

Contemporary Challenges: Making a Difference

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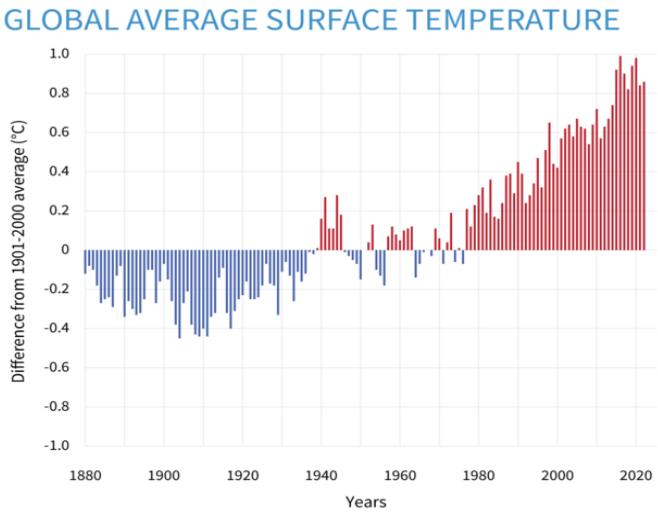
Task 1 – Summary – Leading a Global Team

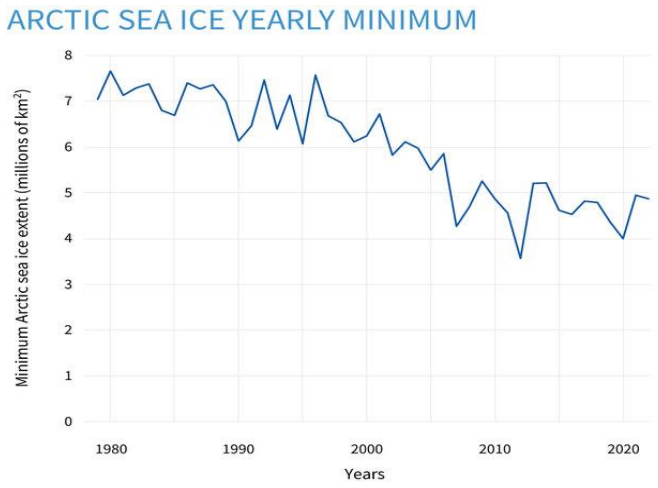
Based on Unit 1, the leadership of a Global Team is influenced by responsible stewardship, equality, diversity, and inclusion.

According to Oboloo (2023), responsible stewardship involves leaders taking action to safeguard the public and the environment, addressing environmental or societal challenges. It encompasses a broad sense of responsibility, covering all aspects of managing and caring for resources entrusted to one's care, whether they are natural, financial, human, or intellectual. On the other hand, corporate social responsibility (CSR), as defined by Newman et al. (2020), comprises legal, economic, and ethical responsibilities that a business must fulfil. It mainly focuses on a company's obligation to be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public, aiming to minimize its negative impact on society.

Responsible stewardship is a continuous and long-term approach, focusing on sustainable management practices that span over extended periods, such as a 20-year plan, to preserve and sustain resources and assets. However, CSR initiatives tend to be short-term and vary in scope and intensity based on the company's objectives and priorities. Additionally, the fight for sustainability in stewardship is centred on meeting the immediate needs of both current and future generations, while CSR's accountability is mainly directed towards limited sustainable projects, campaigns, and ongoing efforts that primarily address environmental concerns.

In contemporary times, climate change stands out as a defining global issue. There is now overwhelming evidence that human activities are causing significant changes to Earth’s climate. For example, rising temperatures in the atmosphere and oceans, decreasing snow and ice cover in the Northern Hemisphere, shrinking of the Greenland ice sheet, and the rise in sea levels. As a consequence, the effects of climate change are manifesting in unprecedented floods, heat waves, and wildfires.





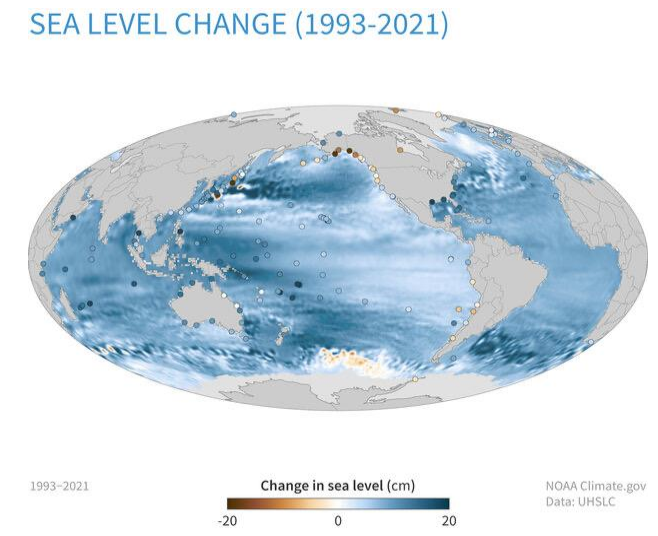


Figure 1 depicts yearly changes in global temperature (°C), arctic sea ice extent (km²), and sea level (cm), 1993 - 2021.

Source: NOAA

Thus, there is a growing urgency for organizational leaders to display responsible stewardship in combating climate change (Mui, 2019). The first step for leaders is to initiate the transition to a paperless office. This involves converting physical documents into digital formats through scanning and electronic archiving in cloud storage. Besides that, replacing paper forms with digital versions that can be filled out and submitted electronically and adopting electronic signature solutions can securely manage documents without the need for printing and scanning. Secondly, leaders should implement waste reduction strategies, such as setting up composting facilities and encouraging proper recycling of paper, plastic, and other materials (Ventiv Technology, 2023). Thirdly, leaders must support reforestation initiatives or renewable energy projects to offset the organization's carbon footprint. Lastly, leaders can exercise their influence to promote climate-friendly policies and actively contribute to international initiatives combating climate change by endorsing public declarations. However, in the pursuit of sustainability, leaders may face challenges that hinder their ability to be responsible stewards. These include limited financial resources for sustainable practices, prioritizing short-term profitability over long-term goals, lack of sustainability awareness, regulatory and policy complexities, and limited shareholder engagement.

Apart from that, responsible stewards must prioritize their staff's well-being as an integral part of their overall organizational responsibility (Erin et al., 2021). Ensuring staff wellness involves crucial aspects like equality, diversity, and inclusion.

As stated by Lazzari (2019), workplace equality means treating all individuals equally, irrespective of their ethnic background, sex, religious beliefs, sexuality, or age. A responsible steward leader ensures employees' fair compensation regardless of their gender, race, or other attributes. Additionally, as a responsible steward, the leader must implement non-discriminatory hiring and promotion policies based on employees' qualifications and merit, not personal characteristics. As a result, equality in the workplace will positively impact employee morale, loyalty, and productivity. Furthermore, inclusion, as defined by Jagoo (2021), involves accommodating individuals who were previously denied employment due to their ethnic background, race, or sexual preference. A leader practicing inclusion must acknowledge and celebrate the diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of employees. They should also ensure equal access to opportunities for career growth and professional development, regardless of employees' backgrounds or characteristics. Finally, diversity refers to a work environment where individuals from various backgrounds are equally represented (Talentlyft, 2023). A leader can foster workplace diversity by establishing diversity councils and

encouraging employees to share their diverse perspectives, leading to more innovative solutions and decision-making.

Through promoting equality, inclusion, and diversity, leaders can cultivate diverse teams within the workplace. The primary advantage of a diverse team is heightened productivity. Emma (2019) reports that organizations with diverse teams are 35 percent more likely to be profitable than their counterparts. This is attributed to the fact that diverse teams engage in robust discussions, foster a culture of innovation, and enhance decision-making within the organization (Emma, 2019). Nevertheless, diverse teams also come with their disadvantages. These include increased conflicts within the organization due to diverse opinions and ideas, especially when individuals fail to respect each other's perspectives. Additionally, diverse teams may encounter communication challenges stemming from language barriers, different communication styles, and cultural nuances. Finally, diverse teams often entail short-term cost outlays for organizations, such as building new bathrooms for transgender employees or creating time and space for practicing Muslim employees to pray daily (Emma, 2019).

In summary, climate change stands as a crucial issue for leaders, demanding various measures like adopting a paperless office, implementing waste reduction strategies, and supporting climate-friendly policies and international initiatives. Furthermore, ensuring staff well-being through equality, diversity, and inclusion is another key issue for leaders. They can achieve this by offering fair compensation and unbiased hiring and promotion practices based solely on qualifications, irrespective of race, gender, or other factors.

Task 2 – Summary – The Advantages, Disadvantages, and Ethics of Implementing New Technologies

In light of my research, multiple advantages and disadvantages are associated with the increased use of Internet of Things (IoT) technology, including ethical concerns that a global leader must weigh before implementing it.

The Internet of Things (IoT) technology involves linking physical devices, vehicles, appliances, and objects embedded with sensors and software, allowing users to connect, communicate, and exchange information over the Internet (McKinsey & Company, 2022). By merging the physical and digital realms, IoT has the potential to revolutionize industries, improve user experience, and boost human efficiency. An example of IoT in action is a smartphone-controlled light bulb. The application possibilities of IoT are extensive and already evident in industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and agriculture.

One of the benefits of IoT devices is their ability to automate repetitive tasks previously performed by humans, alleviating the burden from them (Sergio, 2022). This has in return, saved time and reduced human effort. For instance, people can now control their thermostats from their phones without having to walk from their bedroom to the living room. Another advantage of IoT is its capability to collect real-time data in an organized format for easy access from any device (Sergio, 2022). This access to extensive data facilitates more informed decision-making for individuals and businesses alike, resulting in improved data-based choices. Furthermore, IoT can enhance labor efficiency, reduce skill mismatch, and offer just-in-time training to employees, ultimately contributing to overall organizational productivity.

However, IoT has some drawbacks, starting with its complexity. The diverse network connecting various devices makes it challenging for individuals to control operations behind the scenes, making the systems quite intricate (Sergio, 2022). Furthermore, IoT heavily relies on electricity for power, and power failures can cause significant inconvenience to individuals and substantial losses to businesses. Moreover, IoT devices are susceptible to network-based attacks and hardware-based attacks because of their interconnected nature and communication over networks, putting users' security and privacy at risk (Sergio, 2022). Finally, rising unemployment rates in society may result from the increasing automation of tasks through IoT.

As reported by BBC (2018), ethics refers to a set of moral principles that significantly influence how individuals make decisions and lead their lives. The term "ethics" originates from the Greek word "ethos," which encompasses habits, character, and disposition. In society, ethics plays a vital role in defining how people should lead a virtuous life, understand their rights and responsibilities, and discern what is morally right and wrong.

Like any other technology, IoT presents ethical issues that leaders must consider before deciding to implement the new technology. Firstly, IoT devices often gather users' personal information such as customers' movements and purchase histories through sensors and transmit the collected data to receivers without the user's explicit consent in most cases (Allhoff and Henschke, 2018). Another ethical concern that leaders should take into account is data privacy and the security of information against cyberattacks. Many IoT-connected devices employ the same passwords over an extended period, amplifying the threat of brute force attacks. This vulnerability empowers hackers to compromise security, potentially causing customers to unknowingly disclose their credit card details when using Apple Pay (Allhoff and Henschke, 2018). Finally, it is also crucial for leaders to consider the long-term consequences of adopting IoT in the workplace, as biased IoT algorithms or systems could result in discriminatory treatment of employees, impacting their chances of promotions, pay, and other opportunities.

To conclude, IoT is a revolutionary technology offering numerous advantages like automation, real-time data collection, and improved decision-making. Nonetheless, it faces challenges such as dependence on electricity, security and privacy risks, complexity, and potential unemployment concerns. Leaders must also consider the ethical issues about data privacy, security, and discriminatory treatment of employees in the context of IoT.

Task 3 – Summary - Skills Required to Lead a Global Team

Considering insights from my research, as well as the content in Unit 1 and Unit 2, various skills are essential for effectively leading a global team.

According to Reed et al. (2019), a leader's role involves influencing, motivating, enabling, and empowering others to achieve specific goals. Meanwhile, a global leader goes beyond influencing individuals in a specific community or organization, as they inspire and shape the thinking, attitudes, and behaviour of people worldwide (Mendenhall et al., 2022). The key distinction between a leader and a global leader lies in their scope of influence. While a leader typically operates within a specific community, organization, or team, a global leader demonstrates cultural awareness and adaptability through interactions and experiences with diverse groups worldwide. Additionally, a leader may lack cultural awareness and adaptability due to limited exposure to the outside world. Unlike leaders, global leaders possess excellent communication and language skills that help bridge communication barriers.

To excel as a global leader, a diverse skill set is crucial. This includes self-awareness and communication skills. Self-awareness involves understanding one's identity, beliefs, thoughts, traits, motivation, and overall behaviour. This self-awareness is achieved by introspection, which involves comparing oneself against self-developed standards (Carden et al., 2022). On the other hand, communication skills refer to an individual's ability to effectively and efficiently convey and exchange information among various groups of people. These skills enable individuals to build strong relationships, comprehend others' perspectives, and express their ideas, thoughts, and emotions clearly.

Self-awareness plays a crucial role in leading a global team and contributing to a leader’s success, as it allows them to comprehend their strengths, weaknesses, and biases. By understanding their strengths and weaknesses, global leaders can position themselves in a team that complements their skills and compensates for their limitations (Chuang, 2028), enhancing their decision-making and problem-solving abilities. The pressure and responsibilities of leading a global team can often be overwhelming. Hence self-awareness is a vital skill for leaders to effectively manage their emotions, maintain stability, and adopt a level-headed approach when dealing with complex challenges. Another important characteristic of effective leaders is their ability to adapt and grow in response to changing times. Self-awareness enables global leaders to reflect on their past actions, learn from mistakes, and embrace new ideas and

innovation. Consequently, they can develop their leadership skills, leading their team effectively, positively impacting team members, and fostering their growth.

Besides that, effective communication skills enable global leaders to cultivate strong relationships with individuals in their global teams, contributing to their ability to maintain international competitiveness (Chuang, 2018). By possessing effective communication skills, a global leader can proficiently ask team members questions and exchange messages, ensuring clarity and understanding while fostering a harmonious work environment that is free from conflicts (Chuang, 2018). This ability also enables the leader to cultivate loyalty and trust within the team, as effective communication fosters strong bonds (Chuang, 2018). Due to the challenges posed by geographical distances, time zones, and cultural differences, global leaders face the task of ensuring that every team member aligns with the organizational goals. However, with adept communication skills, the leader can compellingly convey their vision to employees, engaging the team to work towards specific objectives and goals. Concurrently, the leader can establish clear expectations and performance standards for the team through effective communication. Finally, effective communication becomes paramount in the face of inevitable organizational challenges, particularly when diverse teams are involved. During such periods, the leader's effective communication skills play a crucial role in reassuring and guiding their teams, instilling a sense of stability, purpose, and direction (Chuang, 2018). As a result, the leader can promote team resilience and cultivate a strong sense of camaraderie among the employees.

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