

e-Relationships for e-Readiness: Culture and corruption in international e-B2B

Pierre Berthon^{a,*}, Leyland Pitt^b, Jean-Paul Berthon^{c,d}, Colin Campbell^e, Des Thwaites^f

^a *McCallum School of Business, Bentley College, Waltham, MA, USA*

^b *Segal Graduate School of Business, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada*

^c *Richmond University London, UK*

^d *Lulea University, Sweden*

^e *Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada*

^f *University of Leeds, UK*

Received 1 October 2006; received in revised form 1 May 2007; accepted 1 June 2007

Available online 7 November 2007

Abstract

The role of electronic networks in B2B relationships has been growing exponentially. From massive internet B2B exchanges to tiny RFID chips, B2B is increasingly becoming e-B2B. Whilst e-B2B has been explored intra-nationally, its international counterpart is less well documented; as has been the role that culture might play in the development of international e-B2B relationships. In this paper we address this important issue of international e-business relationships. Specifically we explore the interconnection between national e-readiness and cultural values, and address the research question: How do cultural values impact a nation's readiness to engage in e-business? Drawing upon international surveys we link cultural values with national e-business infrastructure. Our findings suggest an intriguing link between cultural values and a nation's readiness for e-B2B. From these results we develop managerial recommendations and extrapolate research opportunities.

© 2007 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: E-readiness; Internet; B2B; Culture; Corruption; International

1. Introduction

The role of electronic networks in B2B relationships has been growing exponentially. From massive internet B2B exchanges to tiny RFID chips, B2B is increasingly becoming e-B2B (cf. Economist, 2006). For example, over the past few years a plethora of trans-national exchanges have emerged, from open, public exchanges such as Covisint (www.covisint.com), through delinked, consortia exchanges such as Aeroxchange (aerexchange.com), to the closed, private exchanges such as those run by Wal-Mart and Dell. These latter companies, as well as the likes of Boeing and Target, mandate suppliers to embed goods and components with RFID chips to create an electronically managed trans-national supply chain (Brass, 2006).

Despite this, the specific *trans-national* aspect of e-B2B although arguably it's *sine qua non*, has perhaps received less formal academic attention than other aspects of e-commerce. Conceptual endeavors in this field do exist in the works of Samiee (1998), Avlonitis and Karayanni (2000), Porter (2001) and Karavdic and Gregory (2005). Furthermore, technical issues such as trans-national e-enabled supply chains (Iyer, Germain, & Frankwick, 2004), enterprise resource planning (Burn & Colin, 2005) and multi-lingual web sites (Tiessen, 2004) have begun to be explored. However, less attention has been given to the question of what makes industrial firms in other countries ready or not for e-B2B relationships, and what will make these relationships work best.

A number of authors have begun to explore the barriers to trans-national e-commerce relationships (e.g. Eid, Trueman, & Ahmad, 2002). A range of objective, technical issues such as network-infrastructure and computer literacy have become apparent (cf.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: pberthon@bentley.edu (P. Berthon).