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Christoph W. Künne

Online Intermediaries for Co-Creation

An Explorative Study in Healthcare

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Foreword

In the digital era, the Internet provides unique possibilities to connect particular groups of stakeholders, like companies with their geographically dispersed customers and partners. Online platforms, in particular, offer distinct features for companies to exchange knowledge and to jointly create (“co-create”) innovations with external stakeholders, such as product users, customers, experts, or partners of other organizations.

Given the complicated industry structure and sheer number of stakeholders in the healthcare sector, this sector appears to be particularly promising for crowd-sourced innovation. The Internet can help to facilitate and improve the exchange between pharmaceutical companies, medical technology companies, insurance companies, medical doctors, nursing staff, patients and their family members, and many others. As Christoph Künne convincingly argues, harnessing the creativity of healthcare consumers is a promising means of innovation in healthcare. Healthcare consumers, who are often patients, tend to be intrinsically motivated to improve their current situation, and there are many examples where patients have played a key role in developing solutions to their healthcare challenges, particularly in the context of rare or chronic diseases. Literature suggests that consumers should be systematically supported in doing so.

As such, understanding this bridging role of online intermediaries is a fertile field for research and the central matter of Christoph Künne’s thesis. Online intermediaries link two or more parties through online platforms in order to foster co-creation of innovative products and solutions. The author addresses this highly relevant research gap with three consecutive empirical studies using qualitative research designs. The work invites the reader to explore what different types of online intermediaries exist, how they differ regarding their value-creation potential, and what challenges they currently face. The author also clarifies the adoption process to be followed for companies to benefit from co-created innovation outcomes.

Overall, the thesis is comprehensive in its approach and reveals results that are not only of great interest for academia, but also insightful for business practice. It

appeals for its readable style, as well as the fresh approach by which the concepts are developed and presented. Also, with specific industry examples, the author helps the reader to follow the research with ease. Christoph Künne's thesis has been accepted as a doctoral dissertation in 2016 by the School of Business and Economics at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. I congratulate Christoph Künne on the tangible and convincing results of his research. The book is a must read for all those who have an interest in consumer co-creation for innovation beyond the typical boundaries of the healthcare sector. I wish the book the broad dissemination it deserves and Christoph Künne all the best for his future career.

Nuremberg, Germany

Prof. Dr. Kathrin M. Möslein

Preface

This book concludes my doctoral research activities at the Chair of Information Systems I, especially Innovation and Value Creation in Nuremberg. Looking back, I am glad I pursued this path as it broadened my thinking and sharpened my skills. The printed results you see here are the tip of the iceberg, the end product of a long development process. During this research journey, I relied on the support of several loyal individuals, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude.

First, several senior university professors have influenced my direction. In particular, I am deeply thankful to my doctoral supervisor Prof. Dr. Kathrin Möslein for giving me the opportunity to do academic research and teaching at her chair. I have greatly benefited from all her constructive feedback and the time she spent helping me to develop my hypotheses. Without the trust she put in me, this work would never have been finished. I also want to thank Prof. Dr. Michael Amberg for preparing the second appraisal report on the thesis. During my time in Nuremberg, I felt privileged to have the opportunity to interact with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Peter Mertens, whom I knew long before I started my doctoral research by his esteemed reputation as the godfather of the German Wirtschaftsinformatik. My research was also heavily influenced from overseas, not only through international academic conferences and peer reviews, but also through a research stay at the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. I feel indebted to Prof. Ritu Agarwal, Ph.D., who gave me a warm welcome to the Washington DC area, who constantly challenged the theoretical robustness of my contributions, and who motivated me through our extremely energizing discussions.

Second, I greatly appreciate the support of a few fellow researchers. Specifically, Dr. Stefan Thallmaier (HHL Leipzig), Dr. Daniel Fürstenau (Free University of Berlin), Prof. Dr. Christoph Ihl (Hamburg University of Technology), Dr. Cécile Cam (Audencia Nantes), and Dr. Shahla Ghobadi (University of New South Wales) have proven to be inspiring sparring partners, helping me to solidify my ideas into outcomes. In addition, I want to extend my thanks to many former and current members of the Wil team who took an interest in my research journey. Special thanks go to Dr. in spe Matthias Raß, Dr. Hari Suman Naik, Dr. Constantin Söldner, and Dr. Sabine Brunner for being always approachable, even on

non-research topics. Transforming all the constructive inputs into written pages would not have been possible without the very effective work environment at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, which I gratefully acknowledge.

Third, I want to express gratitude to my good friends who shared the highs and the lows. It is like running a marathon; although you are determined about the mission, the finish line often feels far away. Then, unexpectedly, friends show up along the track cheering passionately. Two of them stand out, namely, Dr. Michael Hagenau for his persistent pushing and rigorous reflection, and Christian Siebert for his generous support in many ways and an unparalleled sense of humor.

Finally, I am most indebted to my family, especially my parents Rita Künne and Dr. Wulf-Dieter Künne, and my sister Stefanie. They believed in me during the entire journey. Thank you for listening to my concerns at all times and providing unfaltering encouragement whenever I needed it.

All of those listed above I acknowledge for supporting me through this stage of my life. Now, let us take it from here. Exciting times are ahead.

Munich, Germany

Christoph W. Künne

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Abbreviations

AGOF	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Online Forschung
AJAX	Asynchronous JavaScript and XML; enables modern web applications
B2B	Business to business
B2C	Business to consumer
CEO	Chief executive officer
cf.	Confer (latin); compare with
Chap.	Chapter
e.g.	Exempli gratia (latin); for example
EK	External knowledge
EMA	European Medicines Agency
et al.	Et alia (latin); and others
etc.	Et cetera (latin); and so forth
FDA	Food and Drug Association
Fig.	Figure
GDP	Gross domestic product
HC	Healthcare
HCC	Healthcare consumer
HCO	Healthcare organization
i.e.	Id est (latin); that is to say
ibid.	Ibidem (latin); referring to a previously cited work
IT	Information technology
IVW	Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern
NPD	New product development
OII	Online innovation intermediary
p.	Page
pp.	Pages
PRO	Patient-reported outcome

R&D	Research and development
RQ	Research question
RSS	Rich Site Summary; a standard of web feeds
Sect.	Section
UII	User innovation input
URL	Uniform resource locator
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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