Prior to the development of the Internet and corporate-wide information systems, business decision makers had limited, delayed, and inaccurate information of customers, suppliers, inventories, and business processes such as delivery, order fulfillment times, and order entry. This means that decisions were made using information that was at best approximate. Information technologies (ITs) are reducing this information uncertainty by increasing the accessibility, storage, and distribution of information for organizations. These trends toward more real-time information are replacing information uncertainty with more precise, timely, and accurate level of decision making. Thus, today ITs are having an important impact on the relationships between firms and external entities, and even on the organization of business processes inside a firm. The former value propositions come from the reduction of procurement and inventory costs, as well as strategic networks with suppliers and customers that allow effective and efficient supply chain management, while the latter benefits come from the collaboration and exchange of knowledge between employees as well as through the availability of information for management and planning. For instance, with the Intranet’s ability to provide intra-organizational communication at reduced cost, employees can distribute and communicate their ideas more readily, enabling them to be more involved in the decision-making process. As a result, firms are rebuilding some of their key business processes based on ITs and networking technology to conduct business electronically.

The IASK International Conference Global Management 2009, held in Seville from the 22nd to the 24th of June 2009, addressed many of recent technical, analytical, managerial and policy issues faced by firms and their stakeholders. Papers from 30 different countries across all continents were presented at the conference.

In this special issue, we have made a selection of extended versions of the best papers from IASK Global Management 2009, focusing on related issues concerning ITs, IT professionals and Management in firms. This special issue includes four papers.

The first paper, entitled “Glass Ceilings in Portugal? An Analysis of the Gender Wage Gap Using a Quantile Regression Approach”, by Mendes, addresses the determinants of gender wage inequality with regard to several occupational sectors, which include the IT industry. In this sense, the main objective is to empirically test whether gender-based wage discrimination is greater among high paid than it is among low paid employees, in line with the glass ceiling hypothesis. This empirical study was conducted for the year 2004, relying on micro data from the Quadros de Pessoal (Personnel Records). The Quadros de Pessoal is an extensive data set provided by the Portuguese Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity. The observations included in the analysis corresponded to 1,886,943 employees, the majority of which were males; women represent approximately 42% of the labor force. Larger unexplained pay gaps at
the top of the wage distribution indicated, as predicted, the existence of a glass ceiling effect in the Portuguese labor market.

The second contribution, entitled “Recruiting, Selecting and Motivating Human Resources: Methodological Analysis and Case Studies Applications”, by Zapounidis and Kalfakakou, analyses practices regarding personnel motivation and human resources management in firms in order to increase their productivity and profitability. Furthermore, the methodology of human resources recruitment and selection used is examined. Through a case study on several Greek firms, authors concluded that in the recruiting and selecting process, IT could represent important added value, as adapted IT processes could lead to quicker, more successful and more transparent results. IT professionals could organise these processes for every enterprise in order to become standard, formulated and, even more, accredited procedures, leading to successful recruiting and selecting results.

The third study, entitled “Human Resource Management on Social Capital”, by López-Fernández, Martín-Alcázar and Romero-Fernández, is still research in progress that develops a conceptual framework for studying the relationship between Human Resource Activities and Social Capital. More specifically, the conceptual framework focuses on how the effective management of certain characteris-

tics and properties of the network, such as the work dynamics developed or the interaction in the group, may be useful for the operation of the work group itself and, therefore, generate performance.

Finally, the fourth study, entitled “The Organizational Management as Instrument to Overcome the Resistance to the Innovative Process: An Application in the Canary Company”, by Acosta and Febles, discusses the management of organizational change as an influential factor in the creation of firm innovation through the implantation of innovative processes. Using a sample of 401 firms from the Canary Islands (Spain), the authors analyze the organizational aspects that could influence the resistance to innovative change and the predisposition to innovation through the importance that companies give to environmental variables.

We are grateful for this opportunity to report and disseminate research presented at IASK Global Management 2009 and we hope to see you all in the next edition of this International Conference.

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