Foreword

by Ronald Cheung

The ubiquity of high-speed Internet services is removing the barrier of distance, and readily facilitating globalization of IT-enabled services, especially IT Outsourcing (ITO) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). Our business, formerly Lifewood and now VanceInfo with which Lifewood merged in 2011, has been fortunate, for over more than a decade, to be able to successfully leverage these ubiquitous global networks and carve out a thriving China-based global business.

Service business is knowledge and skill intensive. It requires alignment of our service and business models to our business strategy. Above all, it requires superior strategy execution capabilities with a laser-sharp focus to judiciously orchestrate the configuration of our skilled resources dynamically, enabled by creative use of information technologies, to help our customers to fulfill their existing and oftentimes emergent latent needs efficiently and effectively.

I find this book quite refreshing in that it clearly explains the theories behind the practices of IT-enabled service innovation and management of which we are familiar with in the evolutionary journey that Lifewood has travelled since its founding in 2000. At Lifewood, the notion of value co-creation with customers and the use of strategy map cum balanced scorecard have both been fundamental to our on-going success.

I have known and discussed the business issues of outsourcing services and balanced scorecard with one author of this book, Professor Eng Chew, for many years, and it has been a pleasure and intellectually rewarding to be able to share my practice experience with Professor Chew’s graduate students over the last 3-4 years. This book has skillfully treated the integration of the alignment of business and IT strategies with service innovation and management—a process we need to be adept at in business. Thus, I find the book informative as a source for reflection on how an IT-enabled service should be run, and I believe the book will be valuable to not only the practitioners but, because of its theoretical treatment, also to business and IT students who wish to master the science, engineering, and management of service innovation. I strongly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in service innovation.

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Ronald Cheung started his IT career in banking in Hong Kong in the 1980s. He pioneered the establishment and operation of a captive banking Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) in China in the mid-1990s. In 2000, Ronald founded the company Lifewood, which later became a global BPO business based in China. Lifewood now has more than 15 BPO centres across China, Bangladesh, and Africa capable of handling multi-languages. In 2011, Lifewood merged with VanceInfo (a leading global service outsourcing company listed in NYSE 2007). Ronald is a graduate of the Hong Kong University (BSc) and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (MBA).