
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Dr. Angappa Gunasekaran is a Professor and the Chairperson of the Department of Decision and Information sciences at the Charlton College of Business, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. He is teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in operations management and management science. He has over 200 articles published in 40 different peer-reviewed journals. He has presented about 50 papers and published about 50 articles in conferences, and given a number of invited more talks in about 20 countries. He is on the Editorial Board of over 20 journals. He edits several journals in operations management and information systems.

Dr. D. Steven White is a Chairperson of the Department of Management and Marketing and Professor of Marketing and International Business at UMass-Dartmouth. He is an award winning author and prolific researcher. His research has been published in *International Marketing Review*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Thunderbird International Business Review*, *Journal of Marketing Management (UK)*, *Journal of Marketing Education* and *International Business Review*. He has received the Charlton College of Business Higginson Award for Excellence in Teaching three times since joining the faculty in 1998.

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The articles in this special issue of the *Int. J. Business Innovation and Research (IJBIR)* are based on the research presented at the Global Business Innovation and Development Conference (GBID 2008) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in January 2008. The conference, sponsored by the Business Innovation Research Center, Charlton College of Business, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, drew participants from every

continent and diverse academic disciplines to present state-of-the art interdisciplinary research on the link between innovation and sustainable economic development.

The link between innovation and development is gaining more interest in business, engineering and economic research. Innovation, more so than creativity, is seen as the driving force in business and economic development. Both continuous and discontinuous innovation provide opportunities for the development and expansion of business enterprises. Despite the importance of innovation in fostering economic growth, a little interdisciplinary research exists on the topic. The purpose of the GBID 2008 conference was to highlight the state-of-the-art in innovation without respect to functional barriers. The research in this special issue of IJBIR captures both the spirit and intent of the conference.

Wood, Pitta and Franzak get things started by identifying key issues for small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to consider when establishing strategic alliances. These alliances are considered to be critical for the success of resource-challenged SMEs in international markets. The authors develop a model to provide SMEs with the strategic and tactical dimensions to consider when selecting and maintaining strategic alliances. The progressive decision-making for strategic alliances model guides business owners through a series of steps for selecting an overseas partner that will best 'fit' with their company and their international ambitions.

A majority of electronic commerce (e-commerce) transactions globally may be characterised as business-to-business (B2B) exchanges. In the second article in this special issue, Saprikis, Vlachopoulou and Manthou provide a contingent typology framework for describing the B2B marketplace in Greece. The typology utilises three key characteristics (ownership/control structure of the marketplace, market focus of the firm and the functionality used by the trading exchange) to develop classification models of B2B e-marketplaces.

Using a detailed case study approach, Som investigates the link between innovation and research and development to the outcomes obtained in the Group Thales in the highly competitive professional electronics and arms industry. The case is a useful teaching tool when examining topics such as international development, multi-domestic strategy, ethical dilemmas and the role of the state in a business that deals in electronics and arms.

The main objective in the article by Vouzas is to identify and document the best practices in human resources management in selected Greek companies. The companies selected seek to signal business excellence through earning the European Quality Award (EQA). The article examines the challenges, barriers and benefits that are associated with earning the EQA in various categories. Documenting and diffusing the best practices of current award winners and provides lessons for other European companies engaged in the pursuit of excellence.

After a review of the literature on business model design, Rhyne proposes a design for biotechnology firms. Biotechnology is seen as an appealing area of economic development for regions in which there is a combination of high-tech industry, medical and scientific research and engineering. The author conducts exploratory research to determine the applicability of the business model to biotechnology firms at different stages of the product life cycle.

The final article in this special issue is from Kiurunen and examines the effect of culture on the level of innovation in European countries. Using the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), an instrument developed at the initiative of the European Commission, differences between countries are examined. The EIS, based on 25 innovation indicators,

has been used to classify European countries into four groups with respect to innovation: innovation leaders, innovation followers, catching-up countries and trailing countries. This research advances the understanding of the impact of culture on innovation and development.

We thank our partners and authors for their contribution to the success of GBID 2008. The organising committee included the American Marketing Association Global Marketing Special Interest Group (SIG), COPPE – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and Fundação Getulio Vargas. The interdisciplinary nature of the conference, including participants from business, engineering, and arts and sciences, highlighted the influence of innovative practices on the development of sustainable enterprises. The successful development of these enterprises is critical for the economic success at all levels be it local, regional, national or global. The goal of the Business Innovation Research Center is to foster more forums for the exchange of the best practices in innovation and development and to effect the economic health of the globe. Thank you to the participants for making our first initiative, GBID 2008, an overwhelming success. We look forward to seeing you at the next GBID conference.

Acknowledgement

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