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## Front Matter

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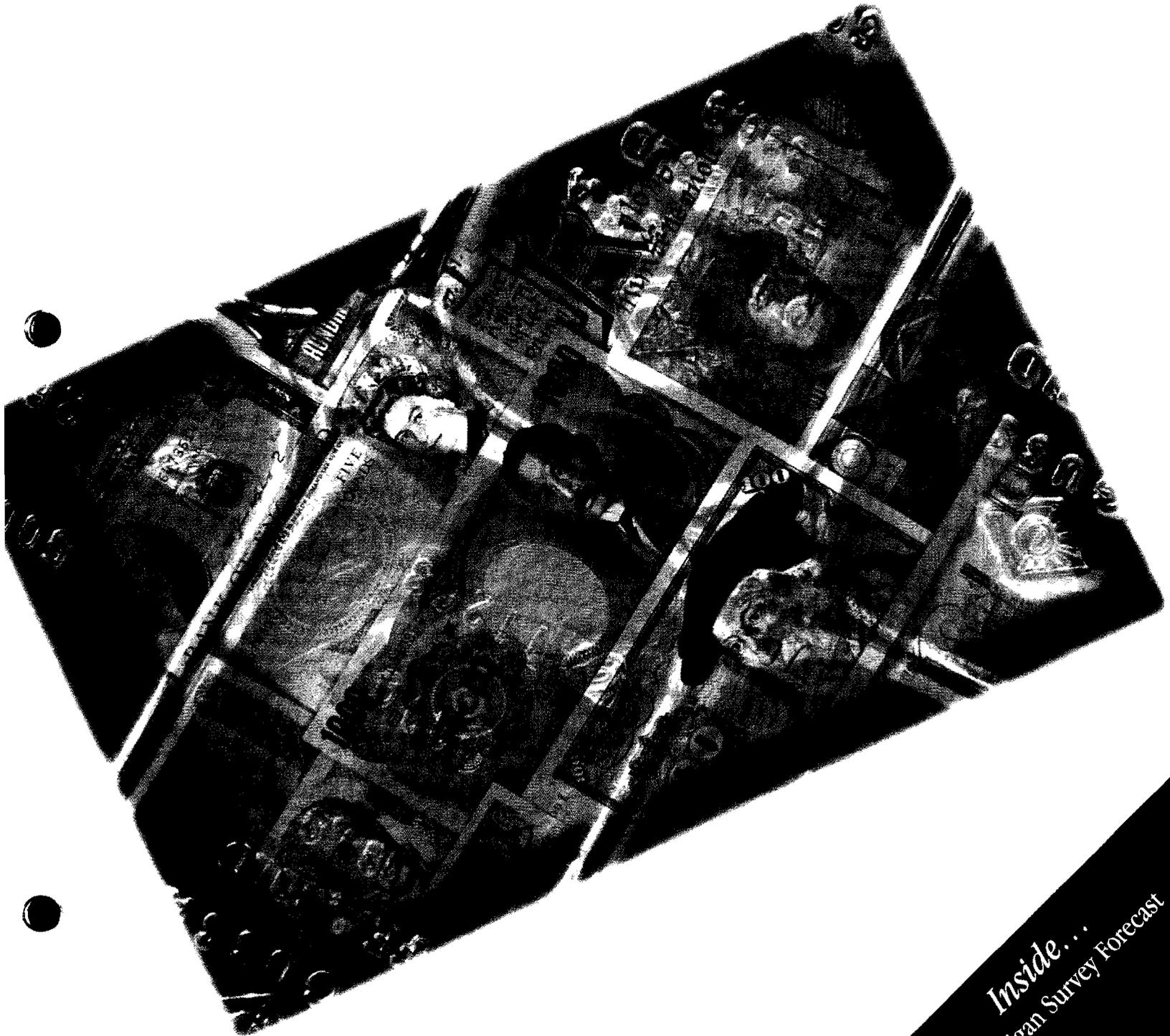
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# WEST MICHIGAN BUSINESS REVIEW

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*Inside...  
Michigan Survey Forecast*

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# WEST MICHIGAN BUSINESS REVIEW

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As one who knows very little about Physics, I have been fascinated by the symmetry between what goes on inside an atom compared to the movements of the planets in our solar system. The economic analog to this symmetry could be how micro improvements in productivity allow firms to compete in the inter-linked national and international markets. Michael Porter's famous "Competitive Diamond" in his *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* is our macro version of planetary movements! As we approach the next century, our economic identity will be forged by how we respond to global competitive pressures.

The fact that three articles in this Review relate to international economic issues is not a coincidence - it is a recognition of the things to come. Professor Gerry Simons's article analyzes how the ongoing integration of the European Common Market may impact west Michigan firms. Two professors in management, Carol Sánchez and Doug White, provide tips to west Michigan firms for developing a globally competitive strategy. In the third international article, our favorite iconoclast, Professor Ben Rudolph, debunks some international myths about marketing and trade.

In the next article, we return to issues of strategic performance when three professors from management (Jaideep Motwani, Ashok Kumar and James Jiang) continue their analysis of manufacturing strategies of west Michigan firms which they began in the previous issue of the Review. They conclude that large firms are able to apply a more comprehensive competitive strategy by blending different dimensions of operations management. Of course, the Review would not be complete without our regular features of a stock market analysis of regional companies by Professor Greg Dimkoff and the 1997 west Michigan Survey Forecasts. To our readers we wish a recession-free, prosperous new year!

*Hari Singh*