



Leading in a Diverse Society

Put the contributions of other cultures to work in your organization.

By Terrence Fernsler

Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age

By Juana Bordas. 244 pages. Softcover. Berrett-Koehler Publishers (www.berrettkoehler.com).

As our society (and the world) becomes increasingly multicultural, it's crucial to understand how leadership works in different cultures so we know what motivates everyone in a diverse team. Each culture has distinct ways of leading, but Juana Bordas, with many years of leadership study and training, finds commonalities in the American Indian, Latino, and African American communities.

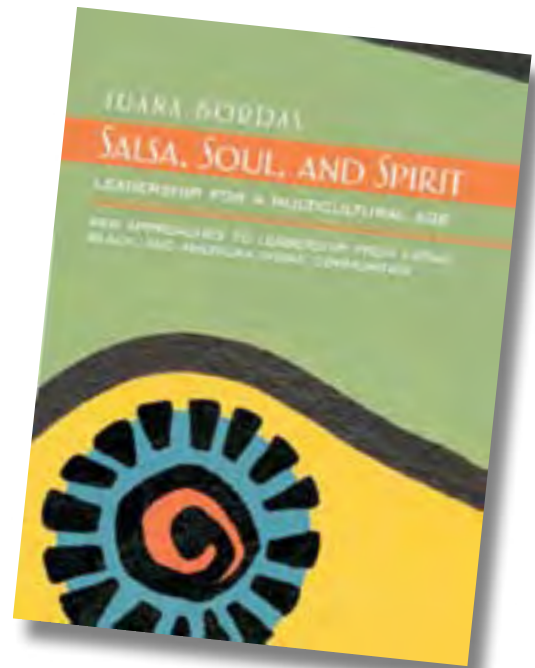
All these cultures integrate some form of spirituality into everyday life. Rather than dissecting matters to understand them, they consider ideas holistically, focusing on the relationship between humans and the larger world.

In our society's dominant culture, personal ambition is usually the aim of leadership. In multicultural leadership, the aim is service to the community. The community gives authority to the leader.

Culture is learned, so leaders can acquire multicultural competencies.

Rather than an individualistic orientation toward leadership (that is, improving oneself to be a better leader), leaders of color practice collective advancement, laying the foundation that places the welfare of all above individual gain. Isn't this the underlying premise of most of our nonprofit organizations? Isn't this, then, the type of leadership we want to encourage in our organizations?

The ability to work with and within a variety of cultures has become an essential skill for today's leaders. Multicultural leadership incorporates the influences,



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practices, and values of different groups respectfully and productively. Multicultural leaders tap the potential of all group members, encouraging everyone to contribute.

Culture is learned, so leaders can acquire multicultural competencies in order to work constructively with many different groups. The most effective nonprofits are those that build alliances, serve their communities, and continually forge new partnerships—all of which are core activities of multicultural leadership. This book can help you build those skills in your organization.

Terrence Fernsler has been a nonprofit professional for nearly 30 years.