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Nov 04, 2016 by [Cari E. Guittard](#)

Re-Framing Global Engagement Through a 3-T Lens

One of the most difficult elements of working effectively globally -- *whether you're in the public, private or NGO sector* -- is in knowing where to begin when it comes to distilling, analyzing, and developing responses to the geopolitical environment that one is operating in. By its very nature, the geopolitical landscape is ever-shifting, uncertain, and complex. One of the approaches I've found useful over the course of my global career is what I have termed the **Three T Lens**: actively and consistently building deep intellectual capital around relevant geopolitical **Trends** and cross-cultural **Tendencies**, which are then analyzed against the backdrop of what's currently gaining **Traction** or immediate attention/focus in the media. Unfortunately, oftentimes an organization's approach to the geopolitical environment is too narrowly focused solely on traction, what's currently headlining in the local and regional media. This narrow viewpoint – without the further context of the two other Ts – provides not only a limited view, but relies on inherently biased information that is unreliable and difficult to analyze for strategic purposes. It is key to pair trends and tendencies with traction, because they thread in historical context while drawing out broader, macro-level concerns, as well as opportunities that the day-to-day traction in the media may miss. Understanding tendencies helps you anticipate and manage behaviors, roles, and expectations of stakeholders.

Pair the Three T approach with tri-sector (public, private, and NGO) engagement strategies and one has a simple, yet powerful, way to engage effectively and consistently in an increasingly volatile world. Too often, efforts by the private sector in the geopolitical realm are reactionary and arise out of crisis, which doesn't serve major stakeholder groups or an organization's interests long term. I subscribe to the view that when it comes to engaging effectively globally, **preparation** and **offense** are essential and just as important as an organization's defense, as prescribed by Michael Watkins, a pioneer in Corporate Diplomacy at Harvard. The Three T Lens is a means for investigating the global environment in which an organization operates or plans to operate in, as well as a powerful tool for instigation, re-direction, and/or disruption where appropriate.
