Acknowledgments

To say that this book is "by Alim Merali" alone would be giving myself too much credit. I didn't make any new discoveries, nor did I invent any novel methods. I am not a pioneer in the field, but a beneficiary of it. My contribution to this book was compiling information and insights taught to me by many people over many years. To these individuals, I offer my sincere gratitude.

First and foremost, I want to thank the leaders who made competitive speech and debate possible for me. In particular, many people within the Alberta Debate and Speech Association deserve my appreciation. Dozens of dedicated volunteers, particularly debate coaches and tournament directors, gave up weekend after weekend to allow me to take up my passion for debating. Hundreds of judges provided priceless advice and continual encouragement.

Over seven years as a competitive debater, I had the opportunity to work with dozens of partners in hundreds of tournament and practice rounds. I want to thank my debate partners from the Old Scona Academic High School Debate Society, the University of Alberta Debate Society, and the University of Western Ontario Debate Society. We relished our victories together, and we reflected on our defeats together. We helped each other build on what we did right and improve on what we did wrong. Since I believe that the greatest source of knowledge is experience (the topic of one of my tougher debate rounds), it's clear to me that my experiences in competitive debating have contributed immensely to this book.

My competitors provided the rivalry that made debate enjoyable and challenging. While they may have been more dedicated to defeating me than to helping me, they acted as indispensable 'sounding boards' for my arguments. The spirit of competition brought out the best in each of us, and I know that we shared some great moments (read: intense, nail-biting battles) over many years.

Some of my best debate experiences have come well outside the world of competitive debate. I want to thank the people who have

challenged me as I've put my debate skills into practice. At the University of Western Ontario's Richard Ivey School of Business, my fellow students have pushed me to defend my views during literally hundreds of challenging debates on real business cases. My associates in the world of politics have encouraged me to articulate and defend my opinions on the issues that shape society. It is from the intelligent and well-spoken people I am privileged to be surrounded by every day that I have experienced the ultimate test in debate.

Finally, thank you to the friends and family who told me to "keep pushing it" when I stalled for a while, unsure of what to write next. Although authoring this book took longer than I had originally anticipated (and promised), I hope that you've found it worth the wait.