Foreword

In today's organizations, a significant amount of work is conducted by virtual teams. While this provides a number of benefits to organizations and individuals, it creates a plethora of issues that are not always easily resolved. Virtual groups supported by collaborative technologies are blazing a path to new organizational forms. In this period, individuals have to develop new skills to deal with changes in work practices and manage organizational transformation.

Ned Kock's book explains how organizations can be redesigned, facilitated by collaborative technologies. His work over recent years has led to him coining the term "e-collaboration" to describe the rapidly emerging area where information and communication technologies support distributed teams. Although the technology is developing in sophistication, on a yearly basis the organizational and management practices to manage the new ways of working are stumbling. An example of this awkwardness in effectively employing collaborative systems is highlighted with the use of e-mail in organizations. Many employees are suffering from information overload, and e-mail is a prime contributor.

Kock explains the history of business process improvement and its importance in the current business landscape. His aim is not to just look at the implications of collaborative technologies, but also to examine how they can be best employed for organizational productivity improvement.

Knowledge management is a huge topic with many facets, but most people concerned with organizational productivity would agree that it is important.

Kock's work explains where and how knowledge can be effectively shared and managed in the business process improvement cycle. Of course, to do this requires the skills and knowledge to effectively employ collaborative technologies in organizations. It is particularly in this area that Ned excels.

I encourage you to read the book, reflect on its contents, and put into practice initiatives based on the insights from the in-depth research that Ned has conducted over a number of years. Finally, I would like to congratulate Ned on an excellent contribution to the literature on this topic.

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