

Scripting practices for mutual gain: Value co-creation in business networks

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Purpose

This study takes a social constructivist view on value co-creation. In so doing, it sets the social-cultural context of (market) actors to the fore, and claims that this social-cultural context has the capacity to reframe how we understand not only markets but equally importantly value co-creation. The purpose of this paper is to devise an alternative conceptual framework that helps understand value co-creation as an interactive process of inter-definition involving networked (market) actors with varying - and often conflicting - calculative motives.

Methodology/approach

As a starting point, the paper assumes a social constructivist stance and a practice perspective. This suggests moving away from cognitive models associated with value creation. The conceptual framework draws on three in-depth case studies involving buying and selling networks in collaborative industrial contexts.

Findings

The conceptual model presents value co-creation as the ongoing result of four distinct, yet closely interwoven practices:

- *Inscription practices* aiming at pre-configuring other (market) actors to change their resource integration practices according to a particular set of norms or rules.
- *Resource integration practices* aiming at sustaining actors' capacity to access and integrate resources in desirable ways.
- *Calculative practices* aiming at signifying whether proposed changes in resource integration practices help the actors improve the density of their resources and thus reinforce their calculative motives.
- *Practices of economic valuation* aiming at sharing the co-constructed worth of proposed changes in resource integration as value among the involved parties.

Translations – social processes that help ideas spread across time and space – help forge links between the practices. They connect not only the practices associated with the focal dyad, but also those associated with adjoining (market) actors in the relevant business network or ecosystem.

Research implications

The conceptual framework suggests that actors co-create value by scripting practices – that is, by interactively re-configuring their resource integration practices - in ways that enhance the density of their resources, whose socially constructed worth they can share as value.

Practical implications

The paper identifies a set of practices that help (market) actors to engage other actors in scripting practices that leave the involved actors better off.

Originality / value

By casting light on the practices that interlink to produce and re-produce what actors deem as valuable, the paper claims it not only contributes to our understanding of value co-creation but also to how actors perform markets.

Keywords

Value co-creation, resource integration, market(s), performativity, practice

Paper type

Research paper