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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** G.D Sardana is Professor of Operations Management and Chairperson of the Bimtech Centre for Management Case Development at Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India. He is a Mechanical Engineer and has obtained his PhD from IIT Delhi in areas of business performance and productivity management. He carries experience of over 40 years having worked in organisations as ABB and Singer at senior positions. He has authored over 100 papers and two books (Narosa-London/NewDelhi): *Productivity Management* (1998) which bagged Best Book awards from Delhi Management Association, and Indian Society for Training and Development, and *Productivity Measurement for Business Excellence* (2009). He has also co-edited six books on management cases. Three of his papers have won Best Paper awards from Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering.

Tojo Thatchenkery is Professor and Director of the Organization Development and Knowledge Management Programme at the School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia, USA. His recent books include *Positive Design and Appreciative Construction: from Sustainable Development to Sustainable Value* (2010), *Appreciative Inquiry and Knowledge Management*, and *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn*. He has also researched contemporary themes such as technological culture and globalisation which resulted in another co-edited book, *Information Communication Technology and Economic Development: Learning from the Indian Experience* (2006). His forthcoming book is *Making the Invisible Visible: Understanding the Leadership Contributions of Asian Minorities in the Workplace* of Palgrave-Macmillan.

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One of the most profound changes in the world of organisations is their almost total globalisation. In the 1980s, 'going global' was a catchword as evidenced by its appearance in media, academic conferences, and political debates. Research on globalisation was fast becoming a topic in itself during that time. For example, a search of articles published in business journals under the term 'globalisation' yielded 1,406 entries for the period from December 1986 to November 1991 (University Microfilms

International's Abstracted Business Information). A similar search for the period until February 2011 yielded 27,690 scholarly, peer reviewed articles, which was a significant increase. The general theme in these business journal articles is that business organisations are becoming more global and managers need to pay attention to this process if they were to succeed in the global marketplace.

This special issue of the *International Journal of Business and Globalisation* provides a balanced mix of articles on various aspects of international business. It features thoroughly revised versions of selected cases presented at the International Conference on Business Cases in 2010. The dominant theme across all the cases is on sustainable development in highly turbulent global economic environment. The business cases included depict a record of business issues and a clinical study of situations arising because of the change dynamics in external or internal environment. A total of eight cases are included.

The first case by Gary Stockport, John Gelavis, John Macdonald, Alan Millard, Glenn Morrison, Rob Pini and Alyson Vinciguerra documents the history and growth of Cochlear, a global leader in advanced hearing loss solutions. They discuss the Cochlear market segment and the strategic positioning of its high technology products. In 2004, having gone through difficult times, the organisation brainstormed and created core strategies such as retaining the customer focus, internal effectiveness and efficiency, and technological innovation and globalisation as key drivers of growth. Today, Cochlear enjoys a strong position in the market and well positioned in an environment where demand outstrips the supply. Towards the end of the case, Stockport et al. identify possible disruptive technologies.

Ravindra Saxena and Arpana Sharma in the second article discuss the global conglomerate Walmart and explore the relationship between its mission, key philosophy and strategies behind its growth and success. Specifically, the case study explores how this growth is continuing even during one of the most difficult times of global economic downturn and what makes the company so unique and different from others. In 1962 when Sam Walton created Walmart, he defined his business by stating three policy goals:

- 1 respect for the individual
- 2 service to customers
- 3 striving for excellence.

These goals helped create an organisation with sustainability and proved blessings in disguise during various economic recessions.

In the next case study, Masaki Iijima, Nobutaka Naruse and Yoshio Furukawa discuss Hoshizaki Electric company's efforts in improving productivity by creating cooperation with suppliers in order to increase sales and by devising models to attain better SCM. Kaizen has helped a reduction of products inventory, a shortening of lead time, an increase in product variation, a change in production systems, and other events. The case study discusses how the manufacturing company tried to tackle these issues and shows the steps involved in setting up an effective SCM in the treatment of increased product variation and quantity. The authors point out that it is difficult to implement Kaizen at a stretch. The company decided to select and concentrate to resolve one issue at a time.

Zhangying He and Tojo Thatchenkery in their case study point out that in today's business environment, successful communication requires special attention to cultural differences. The case study investigates whether there is a difference in the preference for

negotiation styles of employees based on their culture. It explores intergroup conflicts experienced during a project within an international company which utilises a virtual team. The virtual team consisted of members from different cross-functional departments and offices in China, the USA, the UK, and Singapore. The case study explores how the individual team members' culture influences his or her communication and negotiation styles.

Wanda Tisby Cousar and Sharon Huff in the next paper point out that in the current global environment of cross-cultural business and interdependence, education is a priority in cultivating economic development in multicultural communities. The best practices and leadership tools most effective in working with target market's achievement gaps needs to be identified in publicly funded education. The achievement gaps are developed to align with the needs to sustain economic development in disadvantaged target markets. Leadership coaching is also paramount to strategic and tactical management in maintaining the support of key stakeholders to perpetuate stake holder agility by creating high performance teams.

Anuja Pandey captures the evolution and growth of brand in niche segment and its gradual extension into different product line. The brand personality and subsequent brand positioning in international market is the main focus of the case. The case also discusses the opportunities in Indian market and comparative analysis with other brands in different product categories. In 2010, Dove which was largely perceived as feminine brand launched a new Dove Men + Care line. Dove's \$12 million launch of men's line in UK is the biggest ever launch. The case highlights the challenges thrown open due to this launch and raises various methodological questions about strategy. For example, can the Dove brand stretch into male skin care? Can men respond well to products typically thought of as feminine?

Christian Linder points out that ingredient branding is a special form of alliance that exists between two brands that cooperate in designing and delivering the product, with a particular emphasis on the possibility of recognising and identifying the components used in the final product. The author describes the development of such a branding strategy adopted by Bayer AG, a chemical and pharmaceutical company, and UVEX, a family-run enterprise for sports equipment. This case study highlights the marketing strategy formed by insights gained from these two companies. The driving factors for success are described. The study seeks to answer the question of how to proceed with ingredient branding strategy.

Bharat Maheshwari, Alexander George, and Manjari Maheshwari in the last paper of this issue showcase Keystrox, an international new venture in the medical transcription industry catering to physicians who conduct independent medical examinations and render opinions on disability cases. The company has carved out a niche market in an industry that is losing some of its work volumes to technological innovations such as speech recognition and electronic health records management. This case study illustrates how Keystrox has carved this niche market which has remained lucrative and well paying despite the downturn and competitive pressures in the transcription industry. The authors demonstrate how clinical documentation companies can move up the value chain and potentially negate some of the impact of new technology on their revenue growth.

We hope that the above case studies will provide useful information and insights on the working of the organisations featured in this special issue. Each of these organisations have chosen strategic practices specific to their needs and carved out a plan to meet

challenges of globalisation and growing competition. We hope that the articles will encourage academics and practitioners alike to appreciate the value of the case method.

As special issue editors, we thank Inderscience Publishers, the Editor-in-Chief Professor Richard Wright and Professor Leo Paul Dana for allowing us to edit this volume. We appreciate Inderscience's interest in the case pedagogy and promoting case development.