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# Cross-Industry Impact

“**H**owever beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” While Winston Churchill probably didn’t have standardization strategies in mind when he uttered these words, they certainly apply to the situation and to this book. A comprehensive standardization strategy includes processes for measurement. To date, few people can cite their return on investment (ROI) in hard numbers, although anecdotes are widely available. Perhaps this is because the impact of standardization is not directly measurable, at least in terms of increased sales, cost savings, or profits. Still, standards are creating a return on their investments as evidenced by the articles in this section.

Although it may not be possible to directly measure the ROI of a standardization strategy, regular assessment and refinement of that strategy should occur. As with any strategy, it is important to evaluate whether its implementation has produced the changes and results desired. Equally, a feedback mechanism and communications channel is essential so that those individuals implementing the strategy can help to fine tune its evolution.

This section heeds the words of Winston Churchill and looks not only at the results of

individual standardization strategies, but at the results of standardization as a whole. While the system may need strengthening and stakeholders are truly involved in a dynamic tug-of-war, one thing remains true: ICT standardization is impacting industries across most business lines on a global scale. For prominent examples of this impact, you only have to look as far as the articles in this section.

Tony Scott and Ramasamy Uthurusamy of General Motors Corporation explain why “Standards are a way of life at GM” and share some of their standardization efforts and results. Standardization has long been known to have an impact on the automotive industry, but people are less likely to think of other industries as being as heavily impacted by standardization. After reading the article by Robert Noth, Manager of Engineering Standards for Deere & Company, it will become evident just how much thought progressive companies are putting into their standards activities. But standards don’t always bring the benefits they promise, especially if the industry changes during the process. For a first hand account and honest assessment of a standardization strategy and its implications, read the article by Scott Markel and Michael Dickson on Life Sciences standards.

Of course, government relies heavily on standards and New York City (NYC) is no exception. Thanks to their foresight in using industry standards, NYC was able to respond rapidly to the emergencies caused by 9/11. The article by Richard Goodden, Pete Crosswell, and Alan Leidner tell how spatial systems standards enabled these incredible results.

Standards not only impact individual businesses, but entire industries. As one can glean from the contributors to this section, the articles discuss standardization strategies for changing industries, including telecommunications, search engines, the mortgage industry, the geospatial industry, and the health industry. Although the industries differ in their products and markets, the need for cooperation and a healthy management of the dynamic tension

that exists between its participants is prominent in each of these articles.

In ending this section and this book, it seems fitting to include once again an observation by Churchill: “Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on.” This book has presented evidence of standards as a powerful management tool, one that can be used to strategically manage the dynamic tension that is inherent and essential in the marketplace today. Armed with the knowledge and advice from leading experts in government, industry, and academia, will you simply continue with “business as usual” to produce the usual business? Or will you act on your new found knowledge and capitalize on *The Standards Edge*?