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## Preface

Economic value creation in business-to-business (B-to-B) markets by far surpasses value creation in the business-to-consumer (B-to-C) interface in many developed and emerging economies. In Germany as the most important European economy, the ratio is about three to one. Interestingly, this fact is barely reflected in how mainstream marketing scholars and professionals have treated the business-to-business realm; neglect may be the appropriate term. This is all the more astonishing since the paradigm shift from transactional to relational (B-to-C) marketing in the 1980s was nothing new to many B-to-B marketers.

For many organizations selling their products and services to other organizations, their customer relationships are one of their dearest assets. In our four books series “Mastering Business Markets”, the present volume touches upon all relevant questions B-to-B companies face with regard to the management of customer relationships and all marketing-related aspects within them.

We have divided the book into three parts: basic principles of business relationship management (Part I), analysis, goals, and strategies (Part II), and the implementation of business relationship management (Part III). Part I gives a thorough theoretical introduction based on both new institutional economics and behavioral B-to-B marketing theories. Part II is concerned with organization (re-)buying behavior, customer value and customer selection, and strategies within business relationship management. Finally, Part III provides tools and instruments to put business relationship management and marketing into practice: a chapter on the use of the classical marketing instruments within business relationships is followed by a reflection on how a B-to-B organization best organizes itself and its IT infrastructure to meet the challenges of business relationship management and marketing.

Since this book is based on the German language book “Geschäftsbeziehungsmanagement” but will be used in a newly created international Executive Education program, the China-Europe Executive Master of Business Marketing, we also deemed it worthwhile focusing on a special type of business relationships, those between organizations in Europe and China. Thus, Chap. 6 touches upon special questions that these intercultural relations bring with them.

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