PREFACE

"Why don’t you just obtain your PhD on the basis of the articles you’ve published over the past few years?" Rik Maes posed this question roughly a year ago. I must admit I hadn’t considered that option. My first word of thanks is therefore reserved for Rik. Without his idea, I would probably have spent 4 December doing my shopping for St Nicholas; now I am able to defend my dissertation in front of a PhD Committee in that beautiful Lutheran church. I have no doubt that the members of this committee will surprise me with probing questions. That is why I have a small surprise in store for them and all the others present on the day. Curious readers are referred to the cover of this thesis, which lifts a small corner of the veil...

The result is a dissertation consisting of six chapters. In the next section, I shall highlight the publications on which these chapters are based, and thank all those who contributed in one way or another to the realization of these publications. Here I like to show my gratitude in a broader sense.

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues of the Accountancy and Information Management department, the research group PrimaVera and the I+M foundation, who are in charge of our Information Management postgraduate program. Thanks to them, work hardly ever feels like work. Be it education or research, more often than not teamwork allows us to create something that we would never have been able to achieve on our own – isn’t that the essence of collective learning? Our reengineering times, of which I have fond memories, provide a typical example. Just as an educationalist can encounter problems raising his own children, or the economist managing his or her own purse, we "process experts" frequently found our research processes going “off the rails,” a problem that could only be solved through teamwork. We clearly should have learnt to master that particular skill a little better!

Next, I would like to thank the members of the PhD Committee: Prof. Dr Tony Bryant, Prof. Dr Jaap Boonstra, Prof. Dr Wout Buitelaar, Dr Chun Wei Choo, Prof. Dr Claudio Ciborra and Prof. Dr Hans Jägers. Without wishing to offend the Dutch participants of this committee, my gratitude is directly related to
the number of kilometers that you will have to travel to be present on 4 December.

A final word of thanks is reserved for my family and friends, and in particular for Frances, who are always welcome distractions from my day-to-day activities. They too are inspirational people, but I am happy to say in completely different ways!

**Publication History and Acknowledgements**

Chapter 2 – Business Reengineering: The Early Days – is a newly written introduction to the concept of reengineering, which is based on five, more conceptual articles that have been published in the years 1993-1995:


These publications deal with various aspects of business reengineering as a management and organization concept. In succession, these aspects are: the methodology of reengineering, a general introduction of reengineering and the concept of balanced change, change management, information infrastructure, and performance measurement. I thank Rik Maes, with whom I wrote our first publication on business reengineering. This article has been presented at the 1993 G.U.I.D.E conference where I stood in for Rik as the keynote speaker. I also thank the editorial board of the journal Management & Informatie for inviting me to be the guest editor of the 1993 special issue on business reengineering, and Esther Koster and Erik de Vries for co-developing ideas expressed in the introduction I wrote for this special issue. Furthermore, I thank the co-writers of the other three articles:

Chapter 3 – Balance in Business Reengineering – is a reprint of: Huizing, A., E. Koster, and W. Bouman (1997), Balance in Business Reengineering: An Empirical Study of Fit and Performance, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, Vol. 14, No. 1: 93-118. This article, reprinted by permission of Journal of Management Information Systems, was included into the 1997 summer edition of this journal as part of a special section on the impacts of business process change on organizational performance. I owe a special thanks to Esther Koster and Wim Bouman who co-authored this article. Moreover, I thank Erik de Vries, Monique Oliehoek, Laurentine Pels Rijcken, and five students who all participated in the reengineering research project on which this chapter is based, and J. H. Oud, B. Niemöller, and C. Tiebosch for their support on research methodology. I would also like to express my gratitude to V. Grover and W.J. Kettinger, who were the guest editors of the special section in the Journal of Management Information Systems, the anonymous reviewers, and all others who provided valuable advice and useful comments. Finally, I thank the Association of Business Engineers, the leading forum of reengineering professionals in the Netherlands, for its financial and nonfinancial support of the research project.

Chapter 3 is representative of various publications reporting on the reengineering research project that we have conducted in 1995. Amongst others, these publications are:

The main findings of the research project on reengineering were first published in the 1995 book mentioned above. A part of this book concerned a separate, smaller research project on the relationship between reengineering and information technology. The two 1995 publications with Erik de Vries reported on this smaller project. Subsequently, a number of papers and articles followed, which included the two 1996 publications and the article in the Journal of Management Information Systems mentioned before. The article published in 2000 concluded the stream of publications.

Earlier versions of chapter 4 – Business Reengineering: A Critical Assessment – have been published in a book and three journals:


In 1997, my colleague Erik de Vries and I felt that the concept of business reengineering was in need of a thorough and critical evaluation. Subsequently, we invited a number of critics and proponents of reengineering to contribute to the abovementioned book: among others, J.J. Boonstra, W. Bouman, C.U. Ciborra, and E. Koster. My introduction to this book concluded the 1992-1997 period during which my publications were mainly focused on reengineering.

continuing role as my sparring partner, and to Chun Wei Choo, Nick Bontis, and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Finally, chapter 6 – Towards a Learning-Based Theory of the Firm – was written during the summer of 2002 and, consequently, has not yet been published.

I once again thank Rik Maes and Wim Bouman for their invaluable support.