To my mother, Liselotte Adler, who brought together two worlds and two very different cultures in creating the home in which I grew up.

—Nancy J. Adler

To my nieces, Stephanie and Melissa Merakis, who give me hope and inspiration for the future.

—Allison Gundersen
Preface

The world of organizations is no longer defined by national boundaries. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* breaks down the conceptual, theoretical, and practical boundaries that limit our ability to understand and work with people in countries and cultures around the world. Prior to the 21st century, a disproportionate amount of the published material on management came from the United States. American managers and American-trained researchers observed the behavior of people in U.S.-based organizations. From their observations and research, they developed models and theories to explain the behavior of people and organizations. The problem was in their implicit assumption: most scholars assumed that what was true for Americans working in the United States was also true for people from other countries working worldwide. Both managers and researchers assumed that Americans’ work behavior was universal. They were wrong. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* challenges us to transcend our parochialism—no matter which country we grew up in—and to see the world from a global perspective.

Today, managers no longer have the luxury of reducing global complexity to the simplicity of assumed universality; they no longer have the luxury of assuming that there is only one best way to manage. Luckily, we have learned that global complexity is neither unpredictable nor random. Variations across cultures and their impact on organizations follow systematic, predictable patterns. Starting with a core of traditional, primarily U.S.-based understandings of the behavior of people in organizations, *International Dimensions* becomes a guide for modifying our attitudes, thinking patterns, and behavior. Far from ignoring the historical body of managerial knowledge, *International Dimensions* expands our understanding of people’s behavior at work to include the diversity and complexity of today’s global environment.

*International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* is divided into three parts. Part 1, “The Impact of Culture on Organizations,” describes the ways in which cultures vary, how that variance systematically affects organizations, and how people can recognize, manage, and effectively use cultural variance within their own work environments. Chapter 1 provides a broad context for understanding the global nature of today’s business environment. Chapter 2 focuses on the nature of cultural differences worldwide and how they impact organizations. Chapter 3 provides a framework for understanding how to effectively communicate
across cultures. Part 2, “Leveraging Cultural Diversity,” presents an integrated approach to managing in multicultural work environments. Chapter 4 investigates cross-cultural problem solving and organizational development; Chapter 5 presents the dynamics of multicultural teams; Chapter 6 reviews approaches to global leadership; Chapter 7 focuses on the best approaches for inspiring and motivating people from around the world; Chapter 8 reviews decision making from a global perspective; and Chapter 9 summarizes global approaches to negotiating and resolving conflict.

Part 3, “Managing Global Managers,” presents a series of issues that are unique to managing people in a global environment. It addresses the human resource management dilemmas involved in managing one’s life and career while moving across international borders. Chapter 10 describes the cross-cultural entry and re-entry transitions from the employee’s perspective and addresses such questions as: What is culture shock? How does one adjust to a new culture? How can employees who have worked abroad successfully navigate re-entry back into their home countries and home organizations? Chapter 11 also presents global transition issues, but from the perspective of the spouse. Chapter 12 introduces the challenges of managing a global career. How do the routes to the top of major companies vary from one country to another? What do managers see as the most important benefits and drawbacks of pursuing global careers? Given its focus on global managers, this section goes far beyond the scope of domestically oriented books on both management and organizational behavior.

International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior is used by executives, managers, and college students in a number of ways. First, it is frequently used as a basis for cross-cultural management seminars in which each chapter of the book forms the core of a course module. When used in this way, the book is often supplemented with current readings that provide a more in-depth look at specific areas of the world, as well as with news articles on contemporary world business events. After being introduced to each module with a chapter from International Dimensions, seminar participants often expand on the material in the book, based on their current interests and experience, by looking at how it applies, for instance, to e-commerce in Eastern Europe or to China’s and India’s rapidly expanding economies.

Alternatively, the book is used as a supplement to core organizational behavior courses. In this case, professors first use their standard introduction to the study of people’s behavior in organizations. Using Chapters 1 and 2, they then introduce the international dimensions of organizational behavior. Following this introduction, they pair a chapter from International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior with each of the
modules of their standard course. They pair Chapter 3, for example, with their perception and/or communications module; Chapter 4 with their problem solving and/or organizational development and change module; Chapter 5 with their module on group dynamics and team building; Chapters 6, 7, and 8 with their discussions of leadership, motivation, and decision making; and Chapter 9 with material they present on conflict management and negotiation. In addition, in combination with a module on human resource management or managing careers, or as a completely independent module, professors present Part 3 of *International Dimensions*, which deals with issues related to managing global managers. Participants complete the course with an in-depth understanding of organizational behavior issues from a global, rather than simply a domestic, perspective.

As a third alternative, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* is sometimes used as a self-contained part of a more traditional organizational behavior, management, human resource management, or international business course. Professors selecting this option often present their more domestically oriented material first, and then add a section on international dimensions. As the economy becomes more globally integrated, this third option is preferred less frequently.

Because a substantial amount of the traditional management literature is based on the behavior of Americans working in the United States, and many practicing managers as well as students of management are familiar with U.S. patterns, *International Dimensions* often uses the United States as a reference point and as a point of comparison. Readers in the United States will recognize the familiar ways in which organizational behavior is usually described and be able to add a more global perspective to their knowledge and skills. Readers from all countries will gain a better understanding of their own culture's practices and ways of conducting business, both relative to traditional U.S.-based descriptions and, more importantly, relative to a wide variety of countries and cultures worldwide. No country's system or perspective is any better or worse—any more or less effective—than any other country's; rather, each is distinct and therefore must not be understood as a replica of any other nation.

Cross-cultural management (i.e., studying the international dimensions of people's behavior in organizations) is a relatively new field compared to the traditional study of management. *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* integrates the best of what is known in the field as of the first decade of the 21st century. Our knowledge will continue to grow far beyond today's understandings. Even though the limits of our understandings at times restrict us, they also define the expanding boundaries and excitement of an important and rapidly growing field.
of knowledge. Far from leaving with a sense of knowing all there is to know, it is hoped that readers will finish the book with a sophisticated awareness of the world beyond their own national borders, an understanding of the limits of their own knowledge, and a set of frameworks and questions to guide their managerial decisions and future inquiry.

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The process of understanding the human dynamics in global management has brought together some of the best thinking and insights from executives, consultants, managers, and scholars worldwide. The process is evolving. What we know today is so much more than what we understood yesterday, and yet so much less than what we will need for tomorrow. The excitement and passion in the search is predicated on our need to understand ourselves in a world in which no part of humanity is very far away, a world in which our success as well as our survival depends on our understanding and respect for each other.

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About the Authors

NANCY J. ADLER

Nancy J. Adler is a Professor of Organizational Behavior and International Management at McGill University’s Faculty of Management in Montreal, Canada. She received her B.A. in economics, M.B.A. and Ph.D. in management from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

Dr. Adler conducts research and consults on global leadership, cross-cultural management, women as global managers and leaders, and the arts and leadership. She has authored over 100 articles, produced the film A Portable Life, and, in addition to International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior, published the books Women in Management Worldwide, Competitive Frontiers: Women Managers in a Global Economy, and From Boston to Beijing: Managing with a Worldview.

Dr. Adler consults to private corporations and government organizations on projects in Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America, and the Middle East. She has taught Chinese executives in the People’s Republic of China, held the Citicorp Visiting Doctoral Professorship at the University of Hong Kong, and taught executive seminars worldwide, including at INSEAD in France, Oxford University in England, and Bocconi University in Italy. She received McGill University’s first Distinguished Teaching Award in Management and is one of only a few professors to have received it a second time. Honoring her as one of Canada’s preeminent university professors, she was selected as a 3M Teaching Fellow.

Dr. Adler has served on the Board of Governors of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD); the Canadian Social Science Advisory Committee to UNESCO; the Strategic Grants Committee of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; the Executive Committees of the Pacific Asian Consortium for International Business, Education and Research; the International Personnel Association; and the Society for Human Resource Management’s International Institute, as well as having held leadership positions in the Academy of International Business (AIB); the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research (SIETAR); and the Academy of Management. Dr. Adler received ASTD’s International Leadership Award, SIETAR’s Outstanding Senior Interculturalist Award, the YWCA’s Femme de Mérite (Woman of Distinction) Award,
and the Sage Award for scholarly contributions to management. She was elected to both the Fellows of the Academy of International Business and the Academy of Management Fellows, as well as being inducted into the Royal Society of Canada. In addition to her role as a global manager professor and consultant, Dr. Adler is an artist, working primarily in water color and Asian ink traditions.

ALLISON GUNDERSEN

Allison Gundersen received her A.B. from Cornell University and her M.A. in Intercultural Relations from Lesley University. She has extensive experience managing and consulting in information technology and investment banking in Asia and North America, having been based in both Tokyo and New York City. Her global management work has focused on diverse teams, global responsibilities, and expatriation. Allison is currently conducting research on global leadership, international management, and cross-cultural teams as part of the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University’s Weatherhead School of Management (repeatedly rated as the number one Organizational Behavior department in the world by the Financial Times), where she is pursuing her doctoral degree.
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