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**Inaugural Issue of the Applied Business and Economics Journal**Witold Orłowski 

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Welcome to the first issue of the Applied Business and Economics Journal, where knowledge about economics and management meets with the practice of the business. The global economy faces unprecedented challenges related to the amazing pace of changes. They are visible everywhere, from small companies through large corporations to entire national economies.

We are pleased to present the inaugural issue of our journal, featuring research articles and insightful columns by business practitioners aimed at shedding light on the pressing issues of our times.

The first article assesses the efforts of the fashion industry to achieve the Paris Agreement's net zero emissions commitment by 2050. It highlights the need for awareness campaigns, industry cooperation and legislative support for sustainable development.

The next article discusses the problems of Design Management in business, identifying, on the basis of empirical research with a sample of Polish enterprises, factors defining competitive advantage in Central and Eastern Europe.

Two subsequent articles focus on benchmarking. The first evaluates digital transformation processes in consular services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second one analyses the improvement of business processes in the Spanish insurance industry.

In the Expert Column, we explore the problem of rare events in organizations and daily life, offering management strategies to cope with unpredictability.



The issue concludes with an essay on the impact of sustainable development on the economic activity, emphasizing the need for a harmonious approach to generating profits and protecting the environment.

Commencing with our inaugural issue, an exciting adventure of analyzing the challenges of today's economy, I want to express gratitude to the authors, reviewers, and editorial team for their contributions. Our aim is to deepen knowledge, foster discussions, and inspire positive change at the intersection of business, economics, sustainable development, and digital transformation. We invite you to common shaping the future of business.

*Prof. Witold Orłowski*  
*Chief Editor*