

Preface

This book is intended to be a tribute to Gianluca Spina, and to his intense and inspiring work as a researcher, professor, dean, colleague and friend.

Gianluca was Professor of Business Management and Organisation and Supply Chain Management at the School of Management of Politecnico di Milano. He was an active scholar in the field of manufacturing and supply chain strategy, highly involved in international communities and networks such as EurOMA, POMS and IPSERA and a reference point for the Italian Management Engineering Association (Associazione Italiana di Ingegneria Gestionale—AiIG). He was also the Dean of MIP Graduate School of Business for a decade, and become very active in the international communities of management education, in particular European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD).

Very sadly, Gianluca passed away on the 21 February 2015 in a tragic skiing accident in his beloved mountains.

While trying to make sense of the loss that all of us felt, we thought that the best way to do so was to put together a testimony of the legacy that he left to us. For those who did not have the chance of meeting and knowing him as well as we did, this is the opportunity for absorbing some of his teachings and learning by his example.

We, therefore, decided to write this book, collecting together a number of papers that Gianluca had published with his close friends and colleagues in renowned, international journals. We then asked his friends and colleagues to review them, adding their commentaries to try to extract the key messages and values that continue to be valid many years after their publication.

We used the following selection criteria. First, we tried to give the sense of Gianluca's research journey over the years, and to present the main research streams that distinguished his work. We also selected papers with highest impact on the research community (measured through the number of citations received). Finally, we tried to include the most important research collaborations that Gianluca had established in Italy and abroad. Following these criteria, we selected seven papers, and we then asked a number of scholars in the field, who are among his closest friends and colleagues, to review and comment on these papers.

From our side, in the first chapter of the book, we prepared a summary of Gianluca's research journey set out in parallel with the key developments in the field of manufacturing and supply chain strategy. We have also outlined the very important contribution that Gianluca brought to management education, which, in his approach, was always closely intertwined with his research activity. In addition, we have tried to set out the key values which we think inspired Gianluca in all his work, summarising the legacy that he left to us.

The book also contains forewords by Giovanni Azzone, Rector of Politecnico di Milano, Cristina Masella, Head of the Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering, and Andrea Sianesi, Dean of MIP Graduate School of Business. We asked them to write these forewords not only because of their institutional roles, but mainly because of the close friendship that linked them to Gianluca. And a foreword has been also prepared by Gianluca's beloved wife, Francesca.

We would like to remind here also our colleagues and friends of the GIGA Group (Gianluca's research group at the School of Management)—and, in particular, Roberto Verganti, Mariano Corso, Matteo Kalchschmidt, Tommaso Buganza and all the younger group—who also shared with us these inspiring years with Gianluca.

We hope that we are able to convey through this book all the values, inspiration, energy and enthusiasm that all of us experienced throughout the long journey that we had the good fortune to travel on with Gianluca.

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A Journey through Manufacturing and Supply Chain
Strategy Research

A Tribute to Professor Gianluca Spina

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