

## Foreword

During the last few decades, numerous organizations have been forced to transform themselves from “product-centric” to “customer-centric” for various reasons. Becoming customer centric is one of the most important aims of most organizations. Hence, strategic alliance and value co-creation have attracted the attention of both practitioners and researchers over the last few years. Despite, or maybe due to, the attention drawn to the subject, there is no clear agreement on what strategic alliance and value co-creation (VCC) is, and especially how VCC should be developed. It is now commonly understood that value co-creation, drive: marketing, sales, and customer services. It is often approached as a business strategy to create value for an organization, through the creation of profitable long-term relationships. Significant progress has been made in identifying and researching the components of strategic alliance and value co-creation. The roles of strategic alliance, modes of alliance, meaning of value, methods for value co-creation, applications, customer knowledge, customer’s satisfaction, and a co-value creation strategy have all been subject of research lately. Yet, no comprehensive research has been conducted to identify and understand the strategic alliance and value co-creation especially in the service industry. What is more, the advancements in society and technology leading to convergence of information, communication, and technology, coupled with acceleration in globalization, competitive environments, and changing customer’s preferences have created new challenges as well as opportunities for leveraging knowledge about customers and their impact on value creation.

*Handbook of Research on Strategic Alliance and Value Co-Creation in the Service Industry*, edited by Dr. Shai Rozenes and Dr. Yuval Cohen, provides not only a valuable window but examines a variety of new phenomena that have either not received the attention of scholars or requires deeper investigation to build consistent theory. In that, the book will provoke both students and practitioners of global enterprises to understand their contexts and to determine whether and how “offerings” for consumption will need to be designed in fresh and innovative ways. The academics and researchers writing in this book emphasize the primacy of strategic alliance – incremental or radical – for organizations that desire to remain significant in an intensely competitive world. Such alliance or offering, as the breadth of ideas show, need not be one-dimensional, i.e., merely product-focused; rather, value co-creation can cover the gamut of business operations that permeate all stakeholder interests to value-added services, to supply and delivery, promotion, and new ways of consumption.

This book will provoke thinking about strategy, service dominant logic and value co-creation fundamentals. A special attention is given to organizational value co-creation: be it projects as service, agile service, and supply chain value co-creation. Another emphasis is on general value co-creation and the ways it reveal itself in various services. Finally, the book provides key lessons and best practices through case studies in value co-creation. The chapters’ content and sequence encourage creativity and provides

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opportunities for thinking out of the box. To conclude, the recent developments (such as: SDL, VCC, and the role of strategic alliances in designing the customer experience) are posing new challenges and opportunities. In particular, the implementation of SDL, VCC and Strategic alliances utilizing the evolving areas of mobile communications, advanced information technology systems, smart cities, and green sustainable services.

While the Internet's ability to reach new segments and reduce cost through streamlining of the supply chain is well established, the prospects for further improvements using strategic alliances and VCC are promising. Today's exciting dynamic developments promise new horizons. New beginnings could be seen in such ideas as crowdsourcing using web-based platform, and reaching out to new markets built on harnessing the capability of the Internet.

Strategy, alliance and value creation has been, and will always be the way for service organizations to blaze the way to competitive superiority. Such alliances and value co-creations will not only need to be profitable; they must also be people-friendly and sustain or even revitalize the ecologies in which they are expected to thrive. It is for the creative individual to spot the myriad of opportunities for multiplier effect. The diversity of perspectives on strategic alliances and opportunities for value co-creation in general, and for services in particular, that this book offers promises stimulating reading. If it spurs lively debate and discussion among practitioners and encourages academics to build more comprehensive theories of strategic alliances and value co-creation, the book will have served as an important stepping stone.

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