Preface to the Second Edition

Research on organizational learning has increased dramatically since the first edition of my book appeared in 1999. Research on organizational learning began to accelerate in the early 1990s. In the late 1990s, research on the outcome of organizational learning, knowledge, also increased significantly. My primary goal for the second edition of the book is to incorporate these recent research developments about organizational learning and knowledge.

New developments about organizational learning and forgetting, organizational memory, knowledge transfer, and the microfoundations of organizational learning are incorporated into existing chapters. A new chapter, Chap. 2, provides a theoretical framework for analyzing organizational learning and presents evidence about how the organizational context affects learning processes and outcomes. The concluding chapter (Chap. 7 in the new edition) adds a discussion of strategic and managerial implications of research on organizational learning and knowledge for both existing and entrepreneurial firms.

Another change since my book was first published in 1999 is the increased focus on studying learning in service organizations, especially hospitals. Thus, although the first edition focused primarily on manufacturing organizations, the current edition includes more research in service settings.

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Several other institutions deserve acknowledgment. The Organization Science Winter Conference community has been a source of ideas and inspiration. The 2011 conference, which was organized by Dan Levinthal, Ray Reagans, and me and focused on organizational memory, was especially relevant for the ideas in my book. I would also like to acknowledge the Montezemolo Visiting Professorship at Judge Business School at Cambridge University and the Aarhus School of Business for their support.

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