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## Editorial

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### G.D. Sardana\*

Birla Institute of Management Technology,  
Plot No. 5, Knowledge Park-II,  
Greater Noida-201306 (Uttar Pradesh), India  
Email: gdsardana@gmail.com  
\*Corresponding author

### Tojo Thatchenkery

School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs,  
George Mason University,  
Founders Hall 608, 3351 Fairfax Drive, MS 3B1,  
Arlington, VA 22201, USA  
Email: thatchen@gmu.edu

**Biographical notes:** G.D. Sardana received his PhD degree from IIT Delhi and is currently a Professor of Operations Management at BIMTECH and edits *South Asian Journal for Business and Management Cases* (SAGE Publishers). He has a rich corporate experience of over 40 years having worked in organisations of repute as BHEL, ABB and Singer at senior positions. He has authored around 100 papers, published in national/international journals. Three of his papers have won best paper awards from Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering. He has authored three books: *Productivity Management* (Narosa, 1998), *Productivity Measurement for Business Excellence* (Narosa, 2009) and *Managing World Class Operations* (Bloomsbury, 2014).

Tojo Thatchenkery received his PhD from the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. He is Professor and Director of the Organisation Development and Knowledge Management program at the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs, George Mason University, Arlington, Virginia, USA. He is the author of several books and articles on organisational change and social constructionist thinking (<http://www.appreciativeintelligence.com>). He has consulted with many international organisations, including Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, American Red Cross, IBM, Alcatel-Lucent, General Mills, 3M, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Tata Consulting Services (India).

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Services have come to occupy a crucial role for the economic growth of nations, a trend that continues to rise. It has been a long time since the developed economies started reporting higher GDP from services as compared to manufacturing. The developing economies such as India have followed suit. The services sectors have been with mankind since early days of civilisation, even though they may not have been called so. They largely represented the occupations of the lesser educated. The advent of information technology and telecommunications has changed the scenario. Advances in the information technology and communications have impacted the behaviour and

expectations of the customers in service sectors as travel, banking, healthcare and logistics. More and more of traditional services as entertainment, retailing have become dependent on accuracy and speed of delivery. The growth of e-commerce demonstrates the new developments. The orientation towards professionalism was introduced through knowledge and skills. First, the service management, service quality, and then the service technology management became the new subjects of research and higher studies. Technology has entered the services in a major way to impact cost, quality, speed, flexibility and delivery to the customer. It is a new and an important factor of competitive advantage. There are two more dimensions related to marketing of service and importance of service technology management. The services are relatively low barriers to make an entry to services. Secondly, the line of separation of the products and the services is fast thinning. There are no products without service, and no service without an attachment of tangible product. It is therefore the element of service technology that is going to make a difference in customer acceptance between one service and the other. Innovations, new product development, response to quality acceptance, and customer service all carry a close relation to managing service technology management.

The eight articles included in this special issue are drawn from papers presented at International Conference on Management Cases 2014 (ICMC 2014), held on December 4–5, 2014 at Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India. ICMC, jointly organised by BIMTECH and the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs, George Mason University is a well-known annual event that attracts academicians, practitioners and researchers from all over the globe and provides a platform to share experiences from real situations. The papers in this volume are the updated and revised versions incorporating various suggestions that resulted from constructive criticism from the experts while the authors made presentation at the conference.

The volume opens with a paper from Maarit Lammassaari and Esa Hiltunen who present a study on Finnish healthcare system to improve service to the customers. The authors explore managerial sensemaking during a change. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, an interview was carried out with a manager acting in the private healthcare sector while major political decisions about the future of the healthcare system were being pursued in the healthcare field. A sensemaking perspective was adopted as a methodological tool for analysing the interview data. Healthcare change is perceived as an uncertain and a constant change environment for the private healthcare sector. The social change is greatly impacting on the changes occurring in the companies.

Nimisha Singh and Abha Rishi next discuss the importance of open source ERP as a change maker. Compared to traditional ERP systems which were generally complex, the open source model is easy to integrate and implement. Globalisation, changing regulations and technological innovations and zero license cost have fuelled the growth of open source ERP solutions. Moreover, it is a business model which is highly adaptable to small and medium level organisations needs. At the same time, it faces its unique set of problems for implementation. This case presents how Apagen Solutions has emerged as open source ERP service provider in some of the emerging markets. It provides low-cost solutions compared to the commercial software vendors, especially for the cash strapped small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs).

John Walsh in the paper that follows discusses Thilawa special economic zone (SEZ) and the single window service it will provide. Transporting goods by sea has been revolutionised by the containerisation, whereby standardised crate sizes on seagoing

vessels have increased the efficiency of operations. Yet, there are other constraints of services to efficient operations and such issues as customs clearance, tariffs and non-tariff barriers can all have a significant effect. Use of the national single window (NSW) concept should improve competitiveness within the region as a whole because it will be common among all members and will be in operation in all ports of entry and exit. Thilawa SEZ being developed in Myanmar will meet these expectations.

In the next paper, Suvi von Becker, Eeva Aromaa and Päivi Eriksson analyse client-consultant interaction and explore how value is co-created and co-destroyed in the social interaction between consultants and clients. Prior research on management consultancy as service production has elaborated on the question of how value is co-created in the same context as in this paper. However, how value is co-destroyed has not been studied adequately. In this paper, a workshop facilitated by a consultant for a client is studied to conduct a micro-analysis of the dynamics and tensions of co-creation and co-destruction of value. In management consultant services, it is suggested that value and, more specifically, consultant-client relationships can be both co-created and co-destroyed through the approach-avoidance motivation of the consultant and the client.

S.W.S.B. Dasanayaka, G.D. Sardana and C. Silva discuss service technology management issues in the context of SME's of Sri Lanka. Technology support from cluster development initiatives (CDIs) is vital for the success of SME's. Clusters identify a special type of agglomeration of SMEs' activities in a specific geographical location with unique functional dimensions. Clusters give birth to 'CDIs', as a strategy to promote and stimulate the growth of the SME sector by breaking the vicious cycle of the SME through collaborative advantage between firms and other SME-related key stakeholders. This study attempts to explore the applicability of a CDI for the SME clusters through Panchikawatte motor spare parts cluster in the Sri Lankan automobile sector.

Masaki Iijima and Kentaro Azuma in the next paper discuss innovative approaches in offering customer service in the cosmetics market. The authors highlight that most of the Japanese cosmetics market is operated according to the 'small profits and quick returns' type of system. The urban areas are surrounded by residential societies that have many rich families. Customer service to these customers is unsatisfactory. The paper discusses a shop that decides to offer high-quality products and high quality services through staff that have high skills and possess a variety of knowledge as professional technicians. They offer customers unique services known as Omotenashi in Japanese. The shop shares information on the latest cosmetics information by SMS. The service technology management has played an important role to develop a friendly relationship with the customers.

Tero Montonen, Päivi Eriksson, and Hanna Lehtimäki in the paper that follows focuses on empathy as a central aspect of the innovation process. The theme of discussion relates to innovators' empathy towards customers by adding a new angle: facilitators' empathy towards innovators. The authors go on to explore 'empathic facilitation', which draws on a combination of diagnostic and dialogic organisation development and facilitation practice. Through an intensive case study, the authors attempt to show that empathic facilitation can be used as a vehicle for rapid, customer-oriented innovation. The findings indicate that while dialogic practice is a cost-effective way to strengthen and maintain customer perspective in the innovation process, diagnostic practice is required to increase the speed of the innovation process.

The last paper of this volume contributed by Veenu Sharma, Richa Singh and G.N. Patel intend to analyse and understand brand equity through a measurement model. It will help in investigating the effects of overall brand equity and to find out the main drivers of overall brand equity. Analysis is carried out by using structural equation modelling (SEM). Measurement invariance and stability of the model across the product wheat flour, which is widely available and well known to Indian consumers, is tested in the process. Building brand equity will help in generating more value for producers since a more favourable consumer response results from positive brand equity. The result will provide producers with useful insights into brand building.

The eight papers describe the positive approaches adopted from an out of the box thinking in service technology management. We trust that the readers will find the new ideas shared here as useful and the reading will kindle curiosity to know more in this area. We thank Editor-in Chief, Dr. Mohammed A. Dorgham for this opportunity to guest edit this special issue.