

PREFACE

This stunning fourth edition of **Management: A Pacific Rim Focus**, complete with accompanying CD-ROM and on-line resources, continues to equip students with the skills they need to become informed and effective managers. The text and package does so by offering the most stimulating, diverse and original content of any management text available today.

Our experience tells us that one of the most challenging things for lecturers in this field is to teach students to think critically and strategically about theories, and to develop decision-making and analytical skills of their own. To that end, this edition extends each chapter of the text by providing ten new critical thinking questions, as well as application exercises and true/false and multiple choice questions. These questions invite students to carefully evaluate contemporary management debates in a regional and global context, and inspire the development of analytical and decision-making skills.

We believe that diverse case studies and vignettes are essential for providing students with a foundation from which to develop the decision-making and analytical skills that they will need to deal effectively with managerial challenges. That is why, in this edition, we provide even more interesting and relevant new case studies. These ensure the most current coverage available on gender issues, SMEs, globalisation or engineering situations. Each case features real people, real organisations and real strategies and decisions, and is accompanied by critical discussion questions.

The preface to previous editions began with the statement 'Management is about people'. To us, this is self-evident. Ironically, of late our students have begun to question the relevance of a personal approach to management, perceiving that it is being replaced by technology. They see electronic messaging taking the place of verbal communication, e-commerce replacing the need for front-line interactions with customers or suppliers, and computer software performing many of the planning and control functions previously completed by managers.

The popularity of technology might lead students to believe that success will evade them

unless they use and master such tools. However, while we maintain that the tools are relevant and that it would be foolish to disregard their value, they are, nonetheless, only tools. This is why we maintain the stance that management is about people. The use of current technology puts the competence of managers at risk, because it is too easy to rely on it, thereby ignoring the potency of the person-to-person interactions that result in true management excellence. We would like to stress that any electronic supplements are only tools; it is the content and concepts that you study and how you apply them that will make the difference to your effectiveness and success.

This book was conceived based on the philosophy that management is about human endeavour and people achieving results, and, in spite of many changes appearing in society, our convictions remain the same. As you work your way through this text, you will observe that our emphasis is still on the applications of theory to produce a culture and environment in which success is possible. If the use of tools determines the degree of success, this can be achieved by any individual or organisation with the skills to do so. How then, do organisations and individuals differentiate themselves when both have the resources to acquire, and the skills to use, the tools?

The key differences are found in examples of leadership; how individuals in organisations treat one another, their clients, their suppliers and their competitors—in other words, how people are managed. If business enterprise is about people and their aspirations to succeed, then it is the ability to direct the human energies generated in fulfilling these aspirations that constitutes the key to good management.

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