Foreword

It took until the customer, relationship, or social/mobile marketing era for the marketing discipline to wholeheartedly beat a path to the consumer and identify the centrality of her/his importance for its concepts. On its way to create and sustainably maintain increasingly intimate relationships with loyal and emotionally engaged and committed consumers, the marketing discipline resorted not only to other disciplines, such as psychology or sociology, but also to the neighboring management concepts, such as knowledge management and leadership. In the wave of increased customer and societal orientation, a number of consumer-focused concepts emerged, albeit in a rather scattered way. It would go beyond the scope of one single book to claim to provide an exhaustive summary of all the newly emerging concepts in this field. Rather, the objectives of this book are to create heightened awareness that the various consumer centric concepts should be increasingly synthesized as they all revolve around a common central aim: achieving a better organizational performance by congruence with consumers’ and other stakeholders’ values. For this reason, the book concentrates on five interrelated concepts: relationship marketing, customer relationship management, customer knowledge management, cause-related marketing, and behavioral branding. The relationship marketing concept marked the turn away to a more customized communication and long-term interaction with the consumer and found its extension in the customer relationship management concept facilitating individualization of consumer relationships even more with the support of technological advancements. If it is acknowledged that beyond functional needs, values, emotions, and the identity of the consumer should be at the heart of each corporate process, then customer knowledge and ways to gain it should be quasi the DNA of any organization. This is the reason to include customer knowledge management into the selection of concepts. Furthermore, the cause related marketing concept was chosen, as it reflects the increasing societal and stakeholder orientation of the marketing discipline. In this context, I am currently developing and forwarding an interdisciplinary and holistic concept, called curative marketing, which calls to reflect on marketing’s ability to reflect on its current shortcomings and, based on that, deliver compensatory future action drawing on jurisprudence, cultural anthropology, philosophy, and history. Finally, the behavioral branding concept appeared to the authors as the most consequent, interdisciplinary, and cross-functional one to create organic organizational change, which is, at the end, driven by the values and identity of the consumer. In this sense, we thank all the various contributors of this book for supporting us to carve the consumer’s central importance when synthesizing the concepts, and we appeal to the readers to follow us on this way.

*Michael R. Czinkota*

*Georgetown University, USA*
Michael Czinkota teaches International Business and Trade in the Graduate School of Business at Georgetown University, where he also served as the Chairman of the National Center for Export-Import Studies. He also holds an appointment as Chair of International Marketing of the Birmingham Business School in the UK. Fluent in Spanish and German, he has held professorial appointments in Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas. Dr. Czinkota serves on the Global Advisory Board of the American Marketing Association, the Global Council of the American Management Association, and on the Board of Governors of the Academy of Marketing Science. He is a member of the American Council on Germany. For his work in international business and trade policy, he has been awarded honorary degrees from the Universidad del Pacifico in Peru and the Universidad Pontificia Madre y Maestra in the Dominican Republic. He was named a Distinguished Fellow of the Academy of Marketing Science and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in the United Kingdom. Prof. Czinkota also served as Assistant Secretary of Commerce in the Reagan Administration.