

How the organizational context affects boundary spanners' attempts to cultivate organizational trustworthiness

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Abstract

An important part of the work of boundary spanners representing buying organizations is the development of trust vis-à-vis strategic suppliers. However, dependencies on internal actors from different functions and levels of the buying organization may constrain or hinder the efforts of boundary spanners to develop trust. Drawing on principles from boundary spanning theory and using a qualitative case study of an OEM and its relationships with a group of key suppliers, we explore the nature of these internal dependencies and how boundary spanners can cope with them. The findings demonstrate how two types of internal dependencies, executive and functional, affect boundary spanners' capacity to cultivate organizational trustworthiness. We show how boundary spanners can make the implications of these dependencies less pronounced through two coping behaviors: proactive and reactive. The findings extend current knowledge on the micro foundations of interorganizational trust.

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