

Preface

Since the first edition of Business Networking was published in late 1999, a profound development has taken place in the business-to-business area. Portals and electronic marketplaces have been established at a fast pace – [Keenan Research 2000] for example reports that between November 1999 and April 2000 a total of 620 Internet exchanges were founded. Some 4,000 were forecasted for 2004. Today, the smoke over the water is becoming clearer and we see the first B2B sites and exchanges being acquired or exiting the market [cf. e.g. Ante/Weintraub 2000]. The obvious conclusion is that there will be only two or three winners in each market segment.

In our opinion, this development shows that shaping relationships among businesses, an area we termed ‘Business Networking’, is only a technological game to a limited degree. Links to strategy and business processes are vital, and strategies for EC need to be planned jointly with supply chain or customer relationship strategies. Therefore, the mission of Business Networking, i.e. to provide an integrated process-oriented concept for all areas of eBusiness, remains more critical than ever.

This second edition differs quite substantially from the first. We not only corrected spelling and wording, improved and expanded definitions of key terms (e.g. Chapter 1, *Introduction*), and updated company-specific data in Chapters 9, *Overview on Supply Chain Management Systems* and 10, *Electronic Commerce in the Procurement of Indirect Goods*. We also completely revised Chapters 3, *The Networked Enterprise* and 14, *Towards a Method for Business Networking*, added Chapters 12, *eServices for Integrating eMarkets* and 15, *Application of the Business Networking Method at SAP*, and last but not least made it easier to access data contained in the book by means of a new comprehensive index.

The publication of this book has been made possible largely thanks to the support of three groups of people: (a) the partner companies of the Competence Centers in Business Networking (cf. Chap. 1.3.3), (b) the Board of the ‘Business Engineering HSG’ research program, and (c) the people who dealt with the nuts and bolts of the book itself.

Some fifteen executives from large Swiss and German enterprises together with the three Professors from IWI-HSG form the Board of the ‘Business Engineering HSG’ research program. The Board helps to collect and prioritize research topics and perform reality checks on the results achieved. The topic of Business Networking was derived from the ongoing cooperation between research and practice. This book is just one result of the open and cooperative culture which exists between industry and research as well as between different research chairs, namely those of Prof. Andrea Back and Prof. Robert Winter at the IWI-HSG.

Sybill Lötscher, junior research assistant at the IWI-HSG, and Thomas Puschmann, senior research assistant at the IWI-HSG, were responsible for the organizational side of compiling this book. They succeeded in perfectly balancing the multiple goals, enablers and restrictions of authors, editors, publisher, standards and Microsoft Office. Melanie Fletcher and Eduard Alt helped us to translate German thought into English word.

We hope you will enjoy reading this second edition and find it helpful in your daily work. Needless to say, any feedback that contributes to further improvements in Business Networking is most welcome.

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