



## Foreword

This new title, *e.volution.com*, from Prestoungrange University Press explores how key players in a niche academic publisher planned its own metamorphosis and, as the Epilogue shows, successfully did so over just six years, making it a truly leading edge e-publisher. They did so within the framework of anticipatory action learning provided by International Management Centres, and what is described and analysed here does justice both to the authors and to the learning processes espoused. And Sarah Powell as editor on their behalf is to be congratulated on presenting it here so professionally.

The Baron Courts are committed to publishing a series of titles at the leading edge of 21st Century knowledge management as the impact of electronics continues to unfold. This title is exceptionally appropriate for that purpose. But it also gives me most particular pleasure since at the time it was undertaken I too held leadership responsibilities with the authors at MCB University Press in Yorkshire; and I was also Principal of the International Management Centres.

Through the five individual in-depth studies and the Conclusion and Epilogue, the book tells this most extraordinary story. MCB University Press was a small organization but a dominant player globally in its niche market of management academic publishing. As the company Profile from page 7 shows, its journals were read around the world, although all its operations were based in Yorkshire. As soon as it saw the potential of the Internet, it resolved to embrace its potential for publishing.

Whilst most publishers experimented with or derided the potential benefits of the emerging technologies, MCB University Press welcomed them.

From the outset it was crystal clear that e-publishing would be a vehicle for vastly extended access to the body of knowledge globally, at a fraction of the cost the user had hitherto paid. As such, the entire enterprise had to be transformed. The exhilaration experienced amongst the leading edge team of innovators was magnificent then, as it remains now. Nothing they had read, written or taught could have prepared them for the revolution. They took to the streets, thought the unthinkable and, as the studies here show, reflected profoundly as they went. As the final chapter shows, the revolution in electronic publishing is nearly over but the human issues of personal and professional development are as always present.

MCB University Press has metamorphosed itself, indeed flourished, as it progressed to the paradigm. The individual managers who have contributed their studies here can take maximum pride and satisfaction from their achievements. They truly wanted to learn as they went, and in action learning they found a learning technology that more than matched events.

As a business school professor in 1993, I had personally penned a book entitled *Your Enterprise School of Management*, little realizing that it was this very enterprise that would be the first major

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milestone. Nor did I have any inkling when I wrote *Technological Forecasting: The Art and its Managerial Implications* in 1971 that its contents would be called into service 25 years later. But such was the extraordinary concurrency of thinking and writing and acting in which we have all been involved. And because MCB University Press are publishers, we have, as would properly be expected, set it down as best we can in writing as an example of one enterprise that is its own school of management. The places where we work, where we spend most of our working lives, have the potential to be richly rewarding in myriad ways. Our existence there is a far cry from the drudgery experienced by our ancestors, whose labours then made possible the quality of today's and tomorrow's working lives.

To conclude, we dedicate this volume to the memory of our well-loved colleague Judith Atherton, who started us out and shared much of our journey along the road from word processing and bureaux batch computing in Halifax to global knowledge managers, via the proving grounds of database marketing and intelligence.

*Gordon Prestoungrange*  
Baron of Prestoungrange  
Prestonpans, East Lothian, Scotland