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## Preface

The motivation for this book has been built up over time. Experiences from many different clients in a variety of industries, including the public sector, have made me curious about one simple fact: Business management lost sight of one of its most important assets, the Business Information Asset. This happened during the process of “Management Information Systems (MIS)” changing its name first to “Information Systems (IS)” and then to “Information Technology (IT).” Analysis and design of business information became an engineering style discipline instead of being a business management activity.

Working with business information analysis and modeling (which is what I do) is a very enviable position indeed. When you have the opportunity – as I have – to analyze and design business information in direct dialogue with business people, you get very close to the core of the business; issues which lead directly back to the business model and the business plans.

For several years, the focus for many IT development projects has been business process “renovation.” Quite often driven by technology such as object technology leading to service-oriented architectures and the like. However, processes may change quite frequently (and they do), which give them limited long-term business value. Not so for business information, which persist for a very long time and have a high business value.

With this book, I want to help getting focus on business information analysis and design (again). The new approach, I write about, enables business people to work directly and creatively with one of their most important assets – the information about their own business.

What works is a combination of design thinking and concept mapping. Together they enable new, creative conceptual designs and real business innovation. It started around 2004–2005 and has been refined since then. I have had the opportunity to use the concept mapping approach initially on projects together with information management consultants from Devoteam Consulting in Denmark. Since 2007, a Danish business intelligence consultancy with 40+ consultants that I work with on a number of projects, Inspari, has used the approach on assignments for different clients. All together, many business people in both private companies and government have

analyzed and designed their business concepts using the method. The results have been excellent, certainly much better than anything else I have seen.

I hope the experiences presented in the book will inspire you and help you to innovate the business of your organization.

There have been a number of people helping me. I am greatly thankful to all the business people, who over the years opened their doors for me and shared their concepts and concerns, and to many consultants at Devoteam and Inspari for excellent teamwork. I am grateful to Prof. Roger Martin of the Rotman School of Management in Toronto for invaluable advice in the early stages of the design of the book. Also, thanks to Mads Carsten Brink Hansen, External Lecturer at The Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus University, and Business Consultant at Inspari A/S in Denmark for an excellent review. Last, but not least, I am most thankful to my private proofreader, Ellen-Margrethe Soelberg, who also is my patient, loving, and understanding wife.

Copenhagen, 2012

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<http://www.springer.com/978-3-642-32843-5>

Design Thinking Business Analysis  
Business Concept Mapping Applied  
Frisendal, Th.

2012, XII, 136 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-642-32843-5