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## Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

The world has changed significantly in terms of business in the past year. As we are fast approaching the year 2000, economic strengths and weaknesses of single countries or regions of the world considerably influence economies around the entire globe. To realize this, one need only look at the rapid industrialization of the vast country of China with its enormous human resources. Despite the serious attempt to curb the population, statistics nevertheless reveal the exponential growth rate there to be nearly unimaginable. Almost every sector of our economy is greatly influenced by the keen competition for reasonably-priced goods and services, as reflected in the tremendous number of goods imported from China.

The continuing volatility of the Asian markets on the whole over the past months has had much more than just ripple effects in our own economy as well as in that of the rest of the world. Stock markets around the globe fluctuate hourly by the slightest event or announcement, whether here or abroad.

In Europe we can follow the further stabilization process through the coming monetary union. As the euro becomes a reality on January 1, the eleven countries immediately effected will work toward their commitment of one currency, and thus establish a tighter, more interrelated economy. The new and powerful bloc will facilitate trade within and without. The exchange of eleven separate currencies will be eliminated, but not without the attendant problems of such a massive conversion. By the year 2002, the individual currencies will be withdrawn from circulation entirely. A Dutchman has just been chosen to become the first head of the Central European Bank, located in Frankfurt, Germany. Other countries will no doubt wish to join this economic unit as their economies allow them to fulfill the strict parameters set. The movement toward the establishment of the euro, and thus eventually that of a United Europe, will bring significant economic ramifications throughout the world.

NAFTA, too, has greatly influenced the way some firms are manufacturing, buying, and selling. Canada, the United States, and Mexico comprise a gigantic market, with goods and services moving much more freely than before in both directions from north to south and from south to north.

In the very recent past, then, we have seen discernible and lasting changes: the movement toward mega-mergers on the European continent or here in the western hemisphere of many different countries building a unified trade bloc. But we also continue to observe with some regularity industrial mergers. And we are witnesses to their becoming ever larger and more daring. Only this week Daimler Benz and Chrysler announced their intention to merge, followed immediately by the news that Daimler was also negotiating with Nissan. These industrial mega-mergers, representing unparalleled expansion, increasingly involve not just one country, but rather two or more, and therefore are truly international and intercontinental in scope.

With the trend in both industries and multi-national economies toward unifying and pulling together under one umbrella, will the time come for just one or two internationally used languages? Will the other languages then disappear? While it is true that some languages are dying out, we will not likely see the day when the major languages will completely yield to just one or two languages used world-wide. Quite to the contrary, the trend presently is to strengthen national languages and teach the younger generation dialects on the verge of distinction. Even though it is already a fact today that English is used in many business negotiations, it also continues to be true that these negotiations go far better if there is at least some understanding of the other's language and an appreciation of the cultural differences of the trading partner.

At the annual national CIBER-sponsored conference of foreign language teachers held at UCLA in February, an invited executive from industry once more stressed the absolute necessity for Americans climbing the corporate ladder of any international firm to be conversant in at least one or two foreign languages in addition to being well informed about the culture of the company's clients.

Business schools throughout the nation, once considered rigid in their approach to education, are increasingly responding to the notion that a well-educated business person must not only achieve considerable depth of knowledge in the chosen field, but must also be able to read and think critically, and must be able to communicate—both orally and in writing—that knowledge with clarity and precision. In addition, today's successful business graduate must be aware of the cultural, social, political, and economic forces and technologies that shape that world. Ideally to-

morrow's graduate rounds out the education with a significant international experience, either studying or working abroad.

International business programs are growing and flourishing in the engaged institutions of higher learning. Innovative business programs, such as joint degrees from partnerships between an American university and a university abroad are becoming more common as answers to new mandates and challenges.

Recent meetings of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in Monterey, Mexico and Banff, Canada have stressed the increasing importance of this international awareness in the educative process. The upcoming meeting this fall will be in Vienna, Austria. The professional organization now includes the word international in its title, "International Association for Management Education," to better reflect its mission.

The US government also recognizes the continuing importance of internationalizing the curriculum in American universities. Monies appropriated for the purpose of keeping Americans on the forefront in the global market place were again available on a competitive basis, for the establishment or continuance of a Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) at universities across the nation. As a group, the CIBERs have contributed much to remedy the once prevailing narrow viewpoint found in some Business Schools. They are strong advocates for international education. They are leaders in their own intellectual communities, and regional and national resource to the business community. We at Purdue University are proud and grateful to have competed successfully once more for a CIBER grant. The renewed funding for four more years will allow us to continue to bring you this publication, funded jointly by CIBER-Purdue and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

In the first two volumes of this publication, a wide variety of issues related to international business and specific language needs were examined, with an emphasis on language and the classroom. In this volume, however, an emphasis on the business side of global business languages was sought, since our discipline is located at the intersection of both world commerce and language pedagogy. Fortunately, a number of authors answered our call for studies on networking with the business community, and, as always, have chosen a diversity of approaches com-

bined with a focus on a number of different language and culture areas of the globe.

The first two articles analyze data from surveys in an attempt to establish a more firm groundwork upon which to base our business language objectives. Rather than continue to assume we know what business wants, or what our students want, the authors sought empirical data to demonstrate needs and preferences. In “Corporate Recruiter Demand for Foreign Language and Cultural Knowledge,” Christine Uber Grosse studies the data from more than 2,000 job postings at both Thunderbird—The American Graduate School of International Management and the University of South Carolina in order to determine overall demand for foreign languages and demand for individual languages. Her findings are extremely useful both to the business community and to language educators, especially since “slightly more than half the positions posted required and/or preferred knowledge of a second language and culture.” John E. Robbins, Joe Abramson and Craig A. Hollingshead investigate student motivation in their article “Relationships between Foreign Languages and Interest in Global Business Courses and Careers.” Responding to the fact that “international companies need managers that (1) are nationally diverse, and (2) are culturally sensitive,” the authors surveyed business students at 13 regionally different schools of business. While foreign students ranked high in terms of multicultural competence and interest, for evident reasons, American students showed greater differences from foreign students, and from each other, with regard to language and culture skills and their motivation to acquire those skills. The authors recommend more foreign language training both in classroom and “real-world” settings.

The three articles which follow give examples of successful models that meet this recommendation, for they integrate business language classes and the business community. In “An Integrated Approach in Business Japanese: Connecting the Classroom to the Outside Business World and Volunteer Groups,” Masato Kikuchi and Rumiko Shinzato describe the three components of their Business Japanese course at the Georgia Institute of Technology. One of these involves plant/office visits, guest speakers, and cultural demonstrations by volunteers in the Atlanta area. A somewhat more extended and unusual visit is described by Carmen Vega Carney in “Looking into the Future: Training Management Students to Do Business in Cuba.” She provides an abundance of details

about the program from Thunderbird—The American Graduate School of International Management that allowed students to spend three weeks in Cuba in 1994, learning about the business environment. In the third and last of the articles in this group, Janet Lein did not take her students to a plant, or a foreign business environment, but set up a classroom in a plant in order to satisfy employee language demands in their interactions with a supplier in Germany. She discusses the experience in “Language and Culture Training for a Small Manufacturing Company.” She explains that the “model could be applied to many small companies, regardless of the product they produce.” Although the workers had little time for class or homework, their motivation was much higher than students in a traditional classroom.

The next group of articles present insights and analyses of cultural elements that are important for conducting business in a foreign environment. The first two are written by members of the business and professional community, while the last two come from an academic setting. Sawyer Rank relies on over 20 years experience in hiring and training dozens of Korean immigrants in his study of the relationship between popular sayings and the general Korean beliefs and customs. His entertaining article “Native Proverbs as Condensed Culture and Keys to Mentality: An Approach Toward Understanding One’s Korean Counterparts” should be read by anybody contemplating doing business with Koreans or a Korean business. In “Cross-Cultural Currents in International Law,” David Williams Russell furnishes some basic information about origins and practices of international law. All of us involved in global business need an elementary understanding of the connections between national and international law. Professor Vila de la Cruz gives us a different perspective on language pedagogy, since for her students English is a foreign language. She describes her use of realia and current events in “How to Teach Business English through a Newspaper.” Finally, Eileen M. Angelini and Salvatore Federico examine cross-cultural differences in “Understanding French Culture through Advertisements.” They show that “since the 1970’s, French advertising has come into its own and now clearly distinguishes itself from American advertising.” In order to network successfully with the business community, such things as proverbial sayings, national and international law, newspapers and advertising must be considered as important means to gain access to a foreign language and culture.

The final article in this volume studies a different kind of networking, an electronic one. In “Surfing the Net with a Mini-Cam: A Low Tech Approach to International Audio-Visual Communication at St. Mary’s University of San Antonio,” the authors Alejandro Vélez, Robert B. O’Connor and Rubén A. Candia describe their technological video connection with La Universidad Iberoamericana in Puebla, Mexico. The article anticipates the theme of our next volume, which will explore different technological advances and tools that can be used to enhance global business communication and pedagogy.

More than ever before businesspeople and business educators wrote articles, which represent about half the contents of this volume. We are pleased by their informative and entertaining contributions, and hope we may continue to attract such fine articles from both business and language experts. We still have much to learn, and we can profit from our shared knowledge and research.