

## **GAINING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE**

Knowledge of a culture is generally acquired in one of two ways, and both are essential for developing the level of cultural competence required for doing business in foreign markets. Objective or factual information is obtained from others through communication, research, and education. Experiential knowledge, on the other hand, can be acquired only by being involved in a culture other than one's own. Global capability is developed through foreign assignments, networking across borders, and the use of multicountry, multicultural teams to develop strategies and programs.

A variety of sources and methods are available to managers to extend both their factual and experiential knowledge of cultures other than their own. Specific-country studies, for example, are published by the U.S. government, private companies, and universities. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Country Commercial Guides cover more than 133 countries, while the Economist Intelligence Unit's Country Reports offer intelligence on 180 countries. Culture grams, published by the Center for International Area Studies at Brigham Young University, detail the customs of people of 174 countries. Organizations such as advertising agencies, banks, consulting firms, and transportation companies often offer clients background information on the markets they serve. Runzheimer International, for instance, reports on employee relocation and site selection for 44 countries. World Trade magazine's "Put Your Best Foot Forward" series covers Europe, Asia, Mexico, Canada, and Russia.

Czinkota, Michael R., Ilkka A. Ronkainen and Michael H. Moffett. Fundamentals of International Business. Mason: South-Western, 2004.