



Creating value from cross-cultural teams

An example of Franco-British collaborative ventures

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Abstract

Purpose – To demonstrate the added value potential of cross-cultural teams specifically related to Franco-British joint ventures. The paper begins by outlining the current context in M&As across Europe, then homes in on the specific trade links between France and the UK. To what extent are cultural differences a hindrance or a driving force in attaining mutual performance goals?

Design/methodology/approach – The main findings are collected from a survey of 300 companies in France and the UK carried out in 1999. The respondents were HR managers, training officers or middle managers in general. The research was supplemented by three in-depth, semi-directive interviews with HR managers at BP, Vivendi and Eurotunnel.

Findings – The research uncovers some of the main obstacles encountered when setting up Franco-British teams. Certain factors such as education systems, training systems and employment norms are brought to the forefront in an attempt to explain these fundamental differences.

Research limitations/implications – The study is longitudinal and aims at providing a more representative sample since the response rate on the English side was lower than that in France. The authors viewpoint is fuelled by information received during the in-depth, semi-directive interviews.

Practical implications – The article provides a useful insight into the workings of cross-cultural teams in France and the UK.

Originality/value – Little has been written to date on the specific field of the cultural barriers influencing the success of Franco-British work teams.

Keywords Joint ventures, Cross-cultural management, Value added, International cooperation, France, United Kingdom

Paper type Viewpoint

1. Introduction

Much has been said and written in the past ten years about globalisation and how to deal with it. Consequently, the whole question of global leadership and running multicultural teams has also come to the forefront of management thinking, and with it the emergence of a new type of global leader, equipped with all the talents and skills to be effective while operating in the world's markets.

During this same period, we have witnessed the biggest surge ever in mergers, acquisitions, international joint ventures and strategic alliances in Europe. Indeed, cross-border mergers and acquisitions have become one of the most frequently utilized forms of European market entry, representing approximately 45 per cent of total annual outlay on European M&A's.

1998 alone saw the completion of 3000 European cross-border acquisitions valued at over \$220 billion (Acquisitions Monthly, February 1999). In spite of this, corporate acquirers still face major challenges to ensure that these new operations generate sufficient shareholder value to make their ventures viable. In this regard, the global forecast is somewhat bleaker and certain researchers (Datta and Puia, 1995; Bleeke and Ernst, 1991) even suggest that cross-border acquisitions, in certain cases, fail to obtain a financial return in excess of the acquirer's cost of capital.



In spite of this significant increase in international strategic alliances (ISA), international joint ventures (IJV) and wholly owned subsidiaries (WOS), it has been estimated that between 30 per cent and 70 per cent of alliances fail in the early stages (Bleeke and Ernst, 1991; Inkpen and Li, 1999). Kauser and Shaw's (2001) findings on the impact of behavioural characteristics on successful international alliances underline the fact that there is a general dearth of empirical research in this area. Reliable information remains scanty and little has been uncovered to explain the factors that influence this singularly high failure rate.

Research carried out to date in this field has tended to focus on more objective factors such as partner choice, product synergy and strategic fits (Parkhe, 1993). Success stories in the field of ISA's or IJV's or WOS's have been few and far between. Another confusing issue in pursuing our study was the lack of standardised terminology to describe what an International Strategic Alliance or Joint Venture actually represent.

It is important to emphasize the notion of diversity in this context; diversity, in all its forms, whether it concerns the most obvious form of cultural diversity or others such as gender, generation, background, competency, experience, expertise or religion. In our research work, it has always been our contention that multicultural teams, although often experiencing greater problems in the initial stages of formation, produce more impact-full results. It is this very diversity in backgrounds and cultural heritage which offers a bigger challenge to corporate leaders because these groups are harder to form, and to manage. As Carlos Ghosn stated during a recent video conference in Japan, "Where there is diversity, there is more professional and personal enrichment. There are greater opportunities for innovation, creativity, trust and higher performance"[1]. Problem solving is approached from a multi-dimensional standpoint, and yet team members are still pulling in the same direction with a common perspective. Contrary to the usual functioning of a team however, multicultural groups are not always viewed as decision-making groups, but as groups that "seek to make sense of various work-related events" (Maznevski and Peterson, 1997).

A study by Kauser and Shaw (2001) presents the findings of 114 international strategic alliances between UK firms and their European, US and Japanese partners. Having established a database of strategic alliances across Europe, a questionnaire was distributed. Initially, 287 respondents replied and 114 completed the questionnaire. The authors proceeded to hypothesize that four main attributes should be considered when assessing the success of an international alliance; co-ordination, interdependence, commitment and trust (Parkhe, 1993; Mohr and Spekman, 1994). Their observations tend to suggest that if these attribute levels are high then performance and team cohesion are enhanced. Other considerations such as communication flow, cultural dissonance, conflict resolution, autonomy from the parent company and cooperative learning are all important factors in the final analysis. The level of interpersonal trust and commitment of managers working for newly acquired companies can be significantly influenced by their national origin. The relationship between entry mode onto the market and level of commitment has often been overlooked; certain researchers have asserted that commitment levels in a WOS can often be considerably higher than in an IJV (Hwang *et al.*, 2002). The results of Hwang's research focus on the fact that HCN managers (host company nationals) and PCN managers (parent company nationals) working in an international joint venture appear to be less committed to the organisation and have lower levels of

interpersonal trust towards peers when compared to HCN and PCN managers operating in a wholly-owned subsidiary (Hwang *et al.*, 2002).

Concomitantly, it is also necessary to point out what is meant by performance goals. In this area, many companies adopt the customary yardsticks of profitability, market share, sales growth as well as ROI and shareholder value. But it is also important to take into consideration more objective factors such as corporate survival, duration and stability of the alliance (Geringer and Hebert, 1991). The latter goes on to argue that certain managers may not deem an IJV successful in spite of good financial returns: there are undoubtedly certain ambivalent attitudes that must be examined more closely.

Klauser and Shaw's research concludes by indicating that good ability to co-ordinate, to develop a sense of trust and commitment and an efficient communication flow are all key factors influencing the success of international corporate ventures. Parallel to this, the effective management of organisational knowledge has been increasingly linked to competitive advantage and the development of international joint ventures (Grant and Spender, 1996; Holden, 2002).

In this context, it is not surprising that cultural difference, when coupled with highly contrasted work practices, management styles and occasionally unclear expatriation policies exacerbate the complexity of international cooperation (Evans, 2000). Our aim in this article is to ascertain how all the afore-mentioned factors impact on the efficacy of Franco/British collaborative ventures.

2. Methodology

The principal focus in our research has been on the analysis of key factors in cultural difference that impact on corporate performance in Franco-British subsidiaries, joint ventures and affiliates. The term "cultural differences" is in itself a vast field of research which has given rise to a myriad of different interpretations. In using this concept, we have tried to bring to the surface the fundamental orientations of the French and British nations, notably in the business context. This has inevitably led us to emphasize the major contrasts in terms of national psychology, working practices, management styles, as well as socio-political leanings. It is always difficult not to fall into the trap of over-generalising or stereotyping, and we have therefore tried to remain as objective as possible in the treatment of the data received from our respondents.

In our original sample (Evans, 2000), roughly 250 companies were contacted in France and the UK. We targeted mainly middle management and specifically HR managers. Generally speaking, we dealt with companies having vested interests in each other's country in a variety of fields including the industrial, manufacturing, retail and service sectors. The questionnaire presented a series of open-ended questions covering; problems of adjusting to the other country, stereotype perception and prejudices, language difficulties, the impact of the education systems, the difference in work habits and the ease of setting up business. The response rate (35 French respondents living in the UK and 20 British residents in France) represented roughly 20 per cent. We see these findings as the first chapter of a longitudinal research (Evans, 2002) which is currently being reinforced by a supplementary survey carried out in 150 new companies in France and the UK, the basic aim being to enhance the representativeness of the sample. In light of this, we have deliberately concentrated less on the impact of national culture on organisations, which is a separate study. We have, however, sought to correlate the two concepts whenever possible.

In validating our hypotheses, i.e. bi-national work groups produce added value and better performance or alternatively they constitute a constraint in achieving corporate

goals, we have also integrated factors such as each country's degree of involvement in the construction of the European Union, the highly contrasted education systems and training programmes, as well as the role of the State and the legal systems that regulate business procedures.

The original empirical research in this field (Evans, 2000) concluded that, providing Franco/British mergers succeeded in overcoming their initial cultural adjustment period, there was no substantial evidence to suggest that cross-cultural teams from France and Great Britain fared any worse than purely national, mono-cultural teams. On the contrary, historical, political and cultural differences, coupled with a geometrically opposed approach to problem solving and decision-making, were factors that provided added value and complementary working practices in the view of many managers. Problem-solving seen from a multicultural, multilingual and multifunctional angle tended to produce more creativity and innovation in team meetings.

The original sample of 250 companies was reinforced by a series of semi-directive interviews and focus group sessions conducted in very targeted sectors (BP and Eurotunnel in France, Vivendi in the UK). These in-depth interviews were conducted in 2000 and were held with HR managers or members of middle management both in France and the UK.

France and Great Britain have remained particularly close trading partners for the past 30 years. The 2004 statistics indicate that France is Great Britain's 3rd customer and 3rd supplier. Alternatively Great Britain is France's 5th customer and 3rd supplier (see Table I). The stakes are therefore significant[2] and the integration of the Franco-British economy ensures a solid and durable commercial exchange between the two countries. At the same time, Great Britain is the 2nd destination for French expatriates after Quebec and the second country for French FDI (1450 subsidiaries in 2001)[3]. The European tax incentives put in place over the past ten years, together with the comparative ease of setting up business in the UK, has meant that many French companies have relocated or created joint ventures, wholly owned subsidiaries or holding companies in Great Britain.

In spite of this significant increase in Franco/British cooperation over the past ten years, especially in the area of trans-national mergers and acquisitions, the balance of trade, at the current time, is slightly in favour of the French.

In terms of analysing the effectiveness of joint ventures between the two countries, the available literature and statistics remain somewhat rare. It is generally recognised that transnational collaborative ventures are initially very fragile, and although it is difficult to obtain any tangible results in the early years of the joint venture, it is clear that there are a significant number of failures. It is also generally recognised (Barsoux and Schneider, 1997) that intercultural difficulties are the single most complicated factor in international mergers, well beyond financial and technical considerations.

The principal thrust of this research is to analyse to what extent these cultural differences between work teams from France and Great Britain can be identified as a constraint or driving force in terms of overall corporate performance? We have sought to establish, in a more general sense, whether this juxtaposition of national psyche and different working methods produces better results in the long term, when compared to more habitual mono-cultural work groups.

Although the long term profit, in terms of shareholder value, obtained from international M&A's is still to be demonstrated, we believe that the capacity to work in and to manage cross-cultural teams remains a key factor of success in the wake of an ever globalised market place.

	2003	2004	2003	2004
<i>UK main suppliers</i> (% share of total British imports)			<i>France main suppliers</i> (% share of total French imports)	
Germany	13.6	13.6	Germany	17.4
USA	10.0	9.0	Italy	9.3
France	8.3	7.9	Spain	7.6
Netherlands	6.5	7.0	Belgium	7.0
China	5.1	5.6	UK	6.7
Belgium	5.0	5.0	USA	6.5
Italy	4.9	4.7	China	4.1
Ireland	4.1	4.0	Netherlands	4.7
Spain	3.5	3.4	Japan	3.2
Norway	2.6	3.3	Switzerland	2.2
EU (15)	53.9	53.0	EU (15)	61.4
EU (25)	na	55.5	EU (25)	na
<i>UK largest export markets</i> (% share of total British exports)			<i>France largest export markets</i> (% share of total French exports)	
USA	15.4	14.9	Germany	15.0
Germany	10.8	11.3	Spain	10.2
France	9.8	9.7	UK	9.6
Ireland	6.8	7.3	Italy	9.3
Netherlands	7.0	6.2	Belgium	7.7
Belgium	5.7	5.3	USA	6.9
Spain	4.7	4.7	Netherlands	3.9
Italy	4.5	4.4	Switzerland	3.3
Sweden	2.0	2.3	Japan	1.7
Japan	2.0	2.0	China	1.4
EU (15)	55.5	55.1	EU (15)	62.9
EU (25)	na	57.5	EU (25)	na

Table I.

Major trade partners of the UK and France

Note: na, not applicable**Sources:** HM Customs & Excise, French Customs, WTA

3. National mindsets

Marked historical and political prejudices as well as exaggerated stereotyping and biased press coverage have often been the *hallmark* of Franco–British relations since the signing of the Entente Cordiale in 1904. This said, it was surprising to note, during the different interviews we carried out *in-situ*, that these deep-rooted prejudices did not really constitute a serious barrier to Franco–British relations.

Although Britain was the leading power of the industrial revolution, France has surely and steadily managed to transform itself from a quasi-agricultural society of post-war Europe to a country boasting its expertise in the fields of telecommunications, aerospace and transport infrastructures (Ardagh, 2000). The public service sector is still a very prevalent part of French civil life; from this point of view, Great Britain has lagged behind, grossly underestimating the importance of industrial investment, training and modernisation. In terms of general strategy, Great Britain has differed markedly from France in as much as it has almost systematically aligned its policy with the USA since the end of the 2nd World War, often to the frustration of her European partners.

As far as the big industrial groups are concerned, France's strategic options have been limited but finely targeted. They have clearly favoured a niche approach; Péchiney in the food wrapping sector; Valéo in the car accessories sector in cooperation with Honda; Lafarge-Coppée investing in Central Europe and Airbus tapping into the huge potential for trade in China (Crawshaw, 1995). These are just a few examples. Another feature of French corporate life is the fascinating interdependence one can observe in private public partnerships. In 1982, new legislation gave increased powers to municipalities which consequently fostered the development of public/private partnerships (Ascher, 1994). This phenomenon was highlighted in Suzy Nelson's study (Nelson, 2001) comparing the public/private mechanisms brought into play in two urban development projects in Bercy, Paris and the London Docklands. The French have mastered the technique of intricate, corporate networking and the exploitation of common synergy; this was corroborated not only in Nelson's study but also in our Vivendi case.

4. Education – a decisive factor in the training of future managers

Throughout the study we have undertaken, the role of the two education systems has always proved to be an extremely decisive factor in terms of collaborative learning. Although France's education system remains essentially "elitist and ill-adapted to the needs of the national economy" (Simonet, 1989) it is undeniable that it produces a much broader-based, rounded individual than can be found in Great Britain, which is still struggling to open up the curriculum and thus avert excessive specialisation at an early age. It can be argued that Great Britain also has a somewhat elitist education system, but to a lesser degree especially at the University level where there is no real equivalent of *Grandes Ecoles*.

On the other hand, the *Grandes Ecoles* system is still a force to be reckoned with in France and in Michel Bauer's survey (Bauer, 1987), the training background of the top 200 managers in France was broken down as follows:

- *Grandes Ecoles* (highest ranking i.e. Polytechnique, ENA, *Ecole Centrale*) 51.5 per cent.
- *Grandes Ecoles* (second category i.e. Provincial ESC Business Schools) 21.9 per cent.
- State Universities 6.6 per cent.
- Foreign diplomas 6.3 per cent.
- Self-taught managers 13.7 per cent.

In a more recent survey (see Appendix) of the CAC 40 index (a narrow-based, capitalisation-weighted index of 40 companies listed on the Paris Stock Exchange), it is clear that an even bigger percentage of *Grandes Ecoles* graduates (roughly 85 per cent) are occupying the key positions in the top 40 industrial corporations in France. The *Grandes Ecoles* are an ensemble of 172 Business and Engineering Schools that pride themselves on their high level of selectivity and attractiveness for potential employers. Entrance is determined by a national competitive exam.

In the field of vocational training, France commenced a lot earlier (in 1972) by introducing a law on compulsory vocational training programmes; in fact 1.5 per cent of the payroll was levied for this purpose. Another objective was to incite as many students as possible to stay on at school in order to pass their baccalauréat. One consequence of this is that it has provided an excellent grounding for French students to pursue their studies at a higher level and this, in turn, perhaps accounts for the far

greater number of qualified workers, engineers and managers compared to their British counterparts.

In spite of Crozier's (1970) attacks on the system as "places where academic achievement is the overriding consideration to the detriment of the ability to innovate and to develop efficient interpersonal relations", it is true that these shortcomings have been corrected in recent years by the introduction of a more interactive, student-centred teaching approach in higher education. Increasing globalisation has brought about a general overhaul of the curricula that are on offer in French business schools, with a greater emphasis being placed on personal development skills, international experience and working in cross-cultural teams.

In spite of these recent developments, there is still a heavy emphasis in France on acquiring sound technical skills; mathematics still occupy an important place in the weekly academic schedule. In contrast, many more British managers tend to have lower qualifications and less technical know-how compared to their French counterparts (Evans, 2000). To many French directors, this was an incomprehensible feature of management recruitment in Great Britain. A far higher proportion of Great Britain's top 200 companies are inclined to be run by non-technical or self-taught managers.

5. Applying the Hofstedian model and appraising its relevance

The Hofstedian model (Hofstede, 1980) which, although challenged on several occasions for its un-representative nature (the survey was carried out exclusively in IBM subsidiaries around the world), still remains a milestone in its field and has recently been updated by the author himself. One of the most recent challenges from Baskerville (2003) prompted a swift response from Hofstede, who went to great trouble to point out the confusion and misinterpretation of the words *culture* and *nation*, which have been a source of intense debate in the field of research in recent years. Notwithstanding, it must be stressed, that in our experience in the field of Franco-British cultural interactions, a great number of his original hypotheses have been validated.

The main criteria i.e. power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individuality and masculinity were included in our original questionnaire[4] as well as elements from Trompenaars's (1993) research concerning universalism and achievement-based cultures. Consideration was also given to the different thought processes and logical reasoning patterns that distinguish the two nations (deductive and inductive logic). Holden's (2002) recent research into cultural difference as being an important element of knowledge transfer has also provided an interesting insight in this regard.

In pursuing our study, we tried to establish whether our findings correlated with the Hofstedian criteria established some 25 years earlier. The comparative scores at the time of his original survey in 1978 were as in Table II.

At first sight we can observe some very contrasted results. France scored higher on power distance and UA (uncertainty avoidance). These two indicators suggest that

	France	Great Britain
Power distance	68	35
Individualism	71	89
Masculinity	43	66
Uncertainty avoidance	86	35
Long-term orientation	39	25

Table II.

organisational structure and management style in France are deeply anchored in high centralisation and hierarchical position. The high UA index in France connotes the apparent need to protect itself from the uncertainties of everyday living; job security, social welfare, health provision etc. In this regard France has one of the largest civil service contingents in the world and is often a model in health provision. This factor is also correlated with a lower masculinity score which stresses the importance attached to working conditions and atmosphere, and a generally more egalitarian approach to corporate life and even life on the whole. Great Britain's higher score indicates a greater tolerance for inequality in society and a tendency to run more risks in everyday situations. A simple comparison of unemployment provision in both countries is sufficient to emphasize this point; provision in France is more generous and is dispensed over a longer period of time.

Our field research, coupled with the series of semi-directive interviews carried out with French and British executives tended to bear out these findings (Table III). In terms of how each nationality was perceived by the other, the following results were obtained from our respondents[5].

By extrapolating these different perceptions and supplementing them with the results of our interviews at BP, EUROTUNNEL and VIVENDI, we were able to validate some of Hofstede's main assertions namely that:

French business management is considerably more top to bottom, centralised and bureaucratic. Britons, in this regard, were seen as having a more pragmatic, "hands on" approach. Subsequent results of the semi-directive interviews corroborated these findings and brought to light the fact that French managers were sometimes more reticent to delegate responsibility and had the tendency to withhold information more readily. British managers were perceived as being more polite, less bureaucratic and more apt to delegate responsibility, albeit occasionally to excessive proportions (Evans, 2000). On the whole, British managers were seen to be far less open to Europe than their French counterparts, although recent figures indicate that this is not necessarily the case in the Business sector[6], underlining that the majority of British businesses would be in favour of adopting the Euro sooner rather than later.

There were, however, some apparent contradictions in the areas of egalitarianism, anxiety levels and overall efficiency in the workplace.

The Eurotunnel interviews[7] confirmed the notion that French managers were more attached to social welfare, job protection and unemployment and old-age

	French managers viewed by British (in % terms)	British managers viewed by French (in % terms)
Disciplined	50	95
Bureaucratic	95	56
Polite at work	40	75
Anxious	95	35
Dynamic	85	55
Egalitarian	17	38
Hierarchical	100	29
Open to Europe	95	12
Hard working	95	38
Commercially oriented	68	33
Organized	50	63
Efficiency at work	83	67

Table III.

provision. This case was a good example of bicultural cooperation in as much as considerable efforts were made to place French and British cultural differences at the heart of the Group's corporate identity.

This said, at BP, the British were not considered as men of action. They often sought new ideas by calling upon consultants. This practice is apparently more wide-spread and systematic than in France. Great Britain has a more contract-based ethic, "unlike the French who are more concerned with status" (statut)[8].

In all of the case studies, including a more recent audit of BBGR[9], a certain number of common denominators were identified.

6. British corporations acquired by the French

The problems experienced by British managers who had recently teamed up with French counterparts were mainly in the areas of:

- (1) Communication flow. A general lack of knowledge of the organisation chart and the corporate strategy and frustration due to the difficulty of getting to know French counterparts at a more personal level. Although there were few conflicts, the British often suffered from a general lack of feedback and direction from the parent company. Visits from French executives were seen as fleeting and little contact was made between the latter and the first line managers. The global vision of the parent company often remained very hazy.
- (2) Organisation. Reporting lines were not clear and the roles of the British managers were ill-defined. Time management was often brought up e.g. tardiness at meetings, constant interruptions etc. . . .
- (3) Management style. Lack of autonomy from the parent company and reticence to delegate responsibility, which, in turn, was often construed as a lack of trust. Hierarchical status and academic background carry more weight in France.
- (4) Working methods. Different approaches to problem solving, information is more compartmentalised in France. More emphasis is placed on analytical skills. In meetings there was a general feeling of occasional improvisation; things were often arranged at the last minute. Logic patterns and reasoning are very different between the two teams.

7. French companies acquired by the British

- (1) Cultural differences. The UK is generally more universal in approach; rules and regulations are on the whole more important. France has more of an oral culture and this explained some of the communication problems experienced, although the language question was not deemed to be the major issue.
- (2) The British character. Although certain virtues such as pragmatism, positivism and open-mindedness were recognised, the French companies often noticed a lack of transparency and spontaneity in their dealings with the British. They had the impression that they only received the information that the British deemed useful to provide them with. The British tend to be less direct in their business dealings.
- (3) Team leadership. A more free-rein management style was practiced in the UK. This sometimes led to disorganised team work.

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- (4) Human resources management. Human resources management was conducted in a different manner. In France social welfare is generally more efficient and provides better service; workers rights are generally more protected. Different practices, such as the allocation of company cars posed problems in the case of Eurotunnel where the French HR manager was morally obliged to follow suit when a more generous car policy was introduced by the British management team. Holiday time and maternity benefits varied greatly between the two countries.

Contrary to what a lot of people may think, we observed, in the cases of BP and Vivendi, that language was not seen as being a major obstacle. In companies acquired by the French, British managers made efforts to learn French and vice-versa. Since the French were often better than the British in this field, joint management meetings often operated in English after a certain lapse of time. There was occasional bad blood if it was perceived that one partner was making all the efforts. Having said this, the language question was not perceived as being divisive or presenting insurmountable problems. Management teams eventually ended up by working in both languages without any major breakdowns in communication.

8. Conclusions and limitations

Throughout the study, we tried our utmost to collate accurately information received from our respondents and to thus avoid over-stereotyping. Our main concern was to judge to what extent national differences and the ability to work effectively together in teams were key factors of success.

The main findings of Hofstede (1980) and Trompenaars (1993) tended, in the majority of instances, to correlate with the results of our research. Language-related problems, although very much present at the outset, were not deemed as being major obstacles in bilateral communication. The traditional rivalry between the two nations and the adverse press, especially in Great Britain, were not considered to affect, in any substantial way, Franco-British trade relations or FDI (the French still detain 10 per cent of all FDI in the UK).

One of the main contradictions that we observed, however, was in the field of long-term planning. Contrary to what one might anticipate, the French, in many aspects, proved to have a better sense of forward planning, especially in the areas of infrastructure, transport systems, and social welfare.

In spite of the basic difficulty in obtaining reliable data appertaining to performance statistics, the information provided by the respondents (55) and management teams at Vivendi, BP and Eurotunnel (4), even if not over-representative, indicated that cultural differences between France and Great Britain were not believed to constitute major barriers in the work teams; on the contrary, they were extremely complementary.

Notes

1. Carlos Ghosn during a conference in Tokyo, Japan, September 2005.
2. UK external trade statistics (ONS).
3. French Chamber of Commerce, London.
4. The notion of long and short term orientation (LTO and STO) was added at a later date by Hofstede.

5. The sample covered 250 companies, 150 in The United Kingdom and 100 in France. The percentage of respondents was approximately 20 per cent.
6. CBI (Confederation of British Industry) statistics 2002.
7. These interviews were carried out in Calais with the French and British HR managers in 1999.
8. Interview with Director of French Chamber of Commerce in the UK, 1999.
9. BBGR is a subsidiary of the French group Essilor; they bought out two British optical factories in 2000.

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Appendix. List of CEOs in the CAC 40 Index

Company	CEO	Education
ACCOR	Jean-Marc Espalioux	ENA
AGF	Jean-Philippe Thierry	IEP Paris
AIR LIQUIDE	Benoit Potier	CENTRALE Paris
ALCATEL	Serge Tchuruk	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
ARCELOR	Guy Dollé	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
AXA	Henri de Castries	HEC ENA
BNP PARIBAS	Michel Pèbureau	Polytechnique ENA
BOUYGUES	Martin Bouygues	Bachelors
CAP GEMINI ERNST & YOUNG	Serge Kampf	Bachelors in Economic Science
CARREFOUR	Daniel Bernard	HEC
CASINO GUICHARD	Christian CouvreurX	HEC INSEAD
CREDIT AGRICOLE	René Carron	Self-taught
DANONE	Franck Riboud	Ecole Polytechnique Lausanne
DEXIA	Pierre Richard	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
EADS	Philippe Camus	ENS-IEP Paris
FRANCE TELECOM	Didier Lombard	Ecole Polytechnique Paris, ENST
LAFARGE	Bertrand Collomb	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
LARGARDERE S.C.A.	Arnaud Largardère	DEA University Paris Dauphine
L'OREAL	Lindsay Owen-Jones	OXFORD-INSEAD
LVMH	Bernard Arnault	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
MICHELIN	Edouard Michelin	CENTRALE Paris
PERNOD RICARD	Patrick Ricard	Self taught
PPR	Serge Weinberg	ENA
PSA	Jean-Martin Folz	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
PUBLICIS	Maurice Levy	Self-taught
RENAULT	Carlos Ghosn	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
SAINT GOBAIN	Jean-Louis Beffa	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
SANOFI-SYNTHELABO	Jean-François Dehecq	Engineer Arts et Métiers
SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC	Henri Lachmann	HEC
SOCIETE GENERALE	Daniel Bouton	ENA
SODEXHO ALLIANCE	Pierre Bellon	HEC
ST MICROELECTRONICS NV	Pasquale Pistorio	Ecole Polytechnique Turin
SUEZ	Gérard Mestrallet	Ecole Polytechnique Paris, ENA
TF1	Patrick LeLay	IEP Paris
THALES	Denis Ranque	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
THOMSON	Charles Dehelly	Engineer Arts et Métiers
TOTAL	Thierry Desmarest	Ecole Polytechnique Paris
VEOLIA ENVIRONNEMENT	Henri Proglío	HEC
VINCI	Antoine Zacharias	Engineer EESEEIHT
VIVENDI UNIVERSAL	Jean-René Fourtoul	Ecole Polytechnique Paris

Table AI.

About the author

David Evans was born in Manchester, England in 1952. He moved to France in 1975 and has been there ever since, residing in the area of the northern town of Lille. He has spent most of his professional career working in the field of University and Executive education, directing the Reims International Management School (Cesem) from 1999-2003; he has also worked as export manager for three years for a medium-sized electronics company in Lille. David has lived in England, Germany and France and has travelled extensively in most parts of the world over the past 15 years. He has presented papers at international conferences in Greece, Poland, Germany, Spain and the USA and has specialised in the field of International/Intercultural Management. He has also been invited to Finland and Mexico as a visiting professor. David believes that globalisation has given rise to an increasing awareness of the notion of managing diversity and cultural difference. With the increasing number of mergers and acquisitions, running multicultural teams has become a key factor of success in the international marketplace. David also intervenes as a consultant for companies who are eager to ensure a good communication flow in their international dealings. Recent undertakings include Essilor, Kempinsky Hotels and the Algerian Savings Bank network. He holds a PhD in Intercultural Management and is a fully certified professional coach (HEC, Paris). He speaks fluent English, French and German, tries hard in Spanish and Italian, and is a strong advocate of Life Long Learning. David Evans can be contacted at: david.evans@reims-ms.fr