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BOOKS RECEIVED

From the Edge of the World: Global Lessons for Personal and Professional Prosperity. By Roger D. Blackwell. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995. Pp. vii, 220. Index.

“[C]hange to be globally oriented or assume the risk of becoming the dinosaur.” According to Roger Blackwell, the ability to think globally and the development of a global perspective is an indispensable edge in both surviving and prospering in today’s economy. Indeed, few corporate managers today believe their firms can exist without going beyond the edge of domestic markets. For the author, the ability to think globally is one of the ways a firm can increase its profits in the face of slow-growth domestic markets.

What exactly does it mean, however, to “think globally?” According to Professor Blackwell, global thinking can be defined as the ability to understand markets beyond one’s own country of origin with respect to (1) sources of demand; (2) sources of supply; and (3) methods of effective management and marketing. He contends that, practically, understanding demand translates into being able to sell in other countries, while understanding supply means sourcing more efficiently. Finally, understanding management entails adopting manufacturing, management, and marketing methods from other countries.

To help the reader “think globally,” Professor Blackwell offers observations, insights, and his own feelings on fourteen different nations, from Canada and Mexico to Singapore, Poland, and even Botswana—the fastest growing economy in the world. In addition to describing each nation’s business environment, the author focuses more generally on concepts, principles, and lessons to be learned from these countries—his goal clearly being to encourage readers to apply such lessons to their own businesses. According to the author, “learning about the best and worst to be found in each country can lead to

global perspectives on many areas of marketing and business strategy.”

Simultaneously, however, Professor Blackwell realizes that most people are not corporate managers. Of what import, if any, are his lessons to these individuals? While acknowledging that many “ordinary persons” may not care about what lies beyond the edge of domestic markets, the author nevertheless urges all to develop a global perspective and global skills. He cites observers who claim that as many as forty percent of Americans will have no permanent career opportunity if they do not understand and develop global skills. He also contends that no one lacking the ability to think globally should be considered for promotion to a position of major responsibility in any organization. In short, then, according to Professor Blackwell, all should develop a global perspective and an understanding of what lies beyond the edge of the national boundary.

U.S. Business and Today's Germany: A Guide for Corporate Executives and Attorneys. By James A. Hart and Dieter Schultze-Zeu. Westport: Quorum Books, 1995. Pp. xiii, 236. Bibliography, Index.

While fifty years ago, at the conclusion of World War II, there were no U.S. firms in Germany, today there are over 1,600. According to James Hart and Dieter Schultze-Zeu, this fact undermines the unique business opportunities that Germany offers to both American and other foreign enterprises. The authors begin by contending that U.S. firms doing business in Germany are succeeding far better than usually reported. Indeed, thirteen such American companies with direct investment in Germany placed among the top one hundred German industrial firms in sales in 1993 in the German equivalent of the *Fortune 500*. Thus, according to the authors, for these firms in particular and for the 1,600 U.S. firms in Germany in general, the advantages of doing business in this high-powered economy outweigh the disadvantages.

The authors proceed to look carefully at the scope of U.S.-German business and conclude that, in many important respects, it may be easier to do business in Germany than in other major industrial countries, such as Japan. They consider how the unification of East and West Germany has impacted—and will impact—the ways in which business in Germany is—and will be—done. They also review the variety of approaches U.S. firms have developed toward selling in the

German market, and analyze the influence of the German government, German legal system, and European Union on the German business environment.

Finally, Hart and Schultze-Zeu consider some of the more practical concerns of doing business in Germany. They describe the legal forms of doing business and discuss German accounting and tax laws, as well as laws relating to product liability, antitrust, labor, and social security. The German banking and accounting systems and stock market are also discussed. While the authors conclude with case histories of several important U.S. companies doing business in Germany (including General Motors, IBM, Coca-Cola, and Anheuser-Busch), *U.S. Business and Today's Germany* provides useful information for all corporate executives, attorneys, and researchers interested in the nation.

