an increasingly wide geographical stage. This book offers an excellent lens through which to explore some of these shifts and in particular helps us understand some of the strategic management challenges involved.”

—John Bessant, Chair and Professor of *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*,
University of Exeter

Karina R. Jensen

Leading Global Innovation

Facilitating Multicultural Collaboration
and International Market Success

palgrave
macmillan

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Paris, France

ISBN 978-3-319-53504-3
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-53505-0

ISBN 978-3-319-53505-0 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017943379

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Cover illustration: artvea/ DigitalVision Vectors/Getty

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To my parents
for inspiring me to see the world*

Preface

Enjoy the Multicultural Learning Journey

Traveling around the world, from Paris to Kathmandu to Bangalore to San Francisco, it has been interesting to witness the collaborative needs from very poor to wealthy communities who need to connect with a global network, solving problems as diverse as education access and professional development to customer solutions and international market strategies.

Living in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world provides the opportunity to learn and benefit from a wealth of culturally diverse perspectives and practices. Yet this potential is not fully optimized within our communities and organizations. The challenges of time, trust, distance, and communication contribute to failed collaborations. The outcome? A lack of innovation, efficiency, performance, and results.

A global and dynamic business environment is quickly evolving with changing needs where innovation is a constant. Leaders are facing the challenges of navigating a multicultural and digitally connected work environment where collaboration is the norm. The acceleration of competition from diverse international markets requires a responsive organization. New innovations demand consideration of their cultural and local fit for consumers in mature and emerging markets. The outcome is an increased focus on multicultural collaboration in order to ensure organizational performance and international market success.

This book argues that multicultural collaboration is central to global innovation through the integration of new ideas and diverse perspectives from around the world. The focus therefore becomes how to optimize multicultural collaboration and knowledge-sharing for global innovation success. Culturally diverse views and knowledge bring valuable insights to

local challenges and opportunities that are critical to the creation of international solutions. It's important to link local voices to global actions in order to create solutions that truly speak to the culturally diverse markets that are served by organizations worldwide. This requires new competencies for leaders who will need to serve as facilitators and orchestrators of multicultural innovation and collaboration.

Then how do we create leaders, teams, and organizations capable of collaborating in an increasingly multicultural and networked environment? It is a question that has served as great fascination throughout my career, from Stockholm to San Francisco to Paris, as I gained cross-cultural perspectives in my international marketing and sales roles. These were years of great insight and rich in experience where I had the opportunity to work for multinational firms in launching new products and services to international markets in Asia-Pacific, Europe-Middle East-Africa, North and South America. This led to the creation of a consulting firm, Global Minds Network, focused on global innovation and collaboration solutions. My corporate and consulting experiences with multinational high-tech firms in Silicon Valley provided me with an up-close view of recurrent issues: the challenges of cross-cultural team collaboration when creating and delivering new concepts to markets around the world.

This global innovation challenge turned into an idea for a PhD thesis in order to provide the time and opportunity to fully investigate key issues and ultimately discover new solutions. And so, I packed my bags and left the fast-paced and entrepreneurial high-tech region of the San Francisco Bay Area for a PhD program in the cultural and creative city of Paris. The one-year work sabbatical transformed into a four-year learning journey and world tour in order to find the answer to the research question: How can multinational firms facilitate cross-cultural team collaboration in order to accelerate global innovation management capabilities?

The learning adventure and research project employed empirical qualitative research through on-site meetings and phone interviews with leaders at 40 multinational firms in 14+ countries who were leading and facilitating global innovation and launch projects involving cross-cultural teams while based in Asia, Europe, and North America. At the end of the PhD journey in 2012, a framework for global collaboration emerged thanks to new discoveries and findings. Since then, new frameworks and models have evolved with an extended global study as well as a regional study in Asia from 2012–15.

Today in my work as a consultant, researcher, and educator, I enjoy the opportunity to explore new challenges and solutions for leading global innovation, facilitating change, and collaborating with cross-cultural teams.

The learning journey continues and the quest has become the creation of multicultural innovation and collaboration models and practices that improve organizational performance and international market success for leaders, teams, and organizations.

In this book, you will discover the Multicultural Innovation Framework and its key collaboration drivers – Vision, Dialogue, and Space. It takes a holistic view that examines the role of leadership in facilitating global collaboration and innovation success. For each section, you will find highlights including critical discoveries and practices from the studies, as well as recent case examples from multinational firms. A visual model is presented at the start of each section to guide you on this international learning journey, inviting you to explore and discover the keys to leading multicultural innovation and collaboration.

Bon voyage
Karina R. Jensen

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my thanks and great appreciation to the numerous leaders and study participants whose generous time, insights, and collective wisdom have created the road map for my research on multicultural innovation and collaboration.

A special thank you goes to my key contributors for providing valuable insights and authoring some of the case studies featured in this book: Hans-Juergen August, Vice President of Innovation and Quality Management at Siemens Convergence Creators, who provided a valuable case on effective global innovation and collaboration practices; Thomas Arend for an insightful account of his impressive international roles at Google, Airbnb, Twitter, and beyond; Balamurugan Kannan, General Manager of BFSI Global Delivery and Saksham Khandelwal, Member of Thought Leadership Charter at Wipro for a truly innovative case for global and local collaboration practices; and Kurt Ward, Senior Design Director of Philips for sharing leading practices in co-creation and design thinking.

A grand merci to my academic colleagues who offered support and advice for this book project: Nigel Holden, Dana Minbaeva, Fiona Moore, Jean-Paul Lemaire, and Dominique Xardel. Thank you to my colleagues at NEOMA Business School for your support of this book project: Chris Worley, Annabel-Mauve Adjognon, Svetlana Serdyukov, and Lisa Thomas. My sincere appreciation to Bryan Semkuley, Hans-Juergen August, Adam Travis, Clynton Taylor, Sheryl Chamberlain, Fons Trompenaars, Joyce Osland, and Brian Lawley for your invaluable feedback in reviewing this book.

I would also like to thank Liz Barlow at Palgrave Macmillan for your great interest and support in making this book project a reality. An extended thank

you to Lucy Kidwell, the editorial, design, and production teams at Palgrave Macmillan, for skillfully managing the execution process.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to my family and good friends who offered endless support and encouragement during this journey.

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