
Editorial

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Biographical notes: G.D. Sardana is a Professor Emeritus and the Director of the Institute of Management Education Ghaziabad (India). He is a Mechanical Engineer and obtained his PhD from Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi in areas of organisational productivity. He has served the industry for over 40 years occupying senior managerial positions. He has authored two books on productivity and edited six books on management/business cases. He has to his credit over 75 papers published in national and international journals and presented in conferences. His ongoing research is in areas of business and performance modelling, supply chain performance and business excellence.

Tojo Thatchenkery is a Professor and Director of the Organization Development and Knowledge Management program at the School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia. His recent books include *Appreciative Inquiry and Knowledge Management: A Social Constructionist Perspective* (2007), *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn* (2006), and *Information Communication Technology and Economic Development: Learning from the Indian Experience* (2006). His forthcoming books are *Making the Invisible Visible: Understanding Leadership Contributions of Asian Minorities in the Workplace* (Palgrave-Macmillan) and *Advances in Appreciative Inquiry, Volume 4 – Positive Design and Appreciative Construction: From Sustainable Development to Sustainable Value* (Emerald).

Revised versions of cases from the International Conference on Business Cases held on November 26–27, 2009 at the Institute of Management Education, Ghaziabad, India are the primary source of the articles for this special issue. The conference, attended by scholars from India, USA, UK, France, Japan, Canada, Australia and Thailand provided a vibrant forum for a productive dialogue about the role of technology management, marketing considerations for technology, various facets of strategic management and business practices in the new ‘flat world’. Practitioners and scholars were able to bridge the usual schism between theoretical and practical knowledge and showed admirable willingness to listen and learn from one another. The presenters included Richard Lynch (Middlesex University, London), Iijima Masaki (Aichi Gakuin University, Japan), Gary Stockport (University of Western Australia), Paul Lapoule (Advancia Negocia,

Paris), Manmohan Chaubey (Penn State University, Du Bois) John Walsh (Shinawatra University, Bangkok), Zorah Abu Kassim (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak) and the editors. This special issue of the *International Journal of Technology Marketing* features a selection of revised cases from the conference and one independent submission. The cases in this special issue illustrate and analyse real organisational dynamics pertaining to entrepreneurship and technology transfer and technology marketing as well as issues arising from introduction of new technology. Some of the articles also incorporate cases that are essential applications of analytical tools in various situations confronted with choice of alternate technology options. This special issue is also intended, in part, to highlight strategic practices, strategic alliances for technology and technology intensive products/services.

The first article by Roma Chauhan and Rajeev Gupta discusses vReach, a digital media company and a pioneer in design and development of interactive digital content for various conferences and summits held across India. Two years ago, the company decided to provide digital content on the web to its customers to get a competitive advantage and committed significant resources of money and manpower on the project. The case illustrates the complexity of the need to manage technical schedule and financial feasibility issues during the implementation phase.

The second article authored by Sujit Kumar and Siddharth Varma examines Ozonetel systems, a company that focuses on the data network and voice security offerings for enterprises. The advent of internet has brought in several challenges in terms of security of data and network systems. Ozonetel, in an effort to target SMEs across various sectors, developed a solution with features such as automatic storage from host computers, incremental backup, and block level de-duplication. Though the company faced challenges in reaching different market sectors, it was determined to exploit its first mover advantage and decided to study the buying behaviour for IT usage across sectors. Later, they merged the results with an earlier study focusing on lack of market penetration of MNCs and came up with an insightful analysis.

Gary Stockport's article documents the history and growth of Google from its start up to early 2009. A number of important strategic events over its history are considered within the case study such as the energy and dynamism of its founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the struggling of early internet search companies, forming a strategic partnership with Yahoo, building a better business model, its reaction to 9/11, and entering China. The case study addresses a number of strategic questions such as: How does Google formulate and implement strategy? How did Google's business model evolve? How does Google make ethical decisions within its quest to organise the world's information? The last question is particularly relevant since Google has recently announced that it may pull out of China in protest against the Chinese Government's alleged attempt to curtail internet privacy.

Smita Shukla and Kavita Laghate offer an analysis of Silverline Technologies. During its initial years the company created a few historical landmarks and went on an acquisition spree to grow. Within a span of a year, Silverline acquired four companies, all in cash deals. Within the next two years Silverline became a classic example of havoc that can be unleashed if a company blunders in mergers and acquisitions. Surprisingly, the company managed a turnaround and restructured itself. However, during post revival the company once again went on an acquisition spree concentrating on 'buying capability' instead of 'building capability'. The case traces issues related to strategic management (mergers and acquisitions), competitiveness, and corporate survival.

Manmohan Chaubey in the next paper analyses the various ‘growing pains’ confronting KMA Remarketing Corporation (KMA), founded in 1993 in Du Bois, Pennsylvania. The company is primarily engaged in the purchase, resale, service, appraisal and liquidation of pre-owned medical, dental, ophthalmic and emergency medical equipment. The case study illustrates how the cornerstones of KMA business values such as integrity, diligence, cost containment, and quality products are maintained even in uncertain times and how the firm explores various strategies to reach its ambitious goal of US\$5,000,000 within the next three years.

The case from Gary Stockport documents the changing culture and leadership within Semco since Ricardo Semler took over the running of the company from his father. A number of important events and topics are considered within the case study such as the early years, the emergence of a democratic workplace, ‘The Semco Way’, ‘The Five Musketeers’, the Semco Foundation and New Leadership (without Ricardo Semler). The case study addresses a number of issues such as the evolution of Semco’s culture and leadership. Stockport notes that the transformation of Semco from a militaristic autocracy to an entrepreneurial democracy has taken place over a quarter of a century. The strategic challenge for Semco might be the way to continually reinvent strategic leadership within the company.

G.D. Sardana provides a case which captures the circumstances and conditions of an alliance that took place between East India Hotels (EIH) and Hilton. EIH needed the alliance to provide competition to the domestic hotel industry and wanted to provide choices to discerning foreign customer. Hilton was equally keen to make its presence felt in the emerging and fast growing Indian economy. However, the alliance that became effective from 2004 went sour by 2006, compelling both the partners to call it off in 2007. This case traces events leading to the demise of the alliance in infancy and raises fundamental issues regarding strategic objectives, the compatibility of the two partners in an alliance, homework necessary before an agreement is signed, and the efficacy of an alliance.

Manoj Joshi in the last case of this issue showcases the journey of an entrepreneur to fulfil his dreams. The founding manager of Metal Seam Co. Pvt. Ltd. proved that dreams could be turned into valuable ventures by utilising innate characteristics and passion. The challenges imposed by uncertainties did not deter his persuasion to become an entrepreneur. It was his understanding of the business environment and his knack for appreciating opportunity, hard work, dedication and tireless efforts, and engagement in innovative practices that made him different from his peers. The case demonstrates how an individual dared to traverse an unknown field and did wonders in establishing a profitable enterprise while highlighting the passion to learn.

We hope that the case studies above have provided useful insights regarding various issues on technology management, and technology marketing. We hope that the articles will encourage academics and practitioners to affirm the value of the case method for its teaching and scholarly value and encourage a productive dialogue. We also invite our readers to submit cases and participate in the next International Conference on Business Cases scheduled for December 2–3, 2010 at IME, Ghaziabad, India.

As special issue editors, we thank Inderscience Publishers, the journal editors Eric Viardot and Alexander Brem for inviting us to put together this volume. We appreciate Inderscience’s interest in the case method and promoting the scholarly contributions in this issue.