

Editorial

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Starting its exponential growth in the 1990s, the Information Technology revolution facilitated the availability online of terabytes of researched knowledge, in addition to a universe of other forms and categories of knowledge and information. Technology has created the conditions of possibility for a knowledge and information revolution that previous generations could never have anticipated. This worldwide phenomenon simultaneously raised the curtain on the possibility of providing unlimited access to all humanly created knowledge to all people irrespective of class, race, creed or social or political motivation in radical democratic ways. It is because we live in the midst of this multi-faceted contemporary reality that themes such as management, knowledge and information management, and informatics are important.

Arguably one of the most significant events of the twentieth century was the birth and development of the management sciences. The Tuck School of Business (founded in 1900 at Dartmouth College) was the first to confer the Master of Science in Commerce in the world. The first Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree was initiated about 100 years ago at Harvard University in the United States of America—1908 to be precise—and the University of Chicago offered the MBA to working professionals as from 1940. Outside the United States the MBA was first offered by the University of Western Ontario in Canada since 1950, University of Pretoria in 1951, and The Institute of Business Administration in Karachi in 1955. The founding of management as scientific discipline aimed at addressing the need for educated and trained managers from diverse fields of industry, business and commerce. The main impetus for this drive for expertise came from the former colonies and also from the US's need for industrial expansion in the face of evermore raw materials arriving on its shores for

processing. As companies and businesses sought to become ever more competitive and successful, they could not continue to rely on charismatic leadership and entrepreneurial acumen alone but rather scientific analyses and approaches to management¹. This nearly one hundred years development also impacted on the last few decades' separation of ownership and managerial control, allowing managerial classes to appropriate ever larger portions of profit preventing reinvestment while simultaneously externalising waste disposal costs, the ever greater search for raw materials and the cost of infrastructure development. This situation has now raised common collective global conscience levels that transcend national and continental divides in the direction of the internalising of costs. This requires governments taking the steps necessary to keep business and the entrepreneurial classes responsible for reinvestment, the costs of detoxification and waste disposal, resource renewal and infrastructure development². If governments should be held accountable for the business and investment in countries with the resulting impact on management systems, this is equally true for public management expectations, e.g. at municipal levels.

These commonly shared concerns have also impacted on the Washington consensus of the 1990s that preferred (US-driven) market expansion and diminishing government intervention. In South Africa the last fifteen years have seen governance structures enlarged and expanded at a too rapid rate with not enough managerial acumen. One remedy is to drastically improve managerial responsiveness and responsibility through good governance policy, effective and efficient management systems and appropriate auditing. Without this the government will be unable to deliver the basic expectations of the twentieth century welfare state, guaranteeing 'education, health and life-long revenue flows'³. *Themes in Management and Informatics* provides important critical and scientific perspectives on management strategies in the current structural adjustment crisis.

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¹ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_of_Business_Administration,

² See Wallerstein, Immanuel. *Crisis of the Capitalist System: Where do we Go from Here?* Paper delivered as the annual Harold Wolpe lecture, November 5 2009, pp. 17 - 19.

³ See Wallerstein p. 20.