Introduction

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Biographical notes: Keah-Choon Tan is an Associate Professor of Operations Management at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He received a PhD in Production and Operations Management from Michigan State University. He has published papers in the areas of supply chain management, quality and operations scheduling in a number of trade magazines and academic journals. He is a coauthor of the *Principles of Supply Chain Management: A Balanced Approach*. In addition to serving as the executive editor of the *International Journal of Integrated Supply Management*, he also served as the co-guest editor of a special issue of the *International Journal of Internet and Enterprise Management*, and on the editorial board of the *Industrial Management and Data Systems Journal*.

As global competition intensified and product life cycle shrunk rapidly in the last two decades, world-class manufacturers and retailers embraced the concept of supply chain management to improve efficiency across the value chain. Manufacturers incorporated supplier strength and technology in support of new product development, and retailers seamlessly integrated their physical distribution function with logistics providers to achieve direct store delivery or cross docking without the need for receiving inspection. Competency in supply chain integration has replaced physical inventory for many organisations. Today, supply chain management has evolved from a tactical supporting role to an indispensable strategic corporate initiative in many organisations. The primary focus of the *International Journal of Integrated Supply Management (IJISM)* is to provide a forum for academics and practitioners to disseminate their research to further advance our knowledge in effective supply chain management.

I am very pleased to present the Vol. 2, No. 4 (2006) issue of the journal. There are an increasing number of interesting, thought-provoking and high-quality research projects being submitted to the journal. Along with this encouraging trend, *IJISM* is building a reputation for publishing many of these papers, and I appreciate the many supply chain researchers using *IJISM* as their publishing outlet.

A major part of our success is our Editorial Board Membership – without them, this journal would simply cease to exist. Our reviewers are able to provide many value-enhancing suggestions to the submitted manuscripts and we have been fortunate enough to find reviewers who can complete reviews quickly to enable prompt turnaround for the authors. Thus, I give the review board a tremendous thank for a job well done. I also would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Inderscience staff for

all of their high-quality and efficient assistance. Mrs. Barbara Curran, Inderscience's Journal Manager, deserves special thanks for the very hard work she has put in for this journal.

This issue has seven exceptional papers, covering the topics of integration of supply chain functions in a firm, the evolution of supply chain management education in North America, the institutional gatekeepers of supply chain research, managing the Bullwhip Effect through distributor managed inventory, the role of logistics in strategic management, a decision support model to assist public organisations in their outsourcing endeavours and the supply chain impact and challenges of RFID. I hope these papers provide guidelines for practitioners and create ideas for further research, and naturally, I also hope *IJISM* can continue to be the privileged recipient of these studies.

I welcome research papers on topics within the realm of supply chain management from all disciplines, including case studies, modelling papers, literature reviews and surveys. I also would like to review papers discussing supply chain management programmes at the university along with discussions of the ongoing funded research, and the sources of funding.