

WHY FIRMS SHOULD JOIN CIRCULAR ECONOMY NETWORKS BEYOND ECONOMIC RETURNS? THE ROLE OF STEWARDSHIP

Debora Casoli

University of Bologna

Annamaria Tuan

University of Bologna

Marco Visentin

University of Bologna

Giuseppe Cappiello

Università di Bologna

Cite as:

Casoli Debora, Tuan Annamaria, Visentin Marco, Cappiello Giuseppe (2023), WHY FIRMS SHOULD JOIN CIRCULAR ECONOMY NETWORKS BEYOND ECONOMIC RETURNS? THE ROLE OF STEWARDSHIP. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 52nd, (114198)

Paper from the 52nd Annual EMAC Conference, Odense/Denmark, May 23-26, 2023



WHY FIRMS SHOULD JOIN CIRCULAR ECONOMY NETWORKS BEYOND ECONOMIC RETURNS? THE ROLE OF STEWARDSHIP

Abstract

Circular Economy (CE) optimizes resource usage, but it requires companies' leadership to genuinely embrace sustainable values and to radically rethink their inter-firm relationships. This paper aims to answer to an unanswered question in the literature: why firms should join CE networks beyond economic returns? Through a grounded theory approach, we identify five dominant cognitive frames: 1) transactional frame which prioritizes economic over environmental goals and considers sustainability and circularity benefits to trickle down from economic growth; 2) socio-relational frame, tackles the relational dimension of the interfirm relationships between suppliers and buyers; 3) customer orientation frame; 4) social capital frame which recognizes the key role of social capital. However, these contemporary perspectives do not capture the broader commitment to societal and universal moral norms, namely environmental stewardship, that constitutes the last frame, 5) stewardship frame.

Subject Areas: *Business-to-Business Marketing, Marketing Strategy*

Track: Business-To-Business Marketing & Supply Chain Management