

## Understanding and managing digital transformation from an inter-organizational perspective

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To follow up on the main topic of last year's IMP Forum in Uppsala seminar and a forthcoming special issue in *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, a special track regarding the phenomenon of digital transformation as viewed from an inter-organisational network perspective is arranged.

Digital transformation is described as an evolutionary process in which digital capabilities and technologies are used to form new business models, operational processes, and customer experiences, all aimed at creating customer value (Morakanyane et al., 2017). In comparison to digitization and digitalization of business practices, a digital transformation is a more profound change process (Brennen & Kreiss, 2015; Henriette et al., 2015; Parviainen et al., 2017; Stolterman & Fors, 2004). It allows for the development of external opportunities, such as new business models, improved customer delivery times, improved customer service quality, etc. In extension, it may lead to disruptive change such as changes in business roles or even making a company's business obsolete within its wider context (Parviainen et al., 2017). Digital transformation thus includes inter-organizational aspects of how firms create value through social and technical change processes, a perspective that fits well with the research conducted by the IMP community (Baraldi et al., 2012; Håkan Håkansson & Waluszewski, 2007).

Expectations surrounding digital technologies are core to digital transformations, and the realization of their potential benefits is not solely dependent on their intrinsic technical characteristics but rather on how these will interact with their context (Baraldi & Nadin, 2006). However, these processes are often seen from a firm-centric perspective, and the drivers of the value creation behind such transformation remain vague and explained from a theoretically aggregated level. The IMP stream of literature has, for the last 40 years, empirically investigated how inter-organizational activities, resource utilization and actor bonds can generate value for business actors (Håkan Håkansson, 1982; Waluszewski et al., 2017). It is thus logical that literature embracing the inter-organizational network perspective also aids the understanding of digital transformation, especially when it comes to how such a phenomenon might result in novel business practices and value creation within and between interacting firms. Historically, the IMP perspective has proven apt in empirically tracing and explaining innovation and change processes within industrial business practices (Håkan Håkansson & Waluszewski, 2016). Moreover, there is currently an increase in papers within the IMP community that study digital transformation related phenomena (Andersson & Mattsson, 2016; Baraldi, 2003; Ecklinder-Frick et al., 2020; Fremont et al., 2018; Karjaluoto et al., 2003; Mele et al., 2019; Ojala et al., 2016).

The aim of this special track is to stimulate a discussion and increase our understanding of the possibilities and hindrances that digital transformation entail. With a specific focus on digitally transformed inter-organizational activities, resource utilization within and between firms, and the alteration of relational bonds between interacting business actors.

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