

DRAFT

Call for Papers

First Annual Research Conference and Workshop on Offshoring

**Location: Duke University, Fuqua School of Business
Washington, Duke Inn, Durham, NC**

Dates: April 15-16, 2007

Sponsoring CIBERS: Duke University, Indiana University, Temple University, University of Connecticut, University of Kansas, University of Maryland, University of Memphis and the University of NC Chapel Hill

Overview

By all accounts offshoring of all manner of business functions - back office and administrative tasks, entire business process, IT operations, product and process innovations – has emerged as the new dynamic of the globalization of business. It is no longer just a tactic of moving jobs to a low cost country to reduce costs. Increasingly it is about sourcing and competing for talent globally. Findings from 2006 Duke-Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH) Offshoring Research Network (ORN) survey show that it affects companies in all the industrialized economies. More importantly it has implications for new internationalization strategies, new organizational forms, managing globally distributed organizations, economic geography of innovation and the competitiveness of countries.

Surprisingly, although the offshoring phenomenon has received wide attention from consultants, practitioners, and various industry associations it has not yet emerged as sustained subject of research in the social and management sciences underlying international business. Because offshoring has the potential of transforming global competition, business models and management of companies, and the competitiveness of countries the consortium of sponsoring CIBERs is undertaking a multi year effort to advance research on offshoring in all its manifestations as well speed up the diffusion of offshoring research and cases into the classroom and teaching.

The goal of the first conference is to attract and begin building a community of scholars from a wide spectrum of the social and management sciences and thoughtful leading edge practitioners to share research, ideas, identify emerging issues, and resources that can be introduced in the class room at all levels.

This Call for papers is soliciting proposals for plenary sessions and for research papers, research case studies and teaching cases that will be featured in two extended lunch and dinner functions. Participation in the conference and workshop is limited to a maximum of 80 attendees. Every effort will be made to extend invitations on the basis of balancing seniority, range of research topics, and practitioners. The design and organization of the conference is intended to maximize interaction and exchange of ideas among the participants.

Deadlines for submitting proposals

The deadline for submission of a **one page** summary for interactive papers, case studies, teaching cases or panel sessions (must include names of panelists and their topics) is January 31, 2007. Invitations to participate in the conference will be issued on a rolling basis until program is complete. Requests to attend conference on an at large basis should also be received by February 9, 2007. At large invitations will be extended by February 28, 2007. Proposals or requests to attend should be sent to smcadoo@duke.edu.

Context

Offshoring refers to the process by which companies undertake some activities at offshore locations instead of in their countries of origin. Western economies have practiced offshoring for at least 50 years. Until relatively recently, however, offshoring has affected mainly manufacturing work and blue-collar jobs. Since the late 90s, a new type of offshoring has emerged. The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has created the potential to locate digitized business processes almost anywhere in the world. Existing data appear to depict a growing trend that can fundamentally change the ways companies in high-cost economies organize to compete globally. Clearly, efficiency-seeking represents an important initial motivation for many firms to search for new locations in which to conduct relatively low-value-added activities. But actual experience with quality of work and level of services that companies discover abroad has lead many firms to realize that offshoring offers many new opportunities to source new organizational capabilities, rethink business models, and leverage innovation processes. The disintermediation global business processes and innovation activities poses critical issues for international business regarding the spatial and organizational configurations of professional and administrative operations which must take into account not only cost savings, but also management of new risks and the requisite new organizational capabilities.

The following is a sampling of research topics on offshoring that have been discussed in the literature and at various academic and practitioner conferences.

- Offshoring of administrative and technical work is a relatively new business practice that involves the disintermediation of business process that have previously been treated as firm specific and proprietary. Why is it the diffusion and application of ICT based collaborative technologies has been very slow to gain acceptance? What are the implications for firm competitive advantage?
- How can offshoring of administrative and technical work, and indeed, knowledge work in general, be understood in the context of FDI theory, and theories of international management?
- How does offshoring affect the configuration of industry structures in domestic and global economies (offshoring companies, service providers, employees, governments, institutions, high cost and low cost countries, etc.)?
- Increasingly offshoring involves new complex organization structures and processes for coordinating and managing globally dispersed organizational units many of which involve joint ventures with third party service delivery providers. How do companies learn and manage cultural, technical and operational challenges associated with delegating business processes to entities on the other side of the world?
- Leading edge companies are increasingly offshoring product and process innovation functions as well as research development activities. This creates new challenges for

managing human capital globally. What are the implications for building new organizational capabilities to source, locate and manage talent anywhere in the world and how can these capabilities lead to new sources of competitive advantage?

- Are non-English-speaking companies and countries at a potential competitive disadvantage compared with English-speaking counterparts?
- What are implications of offshoring and the rise of third party service providers for the ability of small and medium-sized enterprises to enter and compete in global markets?
- How does offshoring affect the capabilities and opportunities for state-owned enterprises and centrally planned economies to span organizational boundaries and country borders with private firms and traditional capitalist economies?
- What governance issues arise involving offshoring strategies and new organizational arrangements linking onshore activities, third party service providers and captive organizational units?
- How important are criteria such as language, culture, political stability, IP protection, data safeguards, availability of talent and expertise, and local business practices for selecting offshore locations?
- Some research findings and a recent Economist feature report suggest that a race for talent is emerging because of a growing shortage of expert talent in the broadly defined areas of engineering and science. What are the implications of the predicted race for talent on offshoring innovation in the long and short term for the competitiveness of firms, industries and economies?