Organisational Buying

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A Multidisciplinary Perspective

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For Sarah, Mark, Rachel, and Robyn

Preface

This book brings together a diverse set of organisational buying perspectives into a single resource. Adopting a holistic view of organisations is often the key to achieving efficiency and effectiveness. Holistic thinking is an important asset particularly for those of us that occupy mid- and senior-level positions in organisations. For individuals early in their careers, understanding the need for holistic approaches is an important asset that can lead to greater influence. An organisation-wide view increases the chances that we are aware of cause-effect sequences between the actions of individuals in one part of the organisation and their impacts on other parts of the organisation. A holistic view also allows us to consider developments beyond the organisation's boundaries, thus enabling the organisation to recognise its place within a broader network or ecosystem.

Organisational buying sits at the nexus of a range of different organisational units, each with their own roles. If you hold roles in sales, marketing, operations management, production, procurement, supply chain management, project management, and/or finance, chances are you have regular interactions with organisational buying-related activities. You may start a purchase process by recognising and communicating a need. You may have a role in defining or refining the nature of that need. You may have a role in describing that need. You may have a role in interacting with suppliers. You may have a role in ensuring the fulfilment of a given order. You may have a role in paying the invoice. You may have a role in integrating the new purchase into a broader pattern of activity across the organisation.

It is the accumulation of multiple small activities across different organisational units that necessitates a holistic view of organisational buying since it is common for each individual to only see as far as the scope of their own role and, potentially, the role of their organisational unit. This creates silos. Feelings of 'us versus them' do little to support an integrated approach.

While organisational structures are partially to blame for this, educational programmes are also responsible. The division between academic disciplines perpetuates the idea that functional knowledge domains are useful bases for partitioning an organisation. So, an individual may study a degree in supply chain management early in their career, begin a role in the supply chain department, but find they are unable to productively engage with marketing or sales personnel due to differences in the frames of reference that inform each other's viewpoints. Of course, this is just one example.

Given the multiple touchpoints that organisational buying has across an organisation, it is unlikely that managers consider organisational buying as a distinct activity. Instead, it is often part of a set of activities in which individuals engage as part of their roles in other areas. This means that organisational buying sits in tandem with other, related subjects such as supply chain management, procurement, contract management, and purchasing.

So, this book could serve as an introduction to the broad idea of organisational buying. The book alludes to other important areas but does not cover them in depth. This means they could whet one's appetite for further study in more specialised areas.

Alternatively, this book could serve as a capstone resource. After engaging with other, specialist areas, this book could help integrate multiple ideas into a cohesive whole. This might also help to highlight other areas of interest for the reader within the organisational buying domain.

A book specifically on organisational buying has not been in print since Parkinson et al.'s (1986) book bearing the same name. Hence, there is a need to update the coverage of this field to reflect changes in organisations and their contexts, and to address advances in technology.

Research in a range of cognate fields has also seen considerable progress over the years, albeit in contexts of increasingly specialised academic disciplines. This constrains the relevance and impact of such studies for practising managers. As such, a resource that presents a curated set of key ideas in a manner that has direct, practical relevance is also prescient.

It is therefore the mission of this book to develop a holistic, multidisciplinary view of organisational buying that is both current and managerially relevant. The book integrates ideas from a range of academic disciplines, to encourage greater empathy between individuals working across organisational boundaries on organisational buying-related issues. The book aspires to become a common frame of reference about organisational buying that crosses the boundaries between functional silos in organisations and the barriers between academic disciplines.

The content that appears in the following pages is most likely to interest mid- and senior-level managers or those people that aspire to hold such roles. Each chapter has practical examples to help ground concepts. Most chapters also include tools and frameworks useful for appraising organisational buying-related phenomena, as they apply to your organisation.

The book is useful for education programmes. It could serve as the primary resource, or as recommended reading, for a variety of courses. The tools and frameworks throughout the book would serve as useful exercises for individuals or teams in executive or professional education courses, as well as in MBA, master's, and upper-level undergraduate courses that focus on areas such as marketing, procurement, supply chain management, project management, operations management, and production management.

   The book is also a useful resource for scholars in cognate fields. Each chapter has a set of references and/or recommended reading that could help influence a research process. As a consolidated organisational buying tome, the book could also act as a broad-based literature review on organisational buying.

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Daniel D. Prior is Senior Lecturer in Management at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia, based at the UNSW Canberra campus. He also serves as Chief Customer Engagement Officer at Qirx Pty Ltd, an IT Professional and Managed Services company. Between August 2017 and January 2020, Daniel was Professor of Strategic Sales Management at Cranfield University, UK. While at Cranfield, he was the Co-director of the Centre for Strategic Marketing and Sales, Director of the Key Account Management Best Practice Forum, and Director of the Cranfield Executive MBA. Prior to re-joining academia in 2009, he held roles in industries such as IT, Defence, and Professional Services, working for companies such as Acer Computer Australia, Tenix Defence, KPMG Australia, and Orima Research. He is a past board member of SIDS and Kids ACT and Red Nose Ltd, both charities concerned with sudden infant death and infant loss. Daniel has been a member of the UNSW Academic Board and the UNSW Canberra Board. His teaching and research focus on the conditions, the factors and the dynamics that influence and affect buyer-supplier relationship integrity (i.e., the ability for the relationship to endure indefinitely). His research appears in academic journals such as *Industrial Marketing Management*, the *Journal of Business Research*, *Marketing Theory*, the *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, and the *Journal of General Management*. Daniel is Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK), as well as a Fellow and Certified Practicing Marketer of the Australian Marketing Institute, a Fellow of the Academy of Marketing Science, a Member of the American Marketing Association, and a Member of the Academy of Management (USA). He obtained his PhD in 2008 from Macquarie Graduate School of Management at Macquarie University, Australia.

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