

INTO HIGH GROWTH MARKETS

PAGEUP PEOPLE RESEARCH

**Defining Challenges for Multinational
Corporations Operating in High Growth Markets**



Attracting intense local and global competition, many western markets are now supply saturated

Introduction

Exciting not just for diverse cultural experiences and tasty exotic cuisines, the high growth markets of the world hold great prospects for economic and business growth into the foreseeable future.

Certainly there continue to be great opportunities in the developed world, but several factors are making business growth challenging in these traditional domains:

- **Tough economic times, with slow recovery rates.** As the U.S. and Europe struggle to secure their financial, industrial and government sectors, business and consumer sentiment are at all-time lows and conservative spending is strangling economic growth.
- **Saturation and intense competition.** Since the 1950's, the western world has been rebuilding and reinventing itself with zeal. Strong growth, big profits and seemingly bottomless demand fuelled growth for over 50 years. Attracting intense local and global competition, many western markets are now supply saturated.
- **Instability and volatility becoming endemic.** Western countries have built their markets on solid foundations: governments pay back their debts, banks are safe havens for money and real estate values always increase. The global financial crisis has shaken these foundations and public confidence along with it. Whilst volatility is a natural characteristic of equity and commodity markets, the wild swings over the past three years have disconnected stock prices from any meaningful fundamentals and sentiment rules the day.

Of course, high growth markets have their own problems, yet growth does not appear to be one of them. The International Monetary Fund world forecasts¹ paint the picture very clearly. World GDP growth for 2012 is forecast at 4.5%. But this average is distributed very unevenly, between the advanced economies at 2.6% and the high growth economies at 6.5%.



As a result, employment growth in several Asian markets is already having an inflationary effect on real wages. The cost of skilled labor, for example, has increased in China by between 10-40%, and in India by about 35%³. The popularity of offshoring operations to these destinations, together with local and regional growth is significantly impacting the supply of qualified, high-skilled employees.

Against this backdrop, MNCs need to find, develop and deploy the human capital necessary to implement global strategic plans. Whilst there is no shortage of human beings on the planet, organizational human capital is another story, and employers around the world continually report that they cannot get enough.

In fact, a survey of 70 knowledgeable commentators from 14 different industries highlighted that the risk of attaining and managing talent necessary for business strategy execution was the 4th highest ranking concern for corporate leaders⁴. This risk was felt most acutely in industries such as mining and metals, telecommunications, real estate, oil and gas, banking and automotive.

Only customer retention rated higher than attracting and retaining workforce talent

Top 10 Business Risks	Rank
Regulation and compliance	1
Access to credit	2
Slow recovery or double dip recession	3
Managing Talent	4
Emerging markets	5
Cost cutting	6
Non traditional entrants	7
Radical greening	8
Social acceptance risk and corporate responsibility	9
Executing alliances and transaction	10

Source: Ernst & Young, 2010

Another study of C-level executives conducted by Gartner showed that only customer retention rated higher than attracting and retaining workforce talent in the top ten senior executive business issues confronting organizations⁵.

In this White Paper, we explore the challenges facing MNCs in their efforts to expand into high growth markets. While growth forecasts shine a tempting light on building and expanding operations in these domains, there exist also unique challenges that business experience in the western world does not predicate. Only by truly understanding and working with these unique elements of the emerging world can MNCs realize their growth aspirations and minimize the associated risks.

Part One: The unique high growth market landscape

Business Governance

MNCs are no strangers to diverse operating conditions. Even in advanced economies, business and employment regulations change from country to country, and often even between states within a country. This is also true of doing business in high growth markets, but in addition, there are a few unique aspects that raise the challenge stakes a little higher.

POLITICAL RISK

At a country level, political stability is a key determinant of economic reliability and predictability. Whether a company can consistently expect to import and export goods and services and repatriate profits, for example, fundamentally impacts their success in that market.

The emerging world has fewer and/or younger democracies and their political environments are highly variable. The Euromoney Political Risk Index provides a relative assessment of risk by country. On a scale of 1 – 30, the higher the score, the lower the political risk.

By the criteria used to assess political risk, the advanced economies all score in the mid to high 20's, while high growth economies are in the mid to high teens. For MNCs, this translates into increased uncontrollable risks, and invariably, higher costs.

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Advanced Economies	Political Risk Score /30	High Growth Economies	Political Risk Score /30
USA	26.3	Russia	14.7
UK	25.7	China	17.4
Japan	24.7	India	16.9
Australia	27.1	Indonesia	16.4
New Zealand	27.8	Middle East	18.4
		Mexico	18.4

Source: Euromoney, September 2010

BUSINESS ETHICS AND STANDARDS

To further add to the complexity of business governance in the high growth markets, very different interpretations of ethics and standards apply. From arduous and complex bureaucratic requirements through to expectations of pay-offs and bribes, it can be hard to get things done.

Corruption in business practice is defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain⁷. Examples include:

- bribery of government officials
- commercial bribery, corrupt activities for financial gain
- misreporting or concealment in accounting records
- use of third parties, agents, consultants in bribery schemes
- facilitating payments
- travel, entertainment, gift giving.

How prevalent is corruption in advanced and high growth economies? Questionable business practices occur every day around the globe. What differentiates advanced and high growth economies in this regard is the extent to which these practices are endemic in the business environment and whether a level playing field exists for all industry participants.

The following table exemplifies the differences between the advanced and high growth markets in terms of transparent, equitable processes. By its measure of the level of corruption on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = highly corrupt; 10 = very clean) we can see how each country is perceived. The rankings reflect where each country rates relative to the 178 countries assessed by this measure⁸.

Very different
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Advanced Economies	Corruption Perception Score /10	Global Rank /178	High Growth Economies	Corruption Perception Score /10	Global Rank /178
USA	7.1	22	Russia	2.1	154
UK	7.6	20	Indonesia	2.8	111
Japan	7.8	17	Mexico	3.1	98
Australia	8.7	8	India	3.3	87
Canada	8.9	6	China	3.5	78
New Zealand	9.3	1	Middle East	6.3	28

Source: *Transparency International, 2010*

The challenge for MNCs is in understanding each country environment, navigating through the maze of covert business practices, and maintaining globally consistent ethical standards.

The table below demonstrates this opportunity by showing the total number of internet users by country, and the percentage of total population this represents.

Global Internet Usage

Between 2004 and 2009, the average contribution of the internet to GDP growth in the advanced economies was 21%

Advanced Economies	Number of users (millions)	% of pop.	High Growth Economies	Number of users (millions)	% of pop.
USA	272	78	Russia	60	43
UK	51	82	Indonesia	40	16
Canada	27	79	South America	163	41
Japan	99	78	India	100	8
Australia	17	78	China	485	36
New Zealand	4	84	Africa	119	12

Source: www.internetworldstats.com

On average, only 26% of the total population of the emerging world is currently connected to the internet, compared with an average 80% in the advanced economies.

Future increases in internet usage rates will be facilitated by the growth of wireless networks and mobile devices. Wireless connection services have enjoyed exponential growth, particularly in emerging markets. In 2005, approximately 22% of users accessed the internet wirelessly: by 2008 this had grown to 38% and is forecast to grow to 64% by 2015. The proliferation of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets will continue to improve ease of internet access and drive increased internet usage. Smartphones are estimated to number approximately 5.5 billion by 2015¹⁰.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Internet based commerce contributed 3.4% of the world's gross domestic product in 2009. If it were a stand-alone sector, the internet exceeded the GDP contributions of the global mining, agriculture, utilities, education and communication sectors¹¹.

McKinsey Global research shows that whilst the U.S. still leads the world's internet supply ecosystem, capturing more than 30% of the globally generated internet revenue, China and India are growing at the rate of 20% per annum, with significantly more growth potential, as stated earlier.

In the five-year period between 2004 and 2009, the average contribution of the internet to GDP growth in the advanced economies was 21%. For the high growth economies it was 3%. In the same period, the advanced economies experienced on average below 5% nominal GDP growth, compared to the high growth economies whose nominal GDP growth ranged between 9% and 26%⁸. If the high growth economies held the infrastructure and local economic capacity of the advanced world, imagine the impact e-commerce could have had.

The future brings better, faster and cheaper access to the internet, predominantly through the upsurge in availability of mobile devices. Cisco Research¹⁴ paints a picture of online access for everyone, everywhere, all the time as captured in their 2015 forecasts below:

Mobile Forecasts for 2015

- There will be nearly **1 mobile device per capita** (7.1 billion devices, population 7.2 billion)
- Mobile network connection speeds will increase **10-fold**
- Data traffic will increase **26-fold** (CAGR of 92%)
- Two-thirds of the world's mobile traffic will be **video**
- Tablets will generate as much mobile traffic in 2015 as the **entire world mobile network did in 2010**
- The **Middle East** and **Africa** will have the strongest mobile data traffic growth rate at 129% CAGR
- There will be **788 million** mobile-only internet users
- The mobile network will **break the electricity barrier** in South-east Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: Cisco, 2011

Cross cultural communication

CONTEXT VERSUS CONTENT

The human factor associated with communication across cultures adds color and dimension, as well as complexity and potential for misunderstandings. Many models depicting cultural differences have evolved. One that is particularly useful in understanding how and why cultures differ is the context versus content model described by Edward T. Hall¹⁵.



For MNCs, communication even between low context cultures, presumably more familiar, such as between the USA and UK can be fraught with subtle differences that challenge the effectiveness of the exchange. Consider then the exacerbated effect of communication between high and low context cultures. A potential minefield of errors awaits.

For example, consider the differences between the top ten tips for conducting business in the U.S.A. versus China:

A potential minefield of errors awaits

TOP 10 TIPS FOR BUSINESS: U.S.A.

- 1 Talk straight and get to the point
- 2 Respect is earned through conspicuous achievement, not age or background
- 3 Self deprecation is misunderstood as a sign of weakness: sell your strengths
- 4 Humor is frequently used in business, except in tense situations
- 5 Time is money: do not waste it via vagueness or lack of purpose
- 6 Compromise is often sought – at the brink.
- 7 Do not be offended by seemingly overly personal questions
- 8 Dress code is variable and should be checked before meetings
- 9 Short-termism is endemic: structure proposals for quick wins, not the long term
- 10 “American is best” view prevails: have facts to support if counter-arguing

TOP 10 TIPS FOR BUSINESS: CHINA

- 1 Do not underestimate the importance of guanxi (personal relationships)
- 2 Chinese seek to build relationships based on respect and honor
- 3 Show respect to age, seniority and educational background
- 4 Managers are directive, reflecting Confucian hierarchy
- 5 In return for loyalty, a manager is expected to show consideration for all aspects of a subordinates life
- 6 Senior company management often have close relationships with party officials
- 7 To avoid causing loss of face, respect seniority and never openly disagree
- 8 Do as many favors as possible: debts must always be repaid
- 9 Treat business cards with great respect: the card is the man
- 10 Meetings are often long, vague and without clear purpose: focus is on building relationships

Source: www.worldbusinessculture.com

MNCs in particular, are required to confront and overcome communication challenges across their global operations.



Business leaders
are finding
their operating
environment
tougher than ever

Part Two: The critical business issues for MNCs

1. Strategy Execution

Competitive pressures, changing market conditions, a two speed world economy and cross cultural challenges all threaten effective strategy execution in MNCs. Business leaders are finding their operating environment tougher than ever.

In studies conducted with business executives over the past two years, 92% believe the economic outlook will remain the same or get worse and 87% confirm that competition is intense. Further, 80% confirm strategy execution makes the difference in corporate performance, but only 50% report that their efforts to execute strategy are even moderate or good¹⁹.

Exacerbating challenges to the execution of strategic business plans is market uncertainty and the subsequent pace of change as organizations try to adapt and maintain relevance. In the above studies, 87% of business executives believe that change is accelerating, and will not abate after the global financial crisis. Change is indeed the new certainty.

All business leaders face these challenges, however those at the helm of MNCs face them with the added complexity of the landscape dynamics discussed in Part One of this paper.

BUSINESS GOVERNANCE	INTERNET ROBUSTNESS	CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION
<p>Strategy execution in markets with lower standards of business governance is impacted by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• increased costs• delays to business activity and• increased execution risk	<p>The potential for e-commerce growth in high growth markets is enormous, and executing strategy requires that MNCs can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accommodate variability in internet speeds, security and reliability, and• leverage mobile telecommunications	<p>Effective strategy execution is contingent on effective cross cultural communication: without it, MNC's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduce the ability of leaders to galvanize the workforce to achieve strategic goals, and• risk disconnecting local cultural values from those of the organization



For MNCs, maintaining adequate stocks of human capital requires the management of a global workforce

3. Global Talent Pipelines

Insufficient quantity and quality of talent, especially critical skills, in the corporate talent pipeline increases the human capital risk to business. Demand and supply imbalances for labor also stimulate wage inflation and undermine competitive advantage for MNCs.

With the global population reaching 7 billion, there has never been a larger pool of potential human resources, yet critical qualified talent, where and when organizations need it, remains in short supply. In the USA, the proportion of workforce representing skilled labor is in decline: in the 1960/70's the USA had twice the percentage of tertiary qualified labor of the UK, Germany, France and Japan – this has not been maintained. China produces 8.5 million graduates per year, however less than 10% of these are suitable to work for MNCs³. Inequalities in standards of education also mean that only 25% of Indian and 20% of Russian professionals are considered employable by MNCs²⁴. To further exacerbate the problem of talent supply, research shows that many skills imported via immigration are wasted: in the UK, 45% of new immigrants are tertiary qualified, compared to 17% of locals, however most of these skilled workers are in low paid roles that fail to utilise their skills²⁵.

For MNCs, maintaining adequate stocks of human capital requires the management of a global workforce, balancing expatriate and local skills and developing global mindsets. For example, competencies such as a cosmopolitan outlook, thirst for adventure and intercultural empathy are included in the success profile of high performing global workers²⁶.

For MNCs expanding into high growth markets, attracting top leadership talent to these locations is an added challenge. The cities of the world, not just companies, compete to attract global talent, which has been shown to be an essential ingredient in fostering innovation and economic activity. Measured by a number of factors including physical and infrastructural factors, knowledge and technology and quality of life, the consistently top rated cities, based on MNC expatriates living there, are the key financial centers of the world (New York, London, Paris) with Asia represented only by Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo, none of which could be referred to as emerging markets²⁷. Less appealing cities find it more difficult to attract the world's best talent.

While the knowledge drain resulting from baby boomers exiting the workforce affects all employers, the cross border transfer of knowledge is more unique to MNCs. Many MNCs are headquartered in Europe or North America and have subsidiaries or affiliates in various centers around the world, although there is an increasing trend for the reverse also to be the case. The relationship between MNC headquarters and their subsidiaries is critical to the flow of information between them, with an increasing need to focus on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer, not just the process of it³⁰. Interestingly, recent studies show that direct intervention of MNC headquarters in the transfer process negatively impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of the transfer³¹ and that the timing of knowledge flows have a direct effect on subsidiary sales performance³².

The workforce mix of expatriate versus local employees is also a key concern for MNCs. There are pros and cons for expatriate representation in local subsidiaries: arguments for expatriates include more successful global strategy implementation, technical and management knowledge transfer, co-ordination of foreign departments and human resource development. However offsetting these benefits to a greater or lesser degree are the high costs of expatriation (3-5 times base salary), high failure rates and poor repatriation rates³³.

Added to these challenges is the high growth landscape overlay.

MNCs must tap into what modern science and technology can offer to assist them

BUSINESS GOVERNANCE	INTERNET ROBUSTNESS	CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION
Low standards of business governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create information inconsistencies across countries/regions • limit the leveraging of corporate knowledge and experience • undermine workplace confidence and promote skepticism 	Variable internet services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create sub-optimal conditions for information exchange • slow the rate and efficiency of knowledge transfer 	Ineffective cross cultural communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lowers the productivity and assimilation of expatriates • fractures relationships between headquarters and subsidiaries • decreases the effectiveness of knowledge transfer efforts

For MNCs, the challenges as well as the opportunities are enormous. The emerging nations offer deep, lucrative and relatively untapped markets. However seeing the possibilities and realizing them are not the same. MNCs must tap into what modern science and technology can offer to assist them deploy next generation methods through optimizing the human capital contribution to their success.

Many organizations have already, at least partially, included the cloud in their IT strategy mix and many more are in evaluation and testing phases. Aberdeen research shows that best in class companies currently store 44% for their data in the cloud, and expect this to increase to 67% in the next 12 months. In addition, these companies have experienced benefits including reduced downtime (0.8 events in past 12 months), 10% decreased data center power consumption and a 16.5% reduction in spending on data storage³⁴.

MNCs face both greater gains and greater risks in the cloud environment.

- the aging demographic rate means that cheap labor is on the decline, and technology will be required to automate and replace high cost labor and stem wage inflation
- data protection and data sovereignty become especially challenging for MNCs operating around the globe and exposed to multiple internet security risks
- increased government intervention and censorship of the internet (think of Google in China) and attempts to control its reach and political impact (think of recent events in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Syria and Yemen) may affect the reliability of the internet for MNCs

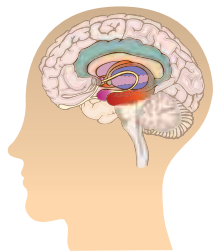
MOBILE

Extensive mobile networks and the proliferation of affordable devices are spurring a mobile generation for which the desktop PC is fast becoming redundant. As internet-accessing mobile devices are still relatively new, so are the applications being built for them. Today, most mobile applications were built for PCs and have been 'converted' for mobile use. In future, mobile specific applications will emerge.

Now that the term 'mobile devices' goes beyond smartphones to include tablets, the limitations of screen size and usability have been largely overcome, and doing business on these devices is much more compelling³⁵.

In addition to providing ease of access to information, products and services for their clients, companies are also utilizing mobile devices to improve their internal productivity and to accelerate decision making. In a survey of 573 organizations, leading firms reported that using mobile applications led to³⁶:

- 90% success in timely accessing of critical information required to resolve issues
- 72% increase in operational efficiency, and
- 42% increase in time to information



We are more adept at accurately identifying emotions in others of a similar cultural background

Better use of science

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

From the field of cultural neuroscience is emerging new information that promises to bring insight to global leaders about the mindsets, motivation and behaviors necessary for effective leadership in multi-cultural environments.

Neuroscience, using brain imaging to capture the neural correlates of behavior, has recently confirmed biologically that individuals from significantly different cultural backgrounds process information differently. Studies have shown for example, that Westerners selectively attend to objects versus context, whereas East Asians attend to the physical and social context surrounding a situation – and that these differences have been reinforced structurally in the brain to create habitual responses. Other studies provide evidence that we are more adept at accurately identifying emotions in others of a similar cultural background, than those from different cultures³⁸.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as the capability of an individual to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity and is described by three elements (cognition, motivation and behavior) that, when combined effectively, result in high levels of CQ³⁹. Cognition also includes metacognition, a measure of self awareness.



Collective intelligence is a key contributing factor to organizational wisdom

COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

To effectively harness the accumulated knowledge and experience in an organization, it must channel and leverage organizational know-how and bind its collective intelligence.

Collective intelligence means that the distributed knowledge, skills and talents across the organization are integrated, synthesized and capitalized. At a higher level, collective intelligence is a key contributing factor to organizational wisdom, enabling leaders to anticipate and prepare for impending changes in their environment⁴³.

Information technology advances, especially social media, are providing the infrastructure for the decentralization of knowledge and mass collaboration. This is fundamentally changing the who and how of information storage and distribution, from hierarchical power-based structures to the collective community⁴⁴. MIT Sloan Professor Thomas Malone refers to this as the paradox of power: sometimes the best way to gain power is to give it away⁴⁵.

In terms of effective decision making, research shows that collective intelligence and tools that facilitate it perform better on average than can be explained. Creation and generation of ideas are well served by collective intelligence, however idea evaluation is less effective. Successfully utilizing collective intelligence for decision making also requires that

- the hierarchy agrees to relinquish some degree of control, and
- there is an appropriate balance of diverse input versus subject matter expertise⁴⁶.

Harnessing collective intelligence is vital in dealing with the knowledge capture and transfer challenges facing MNCs. This, however, is creating upheaval in many organizations that require significant cultural transformation to instill new practices that can tap into widespread knowledge and innovation sources. Further, it is hindered by the differences in national values held in different countries and regions, making this one of the more difficult human capital risks to manage.

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