

Mastering the FISO Factor®

Fit In, Stand Out

The Key to Leadership Effectiveness in Business and Life

BLYTHE McGARVIE

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by Blythe McGarvie

Going Global

Five years ago, as I started to build a new career of professional speaking, writing, and executive coaching, it struck me that many of my experiences at BIC as a CFO had likely been shared by many other executives around the world. I had the opportunity to reflect on what I learned and share these ideas with others by collaborating as a regular columnist with *CFO Europe*, a sister publication to *CFO*. The column, called “Your Move,” allowed me to coach through my writing. Readers asked for more information about how to apply some of the methods I described. As I continued my research, I developed the FISO thesis—that is, that leaders must *fit in* to be part of the team and *stand out* to transform the business. My research showed that to be an effective FISO leader, one must develop six traits. One of them is “global citizenship,” which is a passport to opportunity.

One may argue, “that’s fine for some people, but with family and other priorities, moving from one’s home country to a foreign country is not realistic.” Fortunately, there are three things anyone can do to gain exposure to the global world without physically moving there.

Read

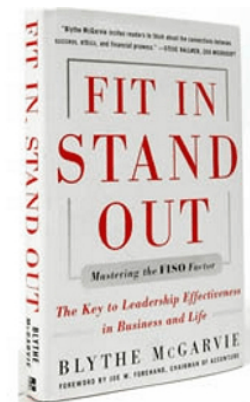
Reading periodicals such as *CFO Europe*, *Financial Times*, or *The Economist* is essential. Reading or skimming the news in major foreign language journals or websites provides exposure, too. Just as we all need to know what is in the *Wall Street Journal* if we want to be current and not be blindsided by business events, we also need to be current with what is happening in other countries. I am grateful to the Editor-in-Chief of *CFO Europe*, Janet Kersnar, for the chance to meet many CFOs from around the world at various conferences and advisory board meetings she established for the magazine. This experience confirmed the fact that no matter how isolated a problem or situation may appear, other people around the world experience similar situations.

Research

It is easier than ever before to learn about foreign countries, cities, and businesses. I remember that in my early days in business, I went to the



Editor-in-Chief Janet Kersnar
with McGarvie in
CFO Europe’s new offices.



Fit In, Stand Out: Mastering the FISO Factor, by Blythe McGarvie, is available from Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and other fine booksellers.
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[amazon.com.](https://www.amazon.com)

public library to study annual reports on companies I wanted to understand better. Sometimes, they sold products in markets with which I was not familiar. I would then do more digging to find out what investment analysts wrote about the company market opportunities and strategies.

Later in my career, I worked for a terrific boss at Sara Lee Corporation. When I first started working for him, he was about to go on a trip to Tangerang and Semarang, in addition to several other cities where we wanted to manufacture and sell our products. I had never heard of these cities—I thought one sounded like a gin drink and the other like a sarong I might wear after tasting the gin! When I learned that these cities are in Indonesia, I purchased an Indonesia almanac to learn all I could. Today, I can research new cities via the internet from the comfort of my desk in a matter of minutes.

Meet and Greet

Before you say you don't have time for more meetings or to attend lectures to hear and greet people from different cultures, think about what Peter Drucker did to make time for what he thought was important. As a famous professor, consultant and coach, he made sure that he knew every name and occupation of his students at the beginning of each course. He believed knowing whom you worked with was essential to building understanding and effectiveness and making better decisions. As a former consultant to companies in Japan, he constantly exhorted his students and clients to consider the global competition factor. Some of the "surprises" we see today—such as the U.S. auto industry and other American companies losing business to foreign competitors—were discernable decades ago to those with a global perspective.

LIF's Lessons

Reading maketh a full man;
conference a ready man;
and writing an exact man.

— Francis Bacon

Today, "going global" receives special attention in the media, yet few of us are doing it ourselves. Ironically, it has never been easier.

I hope that 2008 brings you and your business a broader international perspective!

Happy Holidays!

The *Mastering the FISO Factor Newsletter* targets leaders who recognize the critical importance of financial acumen and global perspective to achieve outstanding, sustainable results for their businesses. FISO means *Fit In, Stand Out*. Developing the FISO Factor is the key to leadership effectiveness in business and life. URLs: www.fisofactor.com and www.LIFgroup.com

Items of Note

Read more about Blythe McGarvie in **Michele Marchetti's** article, "**Going Global.**" Marchetti suggests that **the rewards of working overseas can be especially rich for midlife women.**

In the **CFO Project**, Blythe McGarvie discusses **A Personal Perspective on Business Performance Management**, describing anecdotally where BPM has come from and where it's going.

Laura Martin of **Capital Knowledge** releases updated media company research reports on **Disney** and **Newscorp.**

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