
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Prof. Jaideep Motwani is the Chair and a Professor at the Management Department at the Seidman College of Business, Grand Valley State University, USA since 2000. He is also the E. Seidman Endowed Chair of Management. He has co-authored a book entitled *Classics in Operations Management* and published more than 150 articles in prestigious journals such as *Operations Research*, *IEEE Transactions of Engineering Management*, the *European Journal of Operations Management*, the *International Journal of Production Research*, *Omega*, *Business Horizons*, the *Journal of Operational Research Society*, among others. In 2004, he was ranked among the top 1% researchers in the field of Technology Management by the International Association of Management of Technology (IAMOT). He also appears in several Who's Who in the World publications annually and is the recipient of the Michigan Outstanding Educator's Award granted by the Governor of Michigan.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Wald is an Assistant Professor at the European Business School (EBS), Germany. His research activities are focused on organisational networks, network analysis, aviation management and project management. He received a MA and PhD from the University of Mannheim. His prior appointments include the German Research Institute for Public Administration, the University of Hagen and the University of Mannheim.

Prof. Dr. Ronald Gleich is the Executive Director of the Strascheg Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SIIE), a Professor and Chair of Industrial Management and Executive Director of Executive Education at the European Business School (EBS), Germany. His research interests include innovation management (service, machinery and automotive industries), performance measurement and management control systems.

“Organisations that can learn faster than the competition will have a sustained competitive edge.” (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994)

The automotive industry is in the midst of profound change due to a fierce and growing competition, shifts in consumer demands, high labour costs, among others. In order to combat the challenges of the 21st century, automotive manufacturers have been forced to implement high performance systems. Research clearly indicates that the high performing organisations of the future will bear little resemblance to the structures, processes, and systems of the 20th century. Those who master what creates high performance in organisations will have a competitive edge. Companies like Harley Davidson and Celestica are examples of leading companies who have purposefully designed themselves for high performance. In these organisations, there is a clear operating philosophy that clarifies the underlying beliefs, values, and principles that drive the behaviour of the organisation. The tasks, structures, information requirements, decision making, people selection training issues, support systems and processes, and reward systems are designed for high performance, recognising they are all interdependent, and all impact results.

The purpose of the special issue was to provide a forum for the dissemination of current and future activities pertaining to the role, application, and impact of high performance in the automotive sector. The focus of the issue was to highlight state-of-the-art research and applications in the field of product innovation management, new product development, intelligent customer requirements and relations, risk management, decision support, resources management, supply chain management, change management, product lifecycle analysis and engineering, *etc.*, and their impact on high performance in the automotive sector.

Two types of papers were solicited:

- 1 Theoretical research papers that provide original work on current trends and issues in high performance processes and systems.
- 2 Applied research papers that deal with the design, implementation and evaluation of high performance processes and systems in the automotive sector.

We received several high quality papers that addressed the above theme. Based on a double-blind review process, we selected six papers. These six papers address different aspects of the supply chain.

The first paper entitled ‘A long term investigation on global automakers’ patent and quality’, empirically examined how some automakers achieved higher level of innovation than others in the global automobile industry. Professor Lin concluded that firm quality management and performance of technological innovation were recursively correlated when patenting activities and product quality were considered.

In the second paper entitled ‘Implementing mass customisation in the automotive industry: an analysis of requirements for procurement and procurement objectives’, Dr. Schentler identified 6 specific procurement objectives and 17 procurement requirements when he analysed the development and the manufacturing of mass customised goods in an automotive setting.

The third paper, by Evans and Zhang, entitled 'Real options evaluation of financial investment in flexible manufacturing systems in the automotive industry', discussed and showed how real options rather than traditional net present value analysis provided better initial investment justification for flexible production capability in an automobile engine plant.

In the fourth paper entitled 'The role of technology and people in the diffusion of lean production in the automotive supplier industry', Dr. William Mothersell concluded that the integration of technical and people systems better predicted department performance, perception of department performance, and work-related attitudes. Five hundred thirty three employees working in two automotive manufacturing facilities participated in this study.

In the next paper, Professor Nadin's paper entitled 'Coopetition as a way to reinterpret distribution relationships with emerging automotive dealer groups', concluded that the dealer groups needed customised approaches from their suppliers and that the relationship with dealer groups is a dynamic equilibrium based on the coexistence of coercive strategies, as stated by power-based classical paradigm and collaborative strategies based on trust.

In the last paper entitled 'High performance in after-sales support service in the automotive industry', the authors discuss the need and importance for conducting market studies to provide significant insights and support for performance oriented management of service actions.

Reference

Hamel, G. and Prahalad, C.K. (1994) *Competing for the Future*, USA: Harvard Business School Press.