Preface

With certain exceptions, the scholarly business literature tends to have a positive bias; studies often report a worldview. Unlike other fields that have developed by studying phenomena that endanger the existence of their subjects (e.g., epidemiology, psychiatry, medicine), most business disciplines in general, and management in particular, tend to describe and model what could or should be, as is the case with the subfields of leadership, motivation, task design, and so on. From micro-level themes to meso-level − for example, group formation, intergroup dynamics, diversity − and even macro − strategy, change management, organizational culture, etc. − the emphasis on what could or should be, as opposed to what actually occurs, has been denounced (Pfeffer, 2015).

Even if criticized, this positive bias is not easy to overcome. Traditional, "flagship" publications emphasize theory building using empirical methods, an emphasis that promotes building on what has been published and access to databases or collecting data that rarely will focus on what might have gone wrong. What companies or individuals would share evidence of their mistakes or wrongdoing?

Of course, there are posthumous investigations of unethical practices, and the past decade or two have given us many examples of what might happen when companies or executives misbehave: Enron, MCI, Parmalat, and all the banks that thought that the market for sub-prime mortgages was safe promptly come to mind. Also, the now-classic cases of Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol − for an exemplar of how to deal with the major product and brand crisis − or Arthur Andersen, which surrendered its licenses to practice as Certified Public Accountants after their handling of Enron's auditing, might shed some light and even provide advice for the currently evolving case of Volkswagen's diesel emissions fraud brought up in the United States of America. This particular fraud might offer lessons worth studying for years to come.

All of these examples illustrate another bias in the current literature: an almost exclusive focus on North American, or more specifically, US-based, with a few occasional European firms. Again, the disciplinary obsession with theory building, and lack of familiarity with business environments beyond a few developed nations, is hampering the field's evolution and potential impact.

This volume edited by Miguel M. Torres, Virginia Cathro, and Maria Alejandra Gonzalez-Perez, addresses these deficiencies. As editors of the *Advanced Series in*

Management, we consider ourselves very lucky to include these chapters in our scholarly series. Hailing from both emerging and developed nations, with examples at different levels of analysis and an emphasis in cross-border insolvency, these seven chapters push the knowledge frontiers of our field and challenge the conventional wisdom through the metaphor of "organizational death." This volume continues our series tradition to maintain an openness to multiple paradigms of management research while emphasizing an agenda to challenge traditional thinking. It moves the management knowledge closer toward its use, impact, and societal relevance.

We expect that these chapters will extend the state of the literature, will be used in class and executive development seminars, cited by scholars and used by actively questioning managers. They are great exemplars of the way in which we intend the *Advanced Series in Management* to continue modifying existing intellectual patterns, to provide useful tools to anyone interested in improving their world, one idea at the time.

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Tanya Bondarouk
Miguel R. Olivas-Luján
Series Editors

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Reference

Pfeffer, J. (2015). *Leadership BS: Fixing workplaces and careers one truth at a time.* New York, NY: Harper Business.