

---

## **Foreword**

---

**H.C.W. Lau**

Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering,  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University,  
Hung Hom, Hong Kong, P.R. China  
E-mail: mfhenry@inet.polyu.edu.hk

---

In today's globally competitive business environment, high-quality products play an important role in achieving customer satisfaction and customer retention is always the best way for a business to survive. Due to the increasing awareness of customer relationship management, it becomes crucial that companies are able to understand all the aspects of internal operations together with the external environment and to use the latest technologies and approaches.

In this special issue, we try to embrace the latest research and development of customer relationship management and address the most current issues and challenges. These includes the latest research results and efforts at different levels including sales force automation, intelligent customer analysis, database marketing and supply chain operations. The articles, which have been accepted for publication, broadly focus on state-of-the-art and trends in building effective customer relationships. They are concerned with the implementation of artificial intelligence and data mining approaches that aim at enhancing customer relationship management in a supply chain network.

Some of the articles propose algorithms that allow customers to make optimal decisions when purchasing goods. Others deal with, utilising various artificial intelligence techniques at a structural and conceptual level, including case-based reasoning, learning algorithms and online analytical processing that build supply chain knowledge discovery systems in matters related to a customer retention strategy. In summary, this special issue gives an informative overview with different methodologies and actions for the marriage of business intelligence and customer relationship management.