



ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP

ISSUE 15

The 2010-2011 Going Global Survey – Part 1

| KAREN BEAMAN

For the next five editions of the Enlightened Leadership column of *HRinsights*, I will review key findings of Jeitosa's Going Global Survey 2010-2011. This first article provides some background of the survey and discusses the top challenges for global HR professionals today. I will be discussing the full results of the survey in a webinar hosted by Patersons on March 17th. Information and registration links can be found at the end of this article.

Survey Background

Between August and October 2010, 122 organizations responded to Jeitosa's Going Global Survey. Survey participants were solicited from IHRIM's membership community and via Jeitosa's transnational network, spanning over 50 countries. Organizations from a wide range of industries and a large distribution of employee population sizes participated. The majority of respondents (65%) come from organizations between 1,000 and 50,000 employees. Fifty-five percent of respondents are in the human resource information systems (HRIS) field and 24% are from human resources. Respondents are primarily mid-level management (managers and directors (53%), and 8% are executives at the vice president level. Over three-quarters (78%) of responding organizations have their headquarters based in North America, 12% in Europe, and 10% in other parts of the world. The global reach of the organizations in the survey ranges from three countries to 87 countries. The demographics show a fairly even split among organizations operating in three or few countries (34%) to organizations in three to 20 countries (30%) and organizations with operations in more than 20 countries (36%).

Global Challenges and Successes

Survey participants were asked to rank their top five challenges in going global with HR. As in prior years, the top challenge for global organizations continues to be dealing with cultural differences. Forty-five percent of respondents cite this as their top challenge, followed by time zone differences (41%), lack of global leadership, global resources, and global technology and systems (the latter all at 34% each).

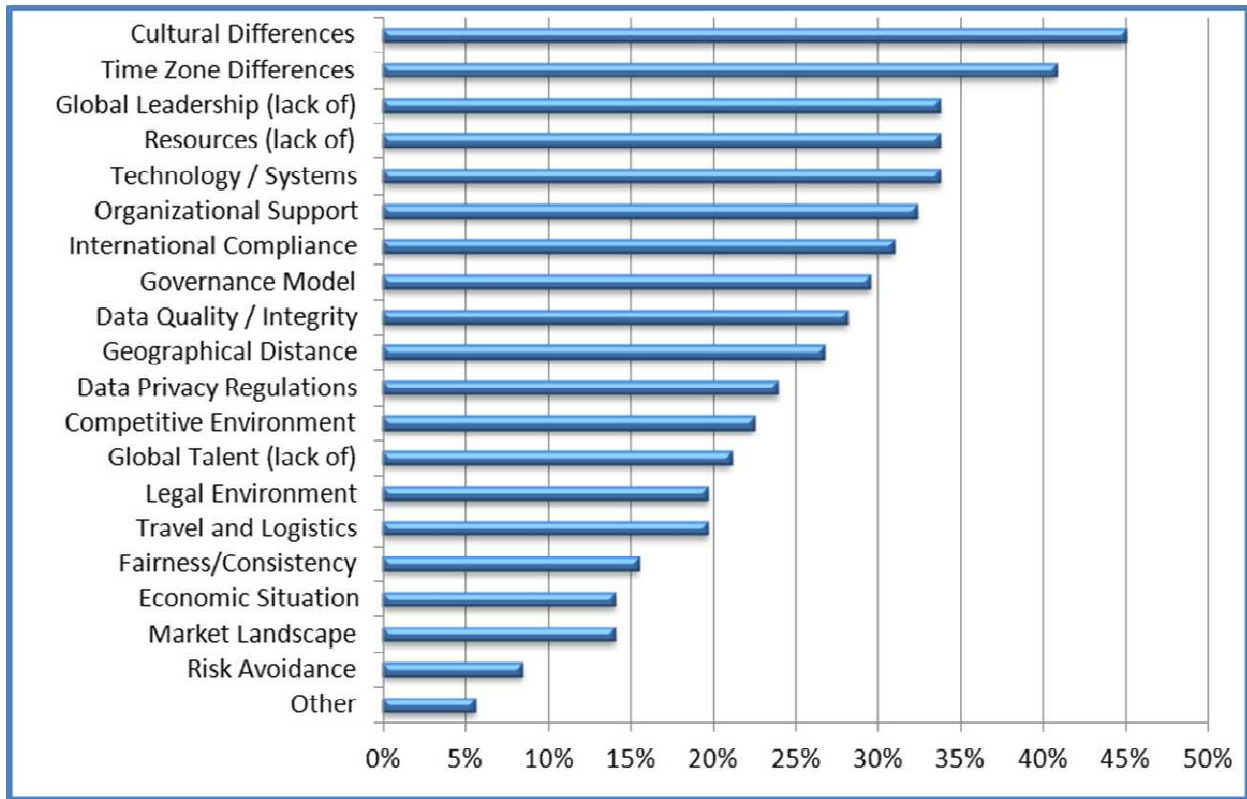


Figure 1. Top Challenges in Being Global.

Cultural Differences. An understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and their impact on collaboration styles, decision-making, meeting etiquette and other aspects of business life cannot be underestimated. The best global companies understand this and provide cultural training for their project and day-to-day operational teams to increase their effectiveness in working internationally.

Global Mindset. Much has been written on global mindset -- the ability to understand and empathize with individuals from other cultures -- and the role it plays in successful international work. From our earlier work, the key factors in building a global mindset are cultural sensitivity and liking, accommodation and flexibility, as well as extroversion and risk-taking skills.

Global Technology. In today's digital age, it is nearly impossible to run an effective global organizational without the right technology in place to support local, regional, and global collaboration efforts and to meet global information needs. HR technology vendors haven't made this easy in the past, as only the largest vendors have mature global platforms. Most technology applications have been built within a single country, and only a few have ventured to provide regional solutions. Technology infrastructure (24%) and data quality and integrity (17%) are cited as a success by only a minority of companies, indicating that there is still significant room for improvement in these areas.

While cultural differences and lack of global resources are the top challenges that organizations face when working globally, cultural diversity and experience turn out to be their top successes, clearly demonstrating that the greatest challenge can become the greatest strength!

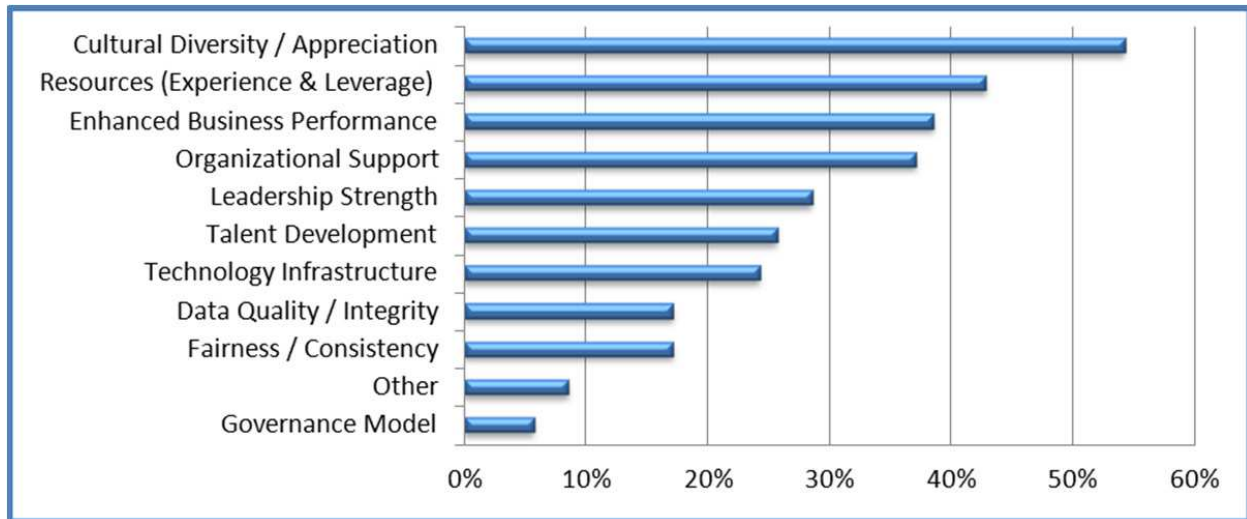


Figure 2. Successes in Being Global.

In upcoming *HRinsights* articles, I will explore various areas of the Going Global Survey such as organizational models, global strategic practices, global organizational practices, global people practices, global business processes, process automation, data privacy, technology practices and global SaaS adoption. We will also take a deeper look at what it means for an application to be global and the different levels of global application maturity.

The results of the survey and their implications will be discussed in a **webinar hosted by Patersons on March 17th, 8am-9am PST / 11am-12pm EST / 15:00-16:00 GMT.**

[Click here to register.](#)

About the Author: *Karen Beaman is Senior Global Advisor, Chief Executive Officer, and the Founder of Jeitosa Group International. She has 30 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.*