

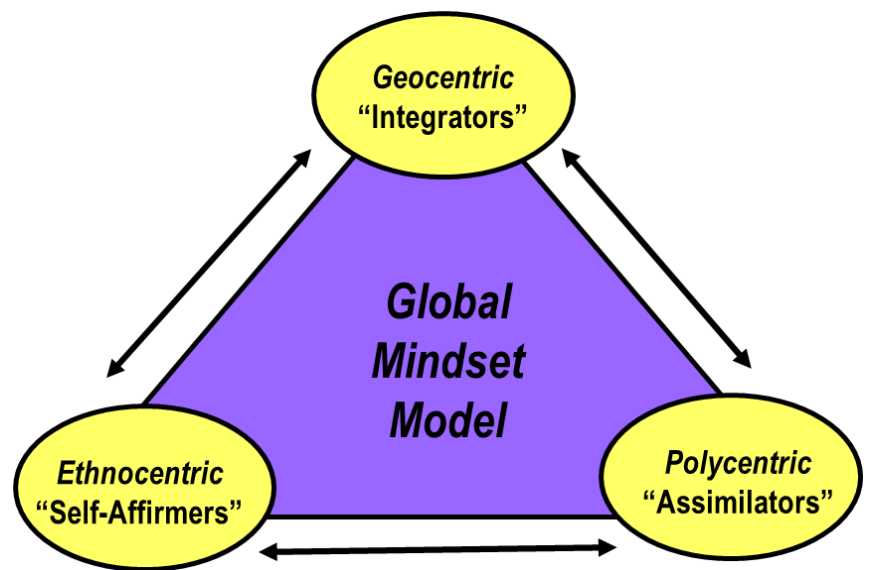




ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP: UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL MINDSET

| KAREN BEAMAN

Considerable
previous work

has shown that international success is highly dependent on “Global Mindset,” that is, an individual’s orientation and perspective of the international experience (Guy & Beaman 2003, 2004). I have long been an advocate of the three-way typology of Global Mindset of Daniel Sullivan and David Perlmutter, distinguishing ethnocentric, polycentric, and geocentric orientations. Each of these individual mindsets is best suited for different types of assignments:



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Ethnocentric Mindsets take the home country as the basis for beliefs and evaluations, holding that one's own culture and values are intrinsically superior to those of others, to the point even of assuming national superiority. It can be characterized by the expression: “the sun never sets on the British empire.” This type of mindset is effective when there is a need to standardize operations around the world or to protect the company’s intellectual property.
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Polycentric Mindsets are ones that adapt well to cultural differences and are effective at bridging the gap between home and host culture and company objectives. The

polycentric mindset entails accommodation or assimilation with the foreign culture, sometimes even to the extent of “going native”. It can be characterized by the expression: “when in Rome do as the Romans.” This type of mindset is appropriate when there is a need for intense focus on the local market or regulatory situation.

🌐 **Geocentric Mindsets** are ones that seek universals and commonalities across cultures and are effective at tying diverse groups together toward a common goal. A geocentric orientation implicitly assumes that a universal set of values govern human interaction, downplaying the importance of cultural differences. This mentality can best be summed up by the famous words of John Lennon, “Imagine all the people sharing all the world.” This type of mindset is appropriate for individuals who work at a global level, responsible for integrating the ideas and practices of different businesses and functions into a unified approach.

With respect to international work experiences, much research has claimed that individual’s global mindset is directly related to the individual’s effectiveness depending on the nature of the job. In his view, ethnocentric individuals tend to excel in environments that call for significant standardization of methodology or technology, while polycentric individuals thrive in situations that require considerable sensitivity to local conditions, and geocentric individuals excel in positions that require identifying commonalities, integrating different approaches, and standardizing processes. Hence, the role or job the individual is to perform is vital in determining the type of individual needed for any particular the assignment. 🌐

About the Author: *Karen Beaman is Senior Global Advisor, Chief Executive Officer, and the Founder of Jeitosa Group International. She has 25 years of experience in human resources from building strategies, designing systems, and deploying technology for both global and domestic organizations. She can be reached at karen.beaman@jeitosa.com.*