

# *Part*

# *II*

## *End-User Information Systems: Business Solutions*

**I**n part II, the emphasis is on understanding requirements of individuals and work groups, and selecting or designing appropriate software solutions to meet identified business needs. The discussion of productivity tools focuses on improving individual, work group, and organizational performance. It offers a sampling of current hardware and software tools but is not intended to be all inclusive, or to suggest limitations of tools to particular personnel or tasks. As thee-business revolution continues to sweep the workplace, the use of information technologies by knowledge workers is no longer optional. The objective here is to expand horizons for identifying innovative business solutions.

Chapter 3, “Productivity Tools for Individuals,” focuses on individual work requirements at all levels of the enterprise. It looks especially at the needs of individuals in four major categories—managerial, professional/technical, sales/marketing, and administrative support—in the light of changing workplace demands and new practices such as customer relationship management and e-business. A variety of software solutions are discussed in relation to their ability to improve individual performance, including desktop productivity tools, activity management, end-user computing, communications, decision support, and sales and marketing automation. The chapter also offers specific guidelines for evaluating software features and matching them to user needs.

Chapter 4, “Work Group Computing,” provides an overview of the promises and challenges related to effective groupware choices and implementation. Groupware is described as a useful infrastructure to support teams, departments, and organizations.

The chapter explores a wide range of increasingly sophisticated communications and decision support technologies and how these tools are enabling virtual work and challenging virtual workers and their managers. Chapter 5, “Knowledge Management,” explores the emergence of an important new discipline intended to manage and leverage knowledge and experience systematically and actively within an organization. The past decade has witnessed the rapid evolution of concepts such as the knowledge worker, knowledge economy, intellectual capital, and knowledge as a tangible asset. Knowledge management programs have been launched at countless companies. Management of organizational knowledge may be especially relevant in flattened or networked organizations where layers of management have been eliminated and empowered workforces need a high level of knowledge to operate effectively in a twenty-first-century global marketplace.