

Chapter I

Review of Current ICT Developments

Increase in business volatility and competitive pressures have led to organizations throughout the world facing unprecedented challenges to remain competitive and striving to achieve a position of competitive advantage (Maguire and Suluo, 2007)

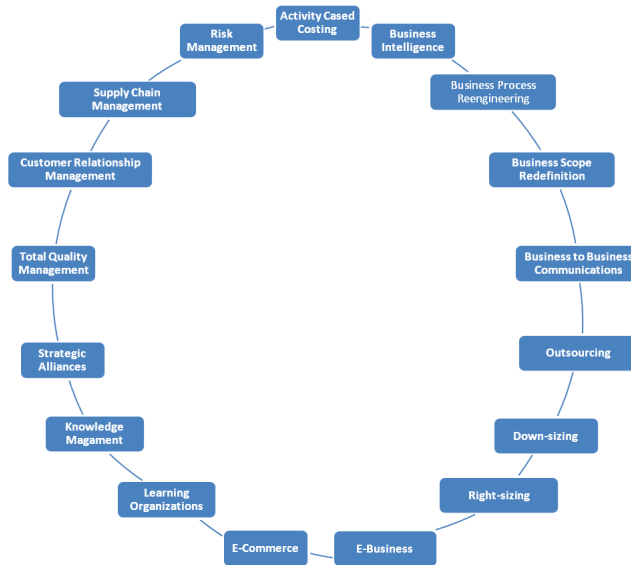
Research by the analyst firm, Gartner, found that I.T. directors considered business intelligence to be their number one technology priority for the second year running. In particular, consolidation of business intelligence tools will be a major focus (Gartner February, 2007, www.gartner.com/2_events/conferences/bie8i.jsp)

INTRODUCTION

The issues that are currently affecting all managers are similar to those facing managers of **ICT**. The following is a list, though not exhaustive, of the issues confronting organizations in changing business environments as shown in Figure 1.1.

Most organizations are conducting their business in global situations that place extra pressure on their effective usage of **ICT**. They may have to think in terms of worldwide purchasing of parts and raw materials. Many organizations view their

Figure 1.1. ICT related issues



products as being global. Firms will have to ensure that they can provide efficient supply chain management. This may require an integrated customer service where geographical boundaries should not cause loss of business effectiveness. Companies may need to provide rationalised manufacturing as they roll-out products worldwide. All organizations will strive to gain global economies of scale.

However, as one can imagine developing an ICT strategy that is able to stand the test of time is well nigh impossible. In 2008 large firms in the ICT sector, such as Google, I.B.M., H.P. and Sun are rolling out major *green* initiatives to reflect current environmental concerns. It is not too long ago that the ICT sector was monopolised by the United States and the United Kingdom. Increasingly sector pundits are talking of the *Chindia* phenomenon. ICT research and development spending in China is still behind the U.S. but ahead of Japan. Firms in India, such as Infosys, are increasingly moving into the high value-added part of the sector.

The ICT sector has taken nearly 50 years to achieve an optimum level of service with internal systems. It is now trying to optimise ICT that extracts information and intelligence from the environment and other organizations. This is a different ball game and it may require firms to put in place a radical recruitment programme or at the very least a retraining programme to ensure they have the correct ‘in-house’ competences.

Information and Communication Technology has become more important to firms in recent years because:

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