



Culture and Management in the Americas (Stanford Business Books)

Alfredo Behrens

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Latin Americans are culturally different from North Americans in ways that so far have been inaccurately portrayed in the management literature. In *Culture and Management in the Americas*, Alfredo Behrens argues that these differences merit a substantial overhaul of management theory and practice to make the best of the significantly untapped Latin American potential for creativity, innovation, and teamwork. This applies in organizations with North American ownership and management, whether they are based in the U.S. or Latin America.

Behrens, a management consultant and academic who has studied, taught, and practiced in South and North America and Europe, explains why the use of traditional North American research methods to capture cultural traits in the multi-cultural workforce is inappropriate. This practice produces a false picture of the cultural attributes and capabilities of Latin American managers and key staff. And this, in turn, leads to serious shortcomings in the development of appropriate motivation and leadership strategies and of appraisal and control instruments.

Rather than relying on standardized surveys for measuring cultural attributes to underpin and develop such strategies and tools, the author suggests that managers look to the arts—particularly literature and cinema—for a richer and more useful alternative. He illustrates his points by reference to literary icons such as Argentina's Martin Fierro, Brazil's Macunaima, and America's Captain Ahab. He uses a variety of case studies to demonstrate what we can learn from these iconographic characters and what we can expect of each other when we apply these lessons—whether we are leading, following, or working in self-directed teams. This readable and enjoyable book will be an invaluable, engaging, and practical tool for anyone charged with managing at any level in workforce that combines both North American and Latin American cultures.

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