
This book has been written to address one central question, namely how can established companies successfully manage a fundamental transformation of their business model(s) based on green value propositions and value creation, thereby improving or sustaining economic performance? The focus of this work is on companies that are already established in the mass market because such companies tend to follow corporate trajectories, and pursue diffusion strategies, that are fundamentally different from those adopted by newly founded firms.

Indeed, a view that the author has tried to convey throughout this timely publication is the heterogeneity of business model-related aspects. For instance, it has been noted that while many large companies – such as GE – have relied on increased research and development spending to deliver on their promise of green innovation, other companies – such as BMW and Maersk Line – have largely depended on modifying their management practices to accommodate the needs of their newly adopted green business models.

Broadly speaking, this book can be divided into four parts. It begins with an introduction before moving on to discuss theoretical foundations. This is followed by some short case vignettes on green business model transformations leading to a framework and some conclusions. This amounts to nine chapters, which can be summarised as follows.

Part I begins with Chapter 1: The Emergence of Green Business Models. This chapter provides a succinct introduction to the so-called ‘Green [R]evolution’, as well as to the origins of business models and their potential use as a means for achieving competitive sustainability. In Chapter 2: Purpose of Work and Research Approach, an academic gap is highlighted at the intersection of the fields of environmental sustainability in business, business models, and organisational change and innovation.

Part II commences with Chapter 3: Environmental Sustainability in Business. Here, the relevance of corporate environmental sustainability is highlighted – both as a managerial task and with respect to its link to the economic success of the company. Following this, the concept of business models is defined, and their importance is highlighted in Chapter 4: The Business Model Concept as a Unit of Analysis for Management Science. In Chapter 5: Towards a Taxonomy of Green Business Models, four types of business models are proposed based on their aggregated environmental impact. Next, theoretical perspectives on organisational change are reviewed and put into context with the challenge of green business model transformations in Chapter 6: Organisations, Change and Innovation.

Part III starts with Chapter 7: A Survey on Green Business Model Transformations. An effort is made here to supplement the synthesised theoretical perspectives from the previous chapters with seven case vignettes, i.e. brief, instructive analyses of business situations. In Chapter 8: Managerial Implications of Survey Results, a discussion is provided with regard to managerial implications based on gathered industry examples and related theoretical work. Finally, Chapter 9: Managing Green Business Model Transformations articulates a framework for managing green business model transformations.

Part IV reiterates the academic contributions of this work and highlights the possibilities for future work on this area.

The author claims that the main contribution of this book is providing management practitioners with a framework that could guide them in the process of seizing new green opportunities for their companies. This framework divides the process of green business model transformation into six phases: (1) embracing ambiguity; (2) rethinking old certainties; (3) translating into business impact; (4) planning for action; (5) making it happen; and (6) finding new signals.

Despite being based on extensive research on several companies belonging to a range of different industries, this framework does not offer a significantly different approach to those often used by change management consultants (e.g. Managed Change of the LaMarsh Global, among others). This observation relates particularly to the theory–practice
balance of the manuscript. While the vast majority of this piece of work is likely to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of an academic researcher who has recently developed an interest in this highly important topic, they are likely to be disappointed with a final product that comes across like almost as a generic tool for corporate change management. On the other hand, management practitioners, consultants, or proponents of general management principles could struggle in maintaining their momentum when navigating through such heavily researched theoretical content before eventually reaching a set of principles that can guide them in the process of green business model transformation. That said, it would be fair to state that the book provides a well-researched insight into subjects relating to green business models and environmental sustainability in business.

To conclude, this book can offer a wealth of useful background information for both researchers and students with an interest in corporate sustainability strategies.

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