



# Shared Services: Adding Value to the Business Units

*Donniel S. Schulman, Martin J. Harmer, John R. Dunleavy, James S. Lusk*

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"One of the ways companies are looking for competitive advantage in this frenetic [business] environment . . . is through the use of a tactical technique called shared services. . . . In this book, we bridge [the] chasm between the theory of how a shared services operation 'ought to' work and the practical issues involved in how to make it work, how to carry out a successful implementation of a shared service operation in your business."-from the Preface.

Gaining competitive advantage in today's fierce business environment requires focus throughout the company on value, as measured by quality, cost, speed, and service. In the quest for superior performance, a growing number of companies are now turning to shared services, a tactical technique by which corporations can organize financial and other transaction-oriented activities to reduce costs and provide better service to business unit partners. Written by four authorities, three PricewaterhouseCoopers consultants and the executive who has directed the shared service efforts at Lucent Technologies, this comprehensive resource-the first of its kind-examines shared services from the macro issues that compel senior management to embrace this approach through the design and implementation of a shared services environment that leads to increased customer and shareholder value.

Of all the tools available for gaining competitive advantage, why shared services? One of the principal reasons is that it creates, through consolidation of often disparate activities, more of a "one company" feel among business units. The benefits of this are twofold: one, it enables companies to show a consistent face to clients and customers, vendors and suppliers, shareholders and potential shareholders; two, it provides increased flexibility to all of the business' operations, allowing corporate leaders to maintain a global perspective while at the same time allowing business unit leaders to take strong, customer-focused actions.

Providing both a domestic and global view, Shared Services addresses the full spectrum of issues, including:

- \* Assessing whether shared services is right for you-issues to consider, goals to be reached.
- \* Getting started-building support, establishing an effective organization, instituting continuous communication.
- \* Setting up the infrastructure-billing shared services to business units, dealing with tax and legal entity issues.
- \* International challenges-complexity, time zone, legal issues, currency stability, and security.
- \* Program and project management-structures, planning, execution, and control.

A groundbreaking book that examines a timely and important topic, Shared Services is an accessible and thorough guide to what could be a critical component in achieving long-term business success.

This comprehensive resource is the first to introduce, explain, and explore shared services, an innovative business strategy that involves centralizing various business units, including accounting and transactional operations, to reduce costs and increase customer satisfaction. Presenting a practical and easy-to-follow blueprint for the smooth and sound implementation of shared services in your organization, Shared Services: Adding Value to the Business Units covers all the fundamentals, from how to get started to proper management techniques.

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