Quick response (QR) policy is a market-driven business strategy under which supply chain channel members work together to react to volatile market demand. Traditionally, QR involves the use of information technologies such as EDI and bar-coding systems. The fundamental tenet of QR is to respond quickly to market changes and cut ordering lead times. QR was first established in the 1980s in the apparel industry in USA. In the 1990s, with advances in technology and the development of many supply chain theories (such as the Bullwhip Effect and the importance of information), QR became a very hot topic. Nowadays, with further advances in information technologies (such as RFID and ERP systems) and other scientific areas (such as 3D body scanning technologies and material sciences), challenges and opportunities arise for the application of QR. As a result, we believe that it is crucial and timely that QR be extensively and deeply explored with a view of discovering innovative QR measures that can help tackle the observed and emerging challenges.

With the aforementioned view, we have co-edited this Springer handbook. This handbook contains four parts that cover introductory materials to innovative QR, modelling and analysis of QR programmes, enabling technologies for innovative QR programmes, and applications and case studies. The specific topics covered include the following:

– The evolution of QR
– Impacts of information systems on QR
– Fast fashion as a means for achieving global QR
– Procurement flexibility under price uncertainty
– The value of information in QR supply chains
– Improving revenue management via a real option approach
– Supply chain scheduling under QR
– Dynamic pricing of seasonal product
– Supplier selection in make-to-order manufacturing supply chain
– Enhancing responsiveness for mass customization strategies
– Innovative process in e-commerce fashion supply chains
– The next generation demand network in QR systems
– RFID’s applications in QR
– ERP systems for the textiles and clothing industry
– Simulation-based optimization of inventory model with products substitution
– Methods for quantifying benefits for fast fashion
– A case study on hybrid assemble-to-order/make-to-order electronics manufacturing
– QR practices in the Hong Kong apparel industry
– Cases in China on efficient response systems with RFID technology
– Fast fashion business model for Chinese fabric manufacturers
– Innovative mass customization in the fashion industry
– A case study on improving inventory allocation under QR

We are pleased to see that this handbook contains new analytical and empirical results with valuable insights, which will not only help supply chain agents to better understand the latest applications of QR in business, but also help practitioners and researchers to know how to improve the effectiveness of QR based on innovative methods. This is especially meaningful to industries such as fashion apparels, in which many companies have not fully understood the critical features of QR, and there is a lack of innovative ideas to cope with the associated challenges.

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