
Introduction

There are only a few other strategy concepts that seem to preoccupy managers and board members more today than ecosystems. Every strategy discussion begins with envisioning the future ecosystems and defining the role the organization should play in them. As attractive and compelling as the promises often sound, the problems usually start with understanding what ecosystems are and how they differ from traditional industries.

Even when this challenge is resolved, many attempts to develop ecosystems are doomed to failure. According to a study by BCG (Pidun, Reevevs, and Schüssler, 2020), the main reason, i.e., 34% of all ecosystem failures, is due to wrong governance decisions. Therefore, ecosystem governance is “a major success factor and a big challenge” at the same time (Pidun, Reeves, and Knust 2020, 1).

The importance of governance to ecosystems is also recognized in the emerging ecosystem theory, as expressed by Jacobides, Cennamo, and Gawer (2018, 2269), “To understand such strategic dynamics, we need a clearer sense of how ecosystems are structured and governed. Behavior in an ecosystem, and ultimately, its success, is affected by the rules of engagement and the nature of standards and interfaces.”

It is therefore a great honor to have gathered ten scholars and practitioners to share their insights on ecosystem governance. The contributions are organized into five sections.

The first section examines the *foundations of ecosystem governance*. I begin by examining the transition from corporate to ecosystem governance, followed by Kilian Schmück and Nicolas Gilgen highlighting the importance of incentive mechanisms in ecosystem governance.

The second section offers two *business perspectives on ecosystem governance*. My exploration of the multidextrous nature of value-creating ecosystem strategies is followed by Karin Taheny’s article on the role of communication in successful ecosystem adoption.

Two *organizational perspectives on ecosystem governance* follow. While I focus on the role of power in understanding and shaping organizations, Nicolas Bürer highlights the importance of collaboration in ecosystems.

The next section examines two different *legal perspectives on ecosystem governance*. Felix Horber and Christina Lusti examine the applicability of corporate law to the challenges of ecosystem governance, followed by Dante Alighieri Disparte’s reflections on structuring ecosystems as associations.

The two concluding articles examine two *applications of ecosystem governance*. Stefano Santinelli describes how he managed to transform a traditional publishing house into a successful business ecosystem. Finally, Ulrich Schimpel shares his experiences with a public-private ecosystem based on distributed ledger technology.

We hope you enjoy reading it, and that the perspectives offered in this book will help you avoid the pitfalls that have confronted many boards attempting to succeed in ecosystems.

Prof. Dr. Michael Hilb

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Literature

Jacobides, M. G., Cennamo, C., & Gawer, A. (2018). Towards a theory of ecosystems. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(8), 2255-2276.

Pidun, U., Reeves, M., & Knust, N. (2020): How do you manage a business ecosystem? BCG Henderson Institute.

Pidun, U., Reeves, M., & Schlüssler, M. (2020): Why do most business ecosystems fail? BCG Henderson Institute.