

Editorial

This special issue of *Total Quality Management* is devoted to the First International Conference on Electronic Business (ICEB 2001), held in Hong Kong during 19–21 December 2001.

In the ICEB 2001, we received well over 200 paper submissions and accepted and included 165 papers in the conference proceedings. These papers and presentations have contributed significantly to the field of e-business as it continues making strides in the new millennium. Although e-commerce has gone through its ups and downs in the past few years, there is no doubt that e-business will shake up every aspect of business operations, and our lives, in the future. To take full advantage of e-business, a great deal more of research is needed to investigate ways to enhance business processes and to improve quality and productivity, utilizing information and other related technologies. There is still much science and technology to be discovered and applied. We sincerely hope the success of the conference will engender the much-needed collaboration of research as well as debates on issues related to pioneering e-business research.

The great success of the ICEB 2001 should be attributed to a group of dedicated people. For this, we would like to express sincere thanks to our conference co-organizers: Department of Decision Sciences and Managerial Economics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; College of Management, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan; Centre For E-Business, National University of Singapore; and Research Center for Contemporary Management, Tsinghua University. We would also like to thank Professors Ching-Chyi Lee, Xiande Zhao and Baoding Liu for coordinating the paper review and the production of the proceedings; Professors Waiman Cheung, Timon Du, Chi-Chun Lo and M. S. Jacqueline Wong for promotion and programme organization; and Ms May Lam and Miss Louisa Liu for their superb administrative support.

Special thanks goes to Professor Gopal Kanji, editor in chief of *Total Quality Management* (TQM), who has dedicated this special issue to the outstanding papers presented in the conference. We are honoured to be the guest editors of the issue. After our initial screening, 15 out of 40 submitted papers were chosen for the double-blind review process. With the help of over 20 reviewers, six quality papers were selected to be included in this issue. The selected papers cover many e-business related issues, such as customer relationship management, electronic operations, consumer behaviour in online retailing, ERP implementation, decision process, and quality improvement through e-learning in the service industry.

In the first paper, 'The effect of national differences on multinational ERP implementation: an exploratory study,' Professors Chwen Sheu, Rebecca Yen, and Dennis Krumwiede, examine what and how national differences affect ERP implementation practices across nations using direct observations and systematic interviews in US and Taiwanese manufacturing firms. In the second paper, 'Competitive advantages through e-operations,' Professor David Barnes and his colleagues investigate how UK-based organizations undertaking electronic commerce are seeking competitive advantages through the management of their e-operations. In the third paper, 'Examination of brand knowledge, perceived risk and consumers' intention to adopt an online retailer,' Professors Rong Chen and Feng He study the causal relationships among brand knowledge, perceived risk, online search action and the intention to adopt an online retailer. The fourth paper, 'DATQUAL: a prototype e-learning

application to support quality management practices in service industries,' by Professors Wild and Hope, describes a prototype e-learning system to assist service operational workers involved in decision making in a TQM environment. The fifth paper, 'A strategic analysis of customer relationship management: a field study on hotel enterprises,' by Professors Lin and Su, presents a field study of customer relationship management (CRM) among high quality hotels in Taiwan. In the final paper, 'A decision support system for solving quality problems using case-based reasoning,' Professor Lari presents an intelligent system designed to assist companies in making decisions in the corrective and preventive action process.

Finally, our most sincere thank goes to all the authors who contributed their works to this special issue. Without them, this special issue would not be possible. Although the review and editorial processes have gone much longer than we have anticipated, we have learnt a lot from the processes and from the contents of all the papers submitted. We would like to once again thank all the reviewers for their efforts and their valuable comments. We hope you will enjoy reading the papers in this issue as we did.

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