

Foreword

“The significant problems we face in life cannot be solved at the level of thinking at which we created them.”

Albert Einstein

This book is invaluable for businesses at any stage of globalization. During the last few years, this issue of globalization has grown significantly, with businesses examining several options for determining optimal operations and logistics strategies in their attempt to grow and compete in the global marketplace. Due to the complexities involved in innovating and integrating technologies, more often than not the technologies have long been separated from a firm’s overall strategic planning. Companies seeking to become global players must pay close attention to and find a delicate balance between globalization, localization, customization, translation and the growing trend towards internationalization. The importance of this book is directly underscored by this ever increasing need to balance business strategies with corresponding technology innovations that provide the underlying impetus for globalizing organizations. The discussions in this book are also extremely valuable to globalizing organizations who need to offset their “late mover disadvantage” in the global arena. For example, when eBay recently entered the European market, it faced an uphill battle with entrenched competitors like QXL in the United Kingdom, Ricardo.de in Germany, iBazaar in France, and Bidlet.com in Sweden. For such large, and also small/medium sized organizations, the processes of globalization outlined in this book, can provide an excellent governing framework.

Due to advances in technology and globalization of markets, organizations have had to improve their internal processes in order to stay competitive. Not only is the speed with which business transactions are being conducted getting faster, but the scope of conducting business is also getting wider. As a result of these evolving changes, organizations are now discovering that improvements to internal processes are not enough. Organizations must therefore get more involved in the management of their supply chain network of all upstream firms that provide the inputs as well as the network of all downstream firms that provide the outputs of the product to the final end customer. Thus, the concept of supply chain, supply chain management (SCM), and now global supply chain management (GSCM) can no longer be defined at a local level and must be defined in terms of a global network of information systems integrated to include both upstream supplier networks and downstream distribution channels. The global methodology basically centers on the need to integrate the various information systems (ERP or otherwise) across the global supply chain to enable quick flow of information between the trading partners. Within the company ERP systems can achieve the desired integration of the information. Inter-company systems can be then linked using EDI/Internet to facilitate the information exchange between companies. Information infrastructure of ERP systems interconnected with the EDI/Internet enable optimal global supply chain strategies.

The key question for businesses to ask is: What will it take for us to be a success in the business environment of tomorrow? Three forces account for most of the convergence of business strategy with organizational structure and information systems. They are rapid innovation of new information technologies, widespread creation of new ideas and concepts about information itself, and extensive development of new information-intensive organizational forms and business strategies. As more countries join the ranks of the industrialized nations, the sophistication of the global market and number of global competitors has eliminated any advantage that organizations had due to their simple presence in international markets. Companies tied to the information economy are typically global right from their inception — the Internet does not permit them to compete in only national markets. At the same time we see massive consolidations of industries from automobiles to banking to pharmaceuticals to cell phones and Internet service providers around the globe. This makes it mandatory for today's international/global/multinational/transnational organization to employ strategic thinking encompassing business processes as well as technological innovations to compete successfully. That is the precise focus of this book, with the authors creating a succinct yet practical understanding of the fundamental processes involved in managing the global enterprise

transition based on the context of the firms (i.e., the current conditions of the industry and the firm) in order to generate and sustain a global competitive strategy.

The most agile of global enterprise transition strategies, as discussed in this book, are applicable in any industry and provide an infinite number of value-increasing possibilities for any organization. This executive's guide on global enterprise transition describes what global enterprise transition is, how it is being conducted and managed, and its major opportunities, limitations, issues and risks. It brings together some high quality expository discussions from the authors to identify, define, and explore global enterprise transition methodologies, systems, and processes in order to understand their opportunities, limitations and risks. This is all eventually demonstrated by an example case study from the hospital domain in the last chapter of the book, which adds significant value to the reader's understanding of the theories of the globalization process discussed in all previous chapters.

Organizations need a clearly articulated strategy (i.e., considerations such as central versus distributed control) focusing on taking their organization to a foreign country. This will save the organizations time and expense as they build their global Web presence. A key takeaway is that this book helps the reader identify and understand the facets of various elements/processes that bear on successful entry/exit into/from a country. The authors deserve compliments on writing this scholarly book, and making a significant contribution to the literature in global information systems and related international business disciplines.

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