

Conceptualization of actor roles in business model innovation

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Abstract

In the face of growing interest in research on business model innovations, this paper explores the roles of actors and their characterizations in the context of developing a business model for a new start-up idea. In particular, we focus on start-up endeavours in a pre-market phase. Following, the present paper investigates different actor roles by screening literature and collecting qualitative data from interviews with nascent founders of start-up firms, experts and others. Thereby we find that many different actors are involved in the process of turning an idea into an actual business model and thus into a successful new company. Ensuing, this paper presents a conceptualization of six different actor roles in the context of business model innovation in start-up firms, the initiator, mentor, networker, expert, decision maker, and influencer. The identified actor roles are clearly delineated from existing role conceptualizations in the literature and their relevance is carved out.

Keywords: *role conceptualization; business model innovation; experimentation*

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