

# **The World is Flat? What?**

## **Globalization Project - Formal Report Assignment**

Hartge, the vice president of strategic planning for your company, doesn't have time to read the World is Flat by Thomas Friedman, The World Is Curved: Hidden Dangers to the Global Economy by Smick or the other book, Invisible Wealth by Kling & Schulz. Hartge wants a formal report written, and a presentation about globalization and its implications for your company (you create the company and product).

Your team seizes the moment knowing that this is your opportunity for corporate advancement. The team members know exactly what to do because you've all had management communication at The University of Michigan. This is the chance you've been waiting for, an opportunity to showcase your *informing and persuading* skills.

Hartge needs this report for a board of directors meeting in early January 2014. He is considering the global opportunities for the company and using your report to help make the case. Some of his corporate concerns are the need to conserve resources and develop a global plan, strategy and much needed cost savings or expansion. Hartge is considering moving some or all of the accounting, engineering and customer service functions to Bangalore, India or Nanjing, China. Or, he is thinking about opening new offices in these countries to expand sales.

This is a critical time for the corporation. Hartge needs your input to understand the nature of globalization and the flattening of the world. He needs background information, sound critical thinking and persuasive arguments for or against globalization. Use the book(s) as a starting point; this is NOT a book report. Use all resources you deem appropriate to argue your convincing point(s). It's extremely important that this report include pertinent information, recommendation(s) and persuasive arguments for or against globalization.

Remember, Hartge is planning to give you and your team the credit for your work in front of the board of directors. This could mean that significant raise you need to buy the new domestic car or truck (yours is on its last lug nu) is on the way.

Assignment Deliverables -- You must argue either for or against globalization. Read and use the recommended texts and other outside sources, and write a formal report. Also, prepare an oral presentation based upon your written work. These books are not a history of globalization; they are resource books to help you understand the concepts of the globalization phenomenon. You must include in your report three quotes from each book. Each member must participate in the team presentation. Deliver to Mr. Hartge:

An oral presentation and written report due: TBD see syllabus

Creativity is rewarded, but it must be delivered for the enhancement of the information being presented. Creative use of the medium(s), style and design and/or the creation of a story line that is in keeping with the assignment, objective or task are encouraged. You can and should make the presentations both visually and verbally exciting and entertaining!

# The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman

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### Teaching Points

- This is a group assignment
- Teach your lesson on persuasiveness early in the term. This assignment is particularly heavy on persuasiveness.
- Have the students start reading the books early (I place the texts on the syllabus as required texts). I do not make every student read each book. The students are in groups, so I ask that each group member to select a book read it and share with the other group members (teams).
- I require an outline early to make sure they are realistic and on track. A key to this assignment is to make it uncomplicated. In other words, a group shouldn't pick an auto company to globalize; they should choose to be a supplier with one product they are supplying to the OEM.
  - They can also select this as an opportunity to entertain an idea for an entrepreneurial enterprise they wish to pursue after graduation. I've had a number of these students do this, and carry the idea forward into my marketing classes.
- I meet with each group after the outline is completed and review for clarity of thought (expressed in a thesis or hypothesis statement). Review the idea, the resources (evidence) they are planning to use, and the counter argument. They are extremely grateful and less fearful of the assignment once they meet with the instructor and are reassured.
- I make myself available for review at any time during the process.
- I allow for class time to work on the project. This is much appreciated by the students.
- On the day of the presentation, the audience is me and business people. To make this real, I ask a set of outside business people (three to five "judges") to come in and review the presentations (only I grade the written reports). At that time the business people give honest feedback on critical thinking skills, and presentation skills, e.g., Shark Tank the TV show.
  - The students love and fear the judges, but in the end the students get an opportunity for real feedback, and an opportunity to make contact with potential employers.
  - The judges love it because they are able to preview the workforce, win-win.

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### Pit falls

- I am astonished by how little students know about this topic. They have a natural concern for the unknown...this is quickly overcome by reading one of the books and meeting with them.
- This assignment requires a great deal of encouragement and coaching
- If you want a quality product and good results, this assignment must be integrated into the class as an on-going term assignment.
- The students don't take this assignment serious and put it off. It's not until I make the outline assignment that they begin work. Get started early with this assignment. I introduce this final assignment in the first few weeks of class; don't wait to make the assignment.
- They have trouble making or deciding upon a company. Meet with them to review their choice and their idea, this is critical to a finally tune, quality product in the end.

### Learning objectives

- If you are a business school and AACSB accredited this assignment can be measured by your assurance of learning committee (AoL).
- The key learning objectives are:
  - Critical Thinking Skills
  - Written and verbal skills
  - Working in teams
  - Knowledge of global business