TRANSLATING INNOVATION INTO VALUE: MARKETS, CAPABILITIES, AND INSTITUTIONS

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Special Session Proposal: 2026 EMAC Conference

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Titles of Papers and Author Affiliations (*Represents Presenting Author)

1. *Does Environmental Regulation Pay Off? The Impact of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Policies on Firm Innovation and Financial Performance*

Shankar Ganesan (University of Notre Dame; sganesan@nd.edu)
Nandini Nim* (Colorado State University; n.nim@colostate.edu)
Xiaoxu Wu Schultz (Colorado State University; xiaoxu.wu@colostate.edu)

2. *Designing with Edge Consumers: How Inclusive Design Orientation Transforms New Product Development*

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Deepa Chandrasekaran* (The University of Texas at San Antonio; deepa.chandrasekaran@utsa.edu)
BJ Allen (Brigham Young University; bj_allen@byu.edu)

3. *Navigating the Riskscape: The Customer Data Protection Capability and Financial Risk*

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Kelly Hewett (Colorado State University; kelly.hewett@colostate.edu)
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4. *Innovation Acquisition and Market Impact in Vertical M&As: Uncovering Drivers of Marketplace Success and Marketing Capabilities*

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Special Session Proposal Abstract

This proposed special session examines how firms create, protect, and capture value from innovation amid pressures from environmental regulation, inclusion demands, data privacy risks, and vertical integration. Rather than treating innovation as a single breakthrough, the session asks: When and how do firms transform these pressures into durable strategic, financial, and societal advantages, and when do they instead erode innovation potential or amplify risk? Four papers, spanning environmental policy, inclusive design, customer data protection, and innovation acquisitions, jointly explore how marketing capabilities, organizational orientations, and governance choices shape innovation payoffs.

The 90-minute session is organized as an integrated journey from external institutional pressures to internal capabilities and market-facing execution. We begin with a macro–policy view in *Ganesan, Nim, and Wu Schultz*, who examine when extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies for electronic waste stimulate or stifle firm innovation and profitability, showing that regulation-induced innovation is contingent on marketing capabilities, ESG positioning, and geographic proximity. We then move closer to the marketplace with *Patrick, Chandrasekaran, and Allen*, who introduce Inclusive Design Orientation and show how systematic engagement with "edge consumers" turns inclusion pressures into a continuous source of product and experience innovation. Next, *Johnston, Hewett, and Damavandi* conceptualize customer data protection capability as a strategic response to an evolving privacy "riskscape," demonstrating how robust data protection mitigates idiosyncratic and systematic equity risk. The session concludes with *Bauer, Matta, and Beckmann*, who investigate innovation acquisitions in vertical M&As and reveal how pre-deal narratives, integration choices, and the innovation–marketing–sales interface determine whether acquired innovation translates into marketplace impact.

Across these projects, three mechanisms consistently surface: the role of marketing-related capabilities in translating pressure into innovation, the importance of key interfaces (innovation–marketing–sales, firm–regulator, firm–consumer) in realizing payoffs, and the moderating influence of institutional context on whether innovation delivers the desired impact. Collectively, the session shifts attention from "how to innovate" to "how to make innovation work when the world pushes back." It bridges conversations in sustainability and regulation, inclusive

innovation, data privacy and risk, and strategic restructuring through a common lens of innovation under pressure.

This session will attract scholars and practitioners who are keen on understanding how innovation moves from breakthrough concepts to enduring market impact. For marketing scholars and practitioners specifically, the session offers an agenda for designing innovation systems that are robust to regulation, responsive to inclusion, resilient to data risks, and capable of harnessing acquisitions so that innovation not only survives pressure but thrives because of it. By presenting four related research papers that bring cutting-edge research from a group of 12 international researchers, we aim to foster a dynamic dialogue and stimulate a constructive debate with the session attendees.