

The Business Model

Formation, description and definition

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Akademisk Avhandling

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Avhandlingen baseras på följande delarbeten:

1. Jon Williamsson
Market-based environmental policies and business models of technology providers: The Swedish cleantech venture experience
2. Jon Williamsson
Appeasing or interacting: Exploring the dilemma of stakeholder inclusion as a means for business model renewal
3. Jon Williamsson
Managerial narratives about business model formation: Stories from the Swedish municipal district heating sector
4. Jon Williamsson
A communicative perspective on the business model concept



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This compilation thesis consists of three papers that examine different aspects of the formation of business models and one paper that examines the business model concept per se.

The first paper explores the potential impact of two market based environmental policy instruments (MBIs) upon the business models of seven Swedish cleantech ventures. The results show that the MBIs have a mainly negative influence on the business models and fail to raise the marginal abatement costs high enough for the firms to find profitable market niches in Sweden.

The second paper explores how managers in the Swedish municipal district heating sector choose between two different approaches to the inclusion of stakeholders when committing to business model renewal. The results show that managers include less salient stakeholders in the strategic goals of the firm than in the processes that shape firm strategy. This result is contrasted by the fact that less tangible value is directed towards the less salient groups.

The third paper builds on an identified lack of narrative research on business model formation and presents a framework for such work. The framework is used in interviews with managers from the Swedish municipal district heating sector. The results suggest that certain properties (flexible, open, comprehensible and inclusive) of the narrative terms (agent, scene, agency and purpose) are associated with the successful outcome of the business model formation narratives.

The fourth paper analyzes the business model concept and suggests that a new perspective based on pragmatist and non-structuralist arguments might ameliorate some of the issues that plague the concept. The business model is redefined as consisting of five areas of concern which should be dealt with in the dialogue between firm representatives and stakeholders.

Key words: business model, market based instruments, cleantech, stakeholder inclusion, sensemaking, narratives, district heating, pragmatism, communicative theory of the firm.

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