

Preface

Managing flexibility in modern organizations is emerging as an area of great interest at the levels of people, process, technology, and business. The need for managing flexibility is growing to cope with the developments and challenges in the global business environment. Flexibility is a major dimension of business excellence and deals with a paradoxical view point such as stability and dynamism, continuity and change, centralization and decentralization, and so on. It needs to be managed at the levels of people, process, technology, and various business functions and accordingly, the book is organized into various parts. It is important to create flexibility at the level of people to create and manage flexibility in processes and technologies to support flexible business requirements.

This edited volume is intended to provide a conceptual framework of “Managing Flexibility: People, Process, Technology and Business” supported by researches and case applications in various types of flexibilities in business. This book presents selected, reviewed, and updated papers of GLOGIFT 13 conference on the related theme that was held at Department of Management Studies, IIT Delhi, India. These papers are organized in the form of an edited volume that can serve as a good reference material in this area. The selected papers from a variety of issues concerning the theme are organized into following five parts:

1. Managing flexibility
2. People flexibility
3. Process flexibility
4. Flexibility in technology and innovation management
5. Business flexibility

First, the broader issues of managing flexibility are covered with five chapters in the initial part of the book. The first chapter gives an overview of managing flexibility and developing a flexibility maturity model. The chapter is intended to bring out the key issues of managing flexibility through a review of relevant literature and managerial interviews. It then presents an integrative view of these issues in the form of a framework of flexibility maturity model. The related issue of critical elements that service innovators and providers could leverage in designing new services or improving existing ones is deliberated in the next chapter. Another chapter dwells

on the aspect of flexibility intensity; it presents a framework that business managers can use to determine where and how much flexibility is needed. It illustrates the utility of the framework with the case example of IBM. Another chapter, based on the experience of practitioners, deals with a novel framework of Total Flexi-Quality, which integrates flexible systems management practices with total quality management practices through a structured focus on human capital development. The last chapter, in this part, attempts to examine strategy formulation in e-governance projects. It is based on a survey of planners belonging to six national multistate agriculture related projects in India taking flexibility constructs in strategy formulation. The subsequent parts bring out studies on specific aspects of managing flexibility.

People flexibility has been covered in part two, which is composed of five chapters. This part begins with a study on leader-member exchange (LMX) congruence. A leader varies his/her style of interaction and communication in a flexible manner and tends to form different relationships with different subordinates. It presents the testing of a model treating different types of LMX congruence as predictors of job performance and promotability of members. The next chapter presents a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews, to inquire into diversity and culture-based behaviors in international information and communication technologies (ICT) projects. The study exposed a clear need for a comprehensive, yet flexible and adaptive framework for managing diversity. A holistic model of leadership development is proposed, in the next chapter, which can help organizations to design and implement systematic and customizable interventions to develop effective leaders flexibly. Another empirical study is reported in the next chapter that treats role efficacy dimensions as significant predictors of people flexibility. It also examines moderating functions of demographic factors on relationships between role efficacy and people flexibility. The last chapter, in this part, is aimed at modeling the complex interface between IT professionals and human resource management functions in an IT software services organization using viable systems modeling and variety matching.

Part three on process flexibility is composed of four chapters. It deals with various processes and associated flexibilities of a supply chain. The first chapter provides a broad overview of incentives for information sharing in collaborative supply chains. This chapter discusses two-tier supply chains and determines channel profit and members' profit under different information sharing and inventory locations. Another important area of process flexibility deals with procurement decisions, which is addressed in the next chapter. It deals with flexible procurement problem by integrating supplier selection, lot sizing, and carrier selection by considering dynamic demand, cost fluctuations, and varying capacities of suppliers and carriers. The next chapter presents an interpretive structural model of enablers of supply chain coordination in flexible environment and identifies the enablers with high driving power and low dependence. This part of the book concludes by reporting a study of soft drink industry on flexibility in the transportation strategy keeping the existing retailers, vehicles, and people in place. It uses flowing stream strategy framework in a case situation.

Flexibility in technology and innovation management is the focus of part four, consisting of four chapters. The first chapter, in this part, examines the applicability of real options to the improvement of robustness of research and development (R&D) sustainability of biotech start-ups during the deficit valley or against the systemic risk as the financial crisis. The next chapter deliberates upon the involvement of various stakeholders in every phase of innovation life cycle. It illustrates the applications of stakeholder engagement methodology for successful implementation of competence development framework during innovation diffusion phase in a case organization. The next chapter cites few case studies to discuss about the leveraging effect of strategic flexibility on technological exploitation. The last chapter in this part presents a review of literature to conceptualize a framework for national technological competitiveness. Literature has been reviewed under the topics, such as views of strategic thinking for managing competitiveness, globalization of technology, importance of technology development, innovation, national innovation system and sectoral innovation system, measuring technological competitiveness and strength of national innovation system, policy interventions and strategies to enhance technological competitiveness, and role of industry and business associations.

Part five is the last part of the book, which is composed of four chapters to cover different aspects of business flexibility. The first chapter, in this part, assesses impact of mobile devices on sales with multiple classes of customers for development of marketing flexibility for e-commerce. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the optimal strategy concerning how to allocate the promotion budget between the PC promotion and the mobile promotion. The second chapter, in this part, aims at exploring the significance of people management in the context of a radical change situation of post-merger integration. The concept of emotional balancing of employees by middle level managers is studied and applied to uncover its effect on projected change outcomes. The next chapter tries to reflect on the aspects of tourism and how different kinds of strategic technology integrations, in terms of banking, insurance, and other service industries are trying to integrate with tourism to provide a better, wholesome, and integrated service convenience to its end users. This is illustrated by a case study using situation-actor-process and learning-action-performance (SAP-LAP) framework. This part concludes with a chapter on managing market demand variability at customer level in the context of a fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company. It illustrates a heuristic through a case study with two category groups in food and personal care.

The above briefing of various chapters in the book provides a bird's eye view of the concerns and issues linked with managing flexibility in a variety of situations which makes this volume comprehensive and interesting to read. Sincere thanks are due to all the authors and reviewers, whose valuable contributions have made this volume a reality. The efforts of Rejani Raghu are worth mentioning, who helped at various stages in communicating with authors and reviewers, and also provided support in formatting the manuscript.

We hope that this volume on "Managing Flexibility: People, Process, Technology and Business" will be of interest to the readers and will motivate them to take

up research in this area. This will help in further enrichment of the paradigm of flexible systems management.

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