CONTENTS

Purpose ........................................................................................................ 2
Approach .................................................................................................... 2
Results – Business Challenges ................................................................. 3
  1. Being More Global ........................................................................ 3
  2. Increased Marketplace Diversity .................................................... 5
  3. Technology & Innovation ............................................................... 6
Results – Leadership Capability Needs ..................................................... 8
Leadership Competencies in the New Globalized Context ......................... 9
Decision Making & Dealing With Ambiguity .............................................. 9
  Developing a Global Mindset ................................................................. 9
  Partnering and Diplomacy ................................................................... 10
  Developing Entrepreneurial Mindsets ................................................. 10
  People Management ........................................................................... 10

Appendix 1 - Background ......................................................................... 11
  University Consortium for Executive Education (UNICON) .............. 11
  London Business School (LBS) and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) .. 11
  Conference Board ................................................................................ 11
  IBM ....................................................................................................... 12
  Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) ................................................ 13
  McKinsey & Company ......................................................................... 13
PURPOSE

Today’s complex global business environment is not only demanding more of leaders, but also challenging the very notion of who a leader needs to be. The purpose of this study is to examine and understand the challenges organizations are facing in order to help identify the key leadership capabilities that will be critical to prepare leaders for the future. While there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with the forces driving change globally or within organizations, and leadership models need to be specific to each company and to the business context in which that company operates, we can still identify the key capabilities that will be most salient in the future. Since business challenges drive capability needs, the first task is to identify the major challenges organizations face, and the second is to understand the leadership capabilities needed to address those challenges.

APPROACH

Duke Corporate Education (Duke CE) is fortunate to have a set of clients who represent a mix of large companies from mature markets, such as Europe and the U.S., as well as companies from fast-developing, high-growth markets. In this study, we examined 80 programs we have designed and developed in collaboration with more than 60 client organizations to understand:

• What business challenges are companies facing?
• What leadership capabilities are being developed in response to those challenges?

From that base, we asked our client team leaders about the challenges they are seeing more of and what trends they are detecting most often across organizations.

To strengthen our understanding and further validate our findings we surveyed more than 70 educators in our global network for their perspectives based on work with their clients. Finally, we presented our preliminary findings to a group of 23 clients and other large organizations at our annual Chief Learning Officer Roundtable to gain their feedback.
RESULTS – BUSINESS CHALLENGES

While a broad range of business challenges were identified, in our opinion, the most salient challenges business face now and into the future fall into three categories:

1. Being More Global
2. Increased Marketplace Complexity
3. Technology & Innovation increasing the pace of change

These challenges, of course, are not entirely mutually exclusive. In a broad sense, it could be argued that these are not three distinct categories but are in fact interdependent. Doing business and operating in more places in the world inevitably introduces an increase in marketplace complexity. For example, the global reach of technology – from aircraft technology to the latest developments in social media – eases the spread and diffusion of innovation as well as provides opportunities for technology leapfrogging and developing new business models. In this paper, we will deal with each of these challenges individually, while also recognizing and noting their interdependence.

1. BEING MORE GLOBAL

The pace and place of economic growth has shifted. The West (North America and Europe) is no longer the exclusive engine of global growth. Rather, that role has begun to shift significantly to the East (India, Southeast Asia and China). Two years ago, emerging markets accounted for 25 percent of total global GDP growth; by 2020, they are projected to account for nearly 50 percent of all GDP growth. Longer horizon global economic trends show the world to be rebalancing to the east and south – a trend that is not likely to disappear.

The global financial meltdown of 2008/2009 and the continuing financial challenges in the Eurozone have taught us that “being global” also entails embracing global interdependence. These financial problems have called for an increased global financial scrutiny and transparency. Global scrutiny also embraces work practices such as working hours, conditions and health and safety issues. The world also increasingly demands to know about the disposal of hazardous waste products, the environmental “friendliness” of companies, and their treatment of ecology and natural habitats. The global reach of social media means that social movements that once might have remained local now rapidly spread to neighbors and even distant lands, as we have seen with the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 and the spread of the Arab Spring.

Increased global travel has brought with it a rise in the potential for pandemics as with the spread of H1N1 (Asian flu) and the 2009 outbreak of swine flu in Mexico. Significantly, 2011 was the first year in which non-communicable diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer) were the #1 cause of death in the world, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all deaths. Global growth has facilitated the exportation of bad habits from West to East, changing how people live and eat and contributing quickly to disease, which in turn strains the economy.

As companies seek to become more active in additional country markets by establishing local operations, they are realizing that there is a real “war for talent” in many parts of the world. The talent shortage is a problem for both global and local companies operating in China and India, for example, resulting in high turnover rates with little employee loyalty. Elsewhere, talent challenges are coming from what might be characterized as local resistance to the effects of global companies moving their operations into countries without sharing the benefits with the local populace. Quotas on how many

1. Ernst & Young, Six Global Trends Shaping the Business World

2. World Health Organization, United Nations high-level meeting on noncommunicable disease prevention and control

3. Voice of America, Emerging Economies, Emerging Diseases
nationals must be employed and at what levels of seniority are common in many parts of the Middle East, e.g. UAE, Qatar and South Africa with its Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment regulations. In parts of the world that were recently part of “super regions” there is a return to supporting national ethnicity and identity as is the case in Kazakhstan with its new laws supporting the use of the Kazakh national language in addition to Russian.

In some areas there is indeed a real backlash against the forces of globalization with “Resource Nationalism” becoming the top risk for mining and metals companies. Countries and companies, while willing to collaborate, face a complex of hurdles: instead of leasing land, governments are seeking partnerships to build their nations beyond financial gains; they are also seeking advances in technological and corporate intellectual capital development, so manufacturers must supply jobs, education, and transfer technologies to transform the economies in which they wish to operate.

FROM GLOBAL CHALLENGES TO GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the challenges we have addressed offer significant business opportunities for those companies that can adapt and be the first to see the “weak signals” offering such chances.

4. (Ernst & Young, 2011)

Even disease and pandemics create entirely new markets for pharmaceutical and life science companies. With communicable diseases on the rise, there is a resurgence of large- and small-molecule drugs, and biologics that aim to create new vaccines.

Many companies have searched for opportunities to expand to the East, a region that is predicted to continue experiencing population surges over the next 40 years. Africa is projected to claim seven of the top 10 spots on the list of fastest growing economies over the next five years. Growing GDP leads to increased consumption, providing more opportunities for consumer goods organizations competing to enter these markets. For example, a consumer goods company whose customer base has historically consisted of Baby Boomers has had to re-evaluate whom its future customers will be since many Baby Boomers have been crippled by the recent financial turmoil. The company is considering markets abroad where growth and consumption exhibit stronger potential.

For another consumer goods client, China, India, and sub-Saharan Africa are expected to sustain growth of five percent or more over the next five years. The company needs to think differently and build new kinds of relationships instead of exporting a copy of itself into these new environments.

Several of our financial services clients in the East and Middle East are following their customers to new markets, thereby becoming super regional banks. In order to be successful, the company and the employees must focus on building valuable relationships and adapt to the culture in the new markets. For example, in parts of East Africa consumer banking has leapfrogged the need to have physical retail banks via an explosive growth in mobile (cell phone) banking. Consequently, banks entering these markets must consider new partnerships with the telecommunications industry to gain a competitive advantage. The war for talent and the very young demographic profile found in many emerging markets open up considerable opportunities for executive education which we at Duke CE have benefited from. Younger managers tend to be more “tech savvy” and willing to embrace virtual work across global teams, allowing companies such as Infosys and Cisco to embrace a 24/7 global operations network with seamless handoffs.

5. The Economist, Africa Tops as One of the Fastest Growing Regions
2. INCREASED MARKETPLACE DIVERSITY

With an increase in globalism, companies are challenged with handling marketplace diversity and complex operations such as working in multiple time zones with diverse cultures and in virtual teams. But the concept goes beyond these components. In the energy extractive business, it’s also about operating in challenging geographies, with new communities who may previously have been somewhat remote or cut off from the modernization of the rest of the world. From dealing with the extreme climatic and technological challenges of oil drilling in the Caspian Sea, to the challenges of mining in Outer Mongolia, leaders are being stretched in their ability to fully control their operations as they partner with governments and local agencies who do not always share the same set of goals and agendas.

With political tensions rising in certain parts of the world, companies must consider whether to even participate in particular markets. Organizations are asking themselves what it means to mine and drill in emerging markets and to work in remote cultures, while also balancing the competing pressures to ensure jobs and investments from their home governments. These divergent pressures from competing governments mean that leaders must now be skilled in the art of governmental diplomacy on top of corporate strategy.

Learning new ways of partnering is also a feature that stems from marketplace diversity. With growing concerns over carbon footprints, resource scarcity, and the importance to heed triple bottom lines, companies now see their sustainability initiatives as a competitive advantage and are beginning to work with governments and NGO’s to develop regulations. Meeting environmental regulations and social standards is an important requirement for businesses now.

With the formation of new partnerships, client companies are focusing on becoming globally integrated wholes, rather than a conglomerate of stand-alone entities. When top executives set the vision for the company, they must take into consideration the different paces of economic growth and sets of constraints many of these managers are facing. Similarly, managers in different markets must communicate with one another, work together and be able to comfortably negotiate their differences, rather than only focusing on their particular market.

The complexities of a company that operates in what has been called a “two-speed global economy,” with the mature economies seeing flat growth or even declines, is a challenge in terms of resources and the right talent. Exporting experienced talent from mature economies to emerging economies may have worked in the past, but it is increasingly at odds with the different “shifts” in what has been termed as the “center of emotional gravity,” which comes from the demographic profile of any country. The youthfulness of the emerging markets goes hand-in-hand with youthful exuberance and a desire to progress quickly. Seeing these marketplaces without actually being immersed in them can challenge ex-patriots who may easily miss the latest trends and local nuances that are at the heart of good market understanding and response.

NEW CHALLENGES & NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The ability to be in and of an emerging market requires attention to developing young talent, nurturing them to take responsibility at an early stage. Recognizing emerging trends and capitalizing on them immediately is what will give companies an edge in these new marketplaces.

Moreover, companies that help foster entrepreneurialism often appear more favorable than others in emerging marketplaces. For example, a young Kazakh entrepreneur in one of Duke CE’s programs in Astana reported to us how an open-minded German manufacturing company helped him start a nascent rubber recycling business in Astana, Kazakhstan. That company has now helped him to start exporting high-grade rubber crump to Russia and China. These are the types of market opportunities that companies who are sufficiently open-minded and innovative can exploit.
3. TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

The third area of business challenges encompasses leveraging technology and being innovative, with three goals in mind: stay ahead, keep up, and embed innovation in the culture of the company. Staying ahead of competition means that organizations need business models that respond to new complex global realities and technologies that will contribute to competitive advantages in the marketplace. As the composition of the workforce continues to evolve, companies are changing the organizational structure in order to match how younger generations want to work and live. Understanding how social media and Internet connectivity affect the marketplace is critical for businesses to remain relevant. Finally, companies are learning to embed a sustainable culture of innovation in order to remain relevant and prosper.

KEEPING UP

Many companies are becoming more flexible with respect to the younger generations they need to employ. Companies like IBM leverage a virtual workforce with more than 40 percent of their employees working from home, on the road, or at a client location, which not only saves large sums of money for the company, but it also provides a more flexible environment for employees.6

Another IT company operates primarily virtually now to enable the work-life integration that so many employees from Generation X and Y desire. This operating structure enhances the company’s ability to attract and retain its workforce year after year because employees are able to choose where and when they work, raising the quality of work delivered. This willingness to innovate and adhere to employee desires and needs rather than demand compliance from employees contributes to the company’s sustained success.

Social media has facilitated the communication of events and positions in a way the world could not have imagined five years ago. Nine out of 10 Tunisians and Egyptians used Facebook or Twitter to organize protests or spread the word about uprisings during the Arab Spring.7 Many organizations are struggling to maintain control over their public image because they are no longer the primary source of information. More importantly, they are investing in social media as a competitive advantage to enable business growth. For example, to help shoppers turn to smaller, Main Street businesses during the holiday season in the U.S., American Express gave small businesses a digital toolkit to help them participate in its “Small Business Saturday,” held the weekend after Thanksgiving, with instructions on how to build special Facebook pages, YouTube video ads and Foursquare deals.8

6. Businessweek, Working from Home: It’s in the Details
7. The National, Facebook and Twitter key to Arab-Spring Uprising
8. AdvertisingAge, June 18, 2012
EMBEDDING INNOVATION

Organizations recognize that developing and embedding a sustainable culture of innovation is crucial to staying ahead of the competition, so innovation must be a core competency of a company’s DNA. Being a leader in the marketplace requires constant innovation and the ability to stay one step ahead of competitors. Even a capital-intensive business such as telecommunications requires an environment of nimbleness and responsiveness, and realizes recognition that embedding innovation also creates a necessity to upscale the abilities of their people in this area.

For one telecom company in particular, shareholder value plummeted year after year because the company had relied on its big supply chain and manufacturing legacy. Recognizing that it was operating in a dynamic and constantly changing industry, the company developed its management to be more flexible and quickly implement change when appropriate. To solidify the company’s culture of innovation, management is responsible for developing these skills in the next generation of leaders, creating a system that continually nurtures flexibility, foresight, and the ability to execute quickly.

In an economic environment of limited resources, how does a company leader encourage new ideas and balanced risk taking when it is understood that innovativeness is not necessarily linked to R&D expenditures? To embed innovation within a culture requires not only that the company have the right talent in place, but also that the structure of the organization will foster that innovation. One IT company recognized that it needed an interconnected structure that allowed people to work across the organization to capitalize on realized opportunities. People must be able to reach both vertically and horizontally across the organization to enlist the skills that will support the success of new ideas.
RESULTS – LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY NEEDS

EXTERNAL (STAKEHOLDERS)
- TRANSPARENCY
- COLLABORATION
- TRUST

INTERNAL (EMPLOYEES)
- INSPIRE
- ENGAGEMENT
- CONNECT

INFORMATION/DECISION MAKING
- WIDE ANGLE LENS
- GLOBAL MINDSET
- OPENNESS/INTEGRATION

PEOPLE
- AUTHENTIC
- RESILIENT

INFORMATION/DECISION MAKING
- AGILE/ADAPTIVE
- STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
- ENTREPRENEUR/INNOVATION

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LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES IN THE NEW GLOBALIZED CONTEXT

It’s important to identify the full range of capabilities leaders will need in the near future. They are based on meeting the three areas of business challenges outlined above and will be essential to leading organizations through the complex business environment.

DECISION MAKING & DEALING WITH AMBIGUITY

Decision making for leaders of the future will be more about dealing with ambiguity than acting upon clarity. Nowhere is that more true than in emerging markets. Managers need to learn to make effective decisions with the information at hand – though they may be lacking the full data set of information they might see in other parts of the world.

Rather than learning old planning routines and building five-year linear plans for the future, leaders will have to develop skills in scenario planning, holding multiple ideas of what the future might look like and watching for the early signals that indicate which direction to take.

A financial services firm in South Africa wants to transform its leaders by creating a company culture that constantly adapts to a changing business landscape. By utilizing global thought leaders and best practices, the company not only adapts to change in the industry, but they also capitalize on change in the company.

Recognizing unconscious decision-making biases will also be important especially when dealing with the different styles of decision making and consensus building that exist throughout the world. Duke CE’s clients are adopting these practices in various industries. To develop better decision-making skills in its leaders, one Australian materials company challenged participants to incorporate four levels of consideration, including the community and the organization, when making decisions. Working transparently and sharing their perspectives and concerns with members of the local government and various community organizations enabled the company to build a relationship of trust with the community. This in turn enabled leaders to cultivate increased returns in the form of social and environmental impact.

DEVELOPING A GLOBAL MINDSET

Having a global mindset is a necessary leadership capability for the future. They need a wide-angle lens to see the world through the eyes of stakeholders and customers in diverse markets.

Many of our clients are asking for ways to help leaders develop this mindset. Realizing that learning can happen at any time in any location, we utilize the Marketplace as the Classroom approach, which allows leaders to visit new market locations and turn knowledge into belief and action into context. Through their journey, they develop the ability to understand people, action, and innovation in a way that business statistics and facts are unable to convey. In the quest to transform from standalone entities to a single global company, leaders recognize that information, relationships, and teams are moving from east to west and west to east. Consequently, when expanding into new international markets, leaders require an established, formal decision-making process to become quicker and more efficient global players.
As businesses and jobs become more global and mobile, global companies are increasingly faced with the challenge of recruiting and retaining talented employees. The future business environment will require engaging a changing workforce, inspiring and connecting with people of various generations, backgrounds, and cultures. Companies will potentially employ four generations of employees with vastly different backgrounds and experiences, including Gen X and Y employees who are recognized for challenging the traditional corporate structure.

As leaders of these workforces, it will be crucial to cultivate work environments that encourage employees to communicate and connect both with one another and the business.

WHAT’S NEXT

When faced with the challenge of increased marketplace diversity, going global and staying ahead of technology, business leaders are often challenged to think outside of the box. Today, the primary challenge for those who educate leaders is to, “think outside of the classroom.” In today’s leadership development environment, context matters at least as much as content and our approaches and designs need to evolve to reflect this new reality.
APPENDIX 1 - BACKGROUND

The past few years have revealed a number of difficult business challenges that companies have had to overcome, and 2012 will continue to expose significant business challenges that companies must address during these turbulent times.

UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR EXECUTIVE EDUCATION (UNICON)

UNICON published a paper entitled, “Strategies and Choices: University-Based Executive Education Markets and Trends” in August 2011. This paper highlighted the long-term trend that corporate clients continue to seek executive education programs that focus on both individual development and organizational performance. Following are the capabilities that UNICON recognized as increasingly important in executive education programs:

1. Developing skills in strategy, execution, innovation and problem solving
2. Establishing global and customer-focused mindsets
3. Managing complexity and ambiguity
4. Bridging leadership actions to business results

Additionally, the paper recognized that a number of drivers continue to encourage participation in executive education programs in a volatile market including:

1. Strategic ambiguity
2. Changing regulatory requirements
3. Major change initiatives
4. Managerial agility and flexibility
5. Demographic shifts in the workforce
6. Pipelines that are unable to keep up with growing businesses in emerging markets

LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL (LBS) AND BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP (BCG)

In a 2011 study of more than 60 interviews with clients, competitors, and experts, LBS and BCG concluded that companies invest in executive education as a way to develop human capital and capabilities that contribute to driving a business strategy. Following is the list of developmental needs they discovered in demand for executive education, in order of highest to lowest demand:

1. Leadership
2. Strategic thinking
3. Innovation
4. People development
5. Customer focus
6. Global perspective
7. Mergers and Acquisitions
8. Financial acumen
9. General management

However, it is no longer enough that the people simply obtain this knowledge. Companies now require their people are able to apply these skills to the company as a value demonstration. But how do you develop leadership and what are the capabilities that companies view as essential to the leadership toolkit?

CONFERENCE BOARD

To answer this question, studies and surveys consider both what current business challenges are and what capabilities are developed to address these challenges. In 2010 members of The Conference Board’s Councils participated in discussions of how the role of leadership is changing. The Councils concluded that tomorrow’s business leaders will need to create a collaborative environment where stakeholders will exchange information, forge new networks, and ensure decision making efficiency.
The Conference Board identified a number of significant factors that will determine why the role of the leader is changing. The identified factors include, but are not limited to, complexity, the speed of change, communication and transparency, and increased regulations. Not surprisingly, many of these factors address the fact that the speed of information has increased to a point that requires decision making to take place in a fragmented and ambiguous environment. To compound this situation, an increased number of stakeholders, both internal and external, have gained access to various pieces of information, and it is now impossible for one leader to hold all of the cards. The following list highlights the top business challenges that The Conference Board concluded as changing the role of leadership:

1. Regulation
2. Complexity
3. Speed of change
4. Diversity/fragmentation
5. Communication/transparency
6. Changing expectations of the workforce
7. Managing polarities/multiple time horizons
8. Customer sophistication/value propositions
9. Sustainability/corporate social responsibility

However, tomorrow’s leaders are not without hope. Throughout the study, The Conference Board concluded that leaders can prepare to effectively address these concerns by developing new skills, including managing networks, building trust, and becoming comfortable moving outside of comfort zones. Combined with additional leadership skills, these attributes will enable leaders to create a collaborative business context where shareholders will feel comfortable. The Conference Board concluded that the following capabilities are most important for the future leaders:

1. Build trust
2. Reflect
3. Influence
4. Be a T-shaped thinker
5. Facilitate the possible
6. Be comfortable with ambiguity
7. Build and manage networks
8. Mine, synthesize, and distribute information to tell a compelling story
9. Inspire innovation and creativity/open-source thinking
10. Go where there be dragons
11. Embrace the motto “We did it ourselves”

IBM

Other resources have emphasized the importance of creativity as a leadership skill. In a 2010 survey conducted by IBM, 1,541 CEO’s from around the world ranked creativity as the most important leadership capability for navigating the increasingly complex business environment. According to this extensive collection of CEO’s, creativity will support future success more so than any other leadership capability.

Here again, CEO’s reported a continued up-tick in complexity in business environments. However, these CEO’s also reported that increased complexity opens new prospects for innovation and growth. Creativity becomes an essential leadership quality because tomorrow’s business leaders will be unable to capitalize on strategic and fleeting opportunities unless they respond with creativity in their visions, ways of thinking, and ability to execute.
CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP (CCL)

In Resolve to Lead in 2011, CCL supports leaders embracing both collaboration and creativity to navigate the increasingly complex, diverse, and global world in which today’s businesses operate. Collaboration and creativity enable people to understand challenges through shared dialogue and to discover sustainable business solutions by overcoming the root cause of each challenge.

MCKINSEY & COMPANY

In a 2010 study, McKinsey reported that 60 percent of the participating companies considered building organizational capabilities a top priority within the company. However, the most significant reason for developing certain capabilities was reported to be that the capability was a fundamental part of the company culture. Additionally, McKinsey’s survey discovered that companies often identify which capabilities will impact business performance and design company training programs based on these capabilities. It was noted that programs that focus on leadership development are more likely to be considered effective in driving company performance. Finally, training programs appeared to be more effective in aligning organizational capabilities and business performance when senior leaders support and engage in the training programs.
CONTACT US

AMERICAS
Durham, NC
310 Blackwell Street
Durham, NC 27701 USA
+1 919 680 5000

Carlsbad (San Diego), CA
Suite 250
5650 El Camino Real
Carlsbad, CA 92008 USA
+1 760 710 2444

EUROPE
London
1st Floor
165 Fleet Street
London
EC4A 2DY
UK
+44 (0)20 7936 6100

AFRICA
Johannesburg, South Africa
The Campus
Augusta Building
Bryanston
Johannesburg 02021
South Africa
+27 (0)11 575 6241

ASIA
Ahmedabad, India
Indian Institute of Management
Academic Block
New Campus, Vastrapur
Ahmedabad 380 015
India
+91 79 6632 4460

OR VISIT www.dukece.com