

Leaders to Follow

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International Leadership Institute: Providing Leadership Development Services and Programs in the US and Europe since 1985

YOUR CAREER PASSPORT

The Third Edition

In March 2007, International Leadership Publications plans to release the third edition of *Your Career Passport: Why do we feel it's necessary to publish a third-millennium update of our core career development textbook?*

We wrote *Your Career Passport* in 1993, in a world that now looks nostalgically innocent and sheltered. Then, our goal was to help those seeking to enter the workforce (or to change careers) by stressing the newly-international aspect of economic development and job growth, and by providing information about the particular skills needed to succeed in a highly-diverse, technologically-advanced global culture.

Freedom and Trust

In 2007, as we revisit the themes and goals of *Your Career Passport*, we are amazed that we ever needed to men-



Photo, The University of the South, courtesy Spencer Pitman, '10

tion such obvious realities.

With free movement of resources, people and ideas in an increasingly borderless world, surely only a few people remain unaware that there is but one economy and it is worldwide. With a few painful exceptions such as Iran or North Korea, the countries of the world trade openly in an unceasing attempt to make the lives of their citizens better; some do so to gain advantage over their neighbors.

The paradox of the global economy is that while being founded on cooperation and mutual trust, it is constantly being "hijacked" by countries seeking to manipulate it for their own purposes. And governments find themselves between a rock and a hard place in balancing the growth of the internal economy, the welfare of the individuals working and living in that country, and the security of that country's borders.

Differences that Divide

Some of the many differences that divide people around the world are **political** (for example, should illegal aliens be better integrated into the social and economic fabric of the countries where they live?), **religious** (how can competing faiths live in peace, respecting each other's sharply differing concepts of the pur-

The International Leadership Institute

- **WAS FOUNDED IN 1985 IN PRINCETON, NJ**
- **REMAINS DEDICATED TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
- **HAS RUN MORE THAN 50 EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE US, FOR EUROPEAN CLIENTS**
- **HAS PARTNERED WITH THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA, THE JACKSONVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MORE THAN 700 OTHER BUSINESSES, UNIVERSITIES, RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

(25 million people have died of AIDS worldwide, causing untold pain and social dislocation in countries afflicted with the virus—what is the international response to this scourge?), **technological** (when so much communication is done by satellite via cell phone and the internet, how can information be restricted?), **energy-related** (global warming is pooh-poohed in some rich countries, who pollute with abandon at the expense of the rest of the world)

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military (does possession of nuclear weapons by belligerent nations constitute a threat to the safety of the entire planet, and, if so, what's the best way to regulate deadly weaponry?), and **educational** (should everyone have a college education, and can the society gainfully employ them all, or will they leave their country for better opportunities, creating a "brain drain"?).

Hard Questions

Such questions are just a few of the multitude of crucial questions that must be dealt with immediately and decisively to insure the survival of the planet. Taken in light of such significant worries, the small worry of getting a job seems almost comically petty.

Yet we argue that there has never been a time in which being rational in your career development has been more necessary. The complexity of the international job market, and the interdependence of each person's job in the larger global community, make your career decisions important to people in every country of the world.

When your career (the one you prepared for, and invested time and money into, getting the right education to equip you for success) is "outsourced" to a professional in another country where the job can be done faster, and cheaper, you have been rudely dumped into the global economy.

When your doctor, your lawyer, your banker and your minister speak with a

foreign accent, were educated halfway around the world and have cultural characteristics quite distinct from your own, you begin to see that "cross-cultural communications" is more than just a human resources department one-day workshop.

Pandora's Box

Like Pandora's box of woes once opened, the globalization of our planet is proceeding whether we like it or not. When respected American firms like Ford lose billions of dollars in six months and retire nearly half their work force, it's time to take notice. When state-owned airlines like SwissAir or Sabena simply cannot compete and are absorbed into a few giants, who then keep buying more airlines (note the recent attempt of US Air to buy Delta), the necessary business of flying becomes more impersonal and less financially competitive.

A bit of investigation as to who owns what shows thousands of American household names (Chrysler, for example, or Bazooka gum, or Verizon, or even Ben and Jerry's ice cream) as actually being subsidiaries of European firms. And it's just a matter of time before the front-page friendly rivalry of America and Europe is replaced by the front-page friendly rivalry of China and India. The prospect of an enormous united China-India economy could send shivers down the spine of even the most complacent American or European, not to mention the prospect of the potential political

powerhouse of the Arab world, which, were it to become a pan-Arab economy, could cause serious dislocations in every oil-import dependent country on the globe.

Your Career Passport

Career development has gained a passport without any effort on our part.

When we wrote *Your Career Passport*, we encouraged job seekers to enter the world of international careers. In the subsequent 14 years, the world of international careers intruded into the job seeker's life, without him or her having to move an inch.

Given this new and somewhat daunting world, we see the most important elements of career development to be squarely centered on leadership skills, cross-cultural communication skills and the willingness to learn continuously. The technical skills needed to do many jobs, while necessary, are constantly changing and often learned on the job itself.

Getting an education, then, is only the first step to getting a foothold in the world economy. The real battle begins with envisioning your career in a world you can't imagine. To take advantage of shifting circumstances and to carve out a living in any situation calls for the arsenal of skills and abilities identified above. The key question is how to identify and develop these skills, and how to use them effectively in making wise, responsible decisions in the integrated world of the third millennium.