Chapter 2
E Commerce as a Tool for Resource Expansion: Postal Partnerships, Data Protection Legislation and the Mitigation of Implementation Gaps

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ABSTRACT
This chapter is aimed at illustrating how the potential of E commerce as a tool for resource expansion, can be maximized where information gaps, asymmetries, and more specifically, implementation gaps are addressed and mitigated. Engaging stakeholders, as well as bright line rules - distinguished from principles, at relevant phases and stages of mediation process between agents and stakeholders, would not only serve to foster greater accountability, but also ensure that better enforcement mechanisms are in place. Hence chapter illustrates how the stakeholder theory can be considered to be consistent with value maximization. Whilst incomplete contracts provide benefits of flexibility, they have also been criticized for facilitating lack of clarity in respect of objectives, focus and accountability in the decision making process. Furthermore, through the engagement of stakeholders, as well as appropriate forms of regulation, the chapter will also, simultaneously, illustrate how a “properly constructed Balanced Scorecard” can comprehensively communicate enterprises’ business strategies.

INTRODUCTION
E commerce is generally considered to relate to “the purchase and sale of goods and services over the internet, whether business to consumer (B2C) or business to business (B2B).” As well as constituting part of the “multi-channel business model” its expansion to incorporate “m-commerce”, namely, shopping via mobile devices, as well as “s-commerce”, namely, shopping via social media networks, is highlighted (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2013, p. 8).

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The importance of facilitating successful delivery from the source to consumer, across the various distribution channels is crucial to a firm’s progress or success in implementing an enterprise’s E-commerce goals and objectives. As well as identifying challenges which could hinder, or are presently hindering the fulfillment of desired objectives - by way of continuous acquisition and refinement of information, effective knowledge sharing and management - fostered through partnership with distributive agents, it is also essential to have adequate resources to facilitate the execution and transformation of such knowledge resource and asset into desired outcomes. “The best marketing in the world won’t help you if the carrier leaves the package out in the rain or the bottles are broken” (E-commerce Europe, 2013).

In selecting the aims and objectives of this chapter, vital areas and issues which relate to the above-mentioned statements have been taken into consideration: namely, (i) the importance of successful delivery following the ordering of products on the internet (be it from originating business to a business firm or to a consumer), (ii) addressing global challenges faced by selected jurisdictions across the globe as a means of ensuring successful realization of E-commerce goals, as well as iii) means whereby successful partnership arrangements can be forged and fostered between the originating firm, distributing channels and the all-important postal carrier.

**Objectives of Chapter**

The objectives of the chapter are hereby highlighted as follows:

1. To identify, analyze and address global challenges encountered by E-commerce firms in selected jurisdictions across the globe.
2. To investigate and propose means of harnessing E-commerce as a tool for resource expansion.
3. To investigate the extent to which informational gap in executing E-commerce goals has been mitigated over the years and also investigate if there is a corresponding decrease or increase in level of implementation gaps, as well as reasons for such increased or decreased gaps.

The first three objectives will primarily be facilitated through a discussion of a vital issue confronting the theories which constitute the focal point of discussion in this chapter. The issue referred to being information asymmetries and the theories being the principal-agent theory and the broader stakeholder theory. An incorporation of the role of corporate social responsibility will assist in facilitating the objective of illustrating how E-commerce can be used as a tool for resource expansion.

4. Investigating gaps in data privacy and protection legislation and directives as means of proposing ways whereby greater trust can be fostered between the originating business, distributing channels and consumer.
5. To investigate buyer spending habits, consumer preferences and behaviors across the globe as a means of proposing how e-commerce businesses can better understand and address consumer needs, hence also mitigating costs which could be incurred through returns.

In investigating and addressing the above-mentioned objectives, the chapter will also attempt to contribute to the existing and previous literature on why certain jurisdictions have been more successful with their E-tailing business models, as well as make recommendations aimed at addressing present concerns which may relate to implementation, strategy and design, and environmental concerns.
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