Preface

In the digital enterprise, individuals will use a variety of technologies to assist them in communicating, collaborating, and coordinating their activities across distance and time. These technologies are designed to enhance workflow automation, office conferencing and communications, information and knowledge sharing, shared calendaring, electronic meeting support, data interchange, videoconferencing, and so forth. The combination of these technologies may also lead to new and emerging applications or systems related to business processes such as e-business, knowledge management, e-learning, supply chain management, enterprise resource planning and so on.

Because of the pervasive nature of these business systems in many organisations, people who are the champions or implementers of these systems are often ordinary business users and typically have very little formal training in information technology. What they do have is business knowledge associated with the particular application, and the leadership and influence skills to shepherd the design and implementation of the system within their organisations. For example, the need to scope a new innovation, produce a business case, establish effective stakeholders’ communications, lead a business-centred design team, provide relevant users support and train and create meaningful evaluation of systems usage. The new leadership roles may be formal or informal, operating outside of “the formal organization,” - which means they have varying degrees of recognition by organisations.

In order to acknowledge the specialized work that these key people are doing, many organisations are inventing or re-defining such IT-related leadership roles by providing job titles such as: knowledge manager, knowledge broker, gatekeeper, online meeting facilitator, virtual team leader, network broker, Web content manager and so on.

In order to present the most comprehensive coverage of these emergent leadership roles in the digital enterprises, researchers in particular sub-fields were invited to contribute specific and relevant chapters for this book. Therefore the purpose of this book is to present a comprehensive description of these new leadership roles in digital enterprises and to explore the implications for human resources planning and training. The book is divided into three sections: (1) Emergent Leadership Approaches in the Digital Environment, (2) Patterns of Leadership Behaviours and (3) Implications for Training and Development.

Section one, Emergent Leadership Approaches in the Digital Environment, includes five chapters, two of which address the issue of ‘leadership’,,and the other three chapters discuss the nature of leadership in the digital enterprises. In “The nature of distributed leadership and its development in online environments,” Kate Thornton (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) explores the reasons for adopting the concept of distributed leadership. She argues that distributed leadership is ideally suited to support online interactions in group environments as all group members have opportunities to facilitate activities that enhance ready access to information and sharing of information. In chapter 2, “Shared leadership meets virtual teams: A match made in Cyberspace,” Christina Wassenaar and Craig Pearce
(Claremont Graduate University, USA), Julia E. Hoch (University of Technology, Germany) and Jürgen Wegge (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Germany) provide a brief exploration of the concept of shared leadership as it pertains to organizing, leading and participating in a virtual team. They strongly suggest that allocating leadership responsibilities based on team members’ expertise and needs might lead to more productive and balanced teams in a virtual workplace. Chapter 3, by Sharmila Jayasingam (Universiti Malaya, Malaysia) and Mahfooz Ansari (University of Lethbridge, Canada), explores the nature of leadership in a knowledge management environment and suggests a transformation of leader behavior is required to manage a new generation of knowledge workers. In chapter 4, “Governance and leadership of knowledge management,” Andreas Schroeder (City University, Hong Kong), David Pauleen (Massey University, New Zealand) and Sid Huff (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) introduce a framework for analyzing governance arrangements of knowledge management (KM) programmes. The framework is then used to analyze the organizational structures, processes and relational mechanisms, including leadership matters, which guide the KM programme of a large European corporation. The final chapter in this section, chapter 5, by Traci Carte (University of Oklahoma, USA) and Heather King (Gabbard and Company, USA), considers the skills needed by leaders to enhance the development of communication practices, performance and change management in virtual teams. They also describe the distinctions between effective practices of face-to-face and virtual team interactions.

Section two, Patterns of Leadership Behaviours, includes seven chapters. In chapter 6, Jocelyn Cranefield and Pak Yoong (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) introduce the role of a Connector-Leader in connecting overlapping online communities of practice as well as meeting the knowledge needs of local organisations and communities. In chapter 7, “Enhancing virtual learning team performance: A leadership perspective,” Charlie Chen and Al Harris (Appalachian State University, USA) and Jimpə Wu (Tamkang University, Taiwan) extended our understanding of leadership in a virtual environment. Using a quasi-experiment approach, they found that ‘trust’ serves as a mediating role in the relationship between leadership effectiveness and team satisfaction and team performance. The next chapter examines the behavioural style of virtual team leaders. Specifically, Mohamed Daassi (University of Bretagne Occidentale, France), Nabila Jawadi (Center for Research in Management & Organization, France), Marc Favier (University of Grenoble, France) and Michel Kalika (Center for Research in Management & Organization, France) examine the effects of leaders’ behavioral leadership orientation on collective awareness building in virtual teams. In chapter 9, “Exploring leadership in e-commerce adoption in Australian SMEs,” Ada Scupola (Roskilde University, Denmark) investigates the leadership style of key players associated with e-commerce adoption in Australian SMEs and finds that the dominant style is ‘directive’. Chapter 10, by Halbana Tarmizi and Gert-Jan de Vreede (University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA), explores the role of a facilitator of communities of practice and identifies several tasks commonly performed by facilitators from different COPs. The final chapter in this section, chapter 11, by Petros Chamakiotis and Niki Panteli (University of Bath, England), discusses leadership approaches suitable for some virtual teams and also the personal values that drive ordinary team members to lead their teams.

Section three of the book, Implications for Training and Development, includes three chapters. Chapter 12, by Kate Thornton and Pak Yoong (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) is titled “The application of blended action learning to leadership development: A case study.” In it the authors describe a case study in which action learning, a process that involves small groups of learners working on issues or problems they face in their every day work, was supported by the use of ICT, thus providing a ‘blended’ approach. Chapter 13, by Darin Molnar (Independent Consultant, USA), titled “Assessment strategies for servant leadership practice in the virtual organizations,” raises the issue of ‘servant leadership’ which is described as a willingness to lead by first serving others. The author argues
that assessment instruments are needed to help leaders understand the level of perceived servant leadership characteristics among organizational members under their guidance. Finally, chapter 14, “Online networks can support the rise of virtual leaders: An Actor-Network Theory Analysis,” is contributed by Annick Janson (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand). Here the author uses an extended actor network analysis approach to investigate how self-selected leaders in online communities spontaneously emerge in a virtual environment, using the online medium to gain legitimacy and coverage.

Finally, section four of the book, Additional Selected Readings, also includes three chapters. Chapter 15, by Ralf Muller (Sweden & BI Norwegian School of Management, Norway) is titled “Leadership in technology project management.” In it the author describes current leadership research in project management, and its related theories. The personality profiles of successful project managers in different types of projects are presented. Chapter 16, by Simeon Simoff (University of Technology, Sydney, Australia) and Fay Sudweeks (Murdoch University, Australia) titled “The language of leaders: Identifying emergent leaders in global virtual team,” examines the communication behaviors of participants in two different case studies to determine if number, length, and content of messages are sufficient criteria to identify emergent leaders in asynchronous and synchronous environment. Finally, chapter 17, “Building trust in networked environments: Understanding the importance of trust brokers,” is contributed by Tom Julsrud (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway) and John Bakke (Telenor Research & Innovation, Norway). Here the authors argue that it is important to recognize the importance of trust as generated through individuals that have trustful ties that cross central boundaries, that is, trust brokers. Based on a relational approach to trust in groups as well as empirical studies of distributed work groups, they argue that trust brokers can help to establish trust quickly and make the group operate in more robust and sustainable ways.

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