Editorial

This issue of jbm presents some new things in the development of the journal: the first pure Asian contribution and the first paper on methods.

Before introducing them to you I would like to present the first article which is from Peter Naudé, Stephan Henneberg, Stefanos Mouzas, Carla Ramos, Andrew Graves, and Valerie Crute dealing with “Seeking for Solutions within a Project Setting”. Solution selling has gained more and more attention in the field of business-to-business marketing practice and research. Based on the assumption that within marketing of solutions a process-centric view of the interaction between buyer and seller is more fruitful than the often predominant product-centric view the authors analyze the case of the United Kingdom’s Lean Aerospace Initiative (UK LAI). After a short literature review and a description of the managerial challenges that are related with a process-oriented approach the authors show what is necessary to understand the search for solutions in complex settings like the one they examine. One basic insight is that potential benefits of projects do not come only from the idiosyncratic capabilities of the selling firms or the other participating companies in the project, but are essentially derived from membership in communities of business relationships. So companies involved in such projects also have to focus their attention on how to mobilize the different parties in order to integrate the perspectives and orientations between the interacting counterparts. For the management of this multilateral integration of ideas and concepts the authors propose an interaction process model and show how the three main groups of actors (Government bodies, four Universities, and the aerospace companies themselves) interact in their pursuit of co-creating their collective solutions.

The second article from Yeonhee Lee, Sooyoung Kim and Jinsook Yoo represents the first contribution from Asia to be published in jbm. It investigates the “Impact of Technology-based Self-Service on Employees, Customers, and Sales in the Korean Services Market”. Self service offerings are playing an increasing role also in business-to-business markets. From the perspective of service providers these kinds of offerings open up new opportunities for cost reduction within the processes of service production and delivery. In contrast they carry the risk of customer dissatisfaction if the service is not delivered properly. Furthermore, it is interesting to see the impact of operational quality of the service on employee satisfaction as we know that in service business there is a strong link between employee and customer satisfaction. So the empirical study presented in the paper investigates the impact of technology-based self-service in the sense of operational efficiency on employee satisfaction on the one hand and on possible disadvantages concerning sales and customer satisfaction in the case of a bad service quality on the other hand. The results show that the technology-based self-service is positively related

to employee satisfaction. But if the service is of low quality this causes disfavours with regard to sales volume and customer satisfaction.

The third article does not only deal with customer satisfaction, too, but it also stands for another innovation in *jbm* as it is the first methodological paper we publish in this journal. Marko Sarstedt and Christian M. Ringle ask “Do We Fully Understand the Critical Success Factors of Customer Satisfaction with Industrial Goods?” To answer the question they extend Festge and Schwaiger’s model to account for unobserved heterogeneity. The aim of the approach is to effectively identify distinctive customer segments in business-to-business markets. The authors use a novel response-based approach in partial least squares path modelling (PLS-PM) which is a finite mixture partial least squares (FIMIX-PLS) methodology. They can show that in comparison to previous studies in this field, group-specific path model estimates reveal each customer segment’s particular characteristics as well as other differentiated findings. Thus the contribution provides a more complete picture of how the antecedents and the drivers of customer satisfaction affect the industrial goods market. Furthermore, it shows that PLS-PM studies on the aggregate data level can be seriously misleading. That leads the authors to the conviction that differentiated, segment-specific customer satisfaction management analyses will lead to a considerably better model fit.

I am sure that the three articles in this issue represent an interesting mixture of topics and methods that have the power to stimulate your work in practice or in research and teaching in the field of business market management. Enjoy reading!

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