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Book review

Circular Business: Collaborate and Circulate; a bookreview

With their book, “Circular Business: Collaborate and Circulate”, Circular Collaboration, Amersfoort, ISBN: 978-90-824902-0-6, €35, Kraaijenhagen et al. (2016) give companies practical guidance on their contribution to the development of a more circular economy by presenting a practical 10-step approach to a more circular business. It includes a circular economy framework to assess existing cases and to give an easy overview of circular economy examples. This framework describes the case's main focal points of innovation by combining technical, collaboration and business model aspects with the case's main environmental focus existing of strategies for slowing, closing and narrowing resource loops. By mainly focussing on existing organisations that own or have the potential to influence the full value chain, the book offers professionals a practical guide on how to initiate, lead and execute projects within organisations that have the potential to grow into a more circular business.

The book is divided into two parts: part 1 elaborates on innovation aspects and strategies for a more circular economy leading to the presentation of the circular economy framework and the 10-step approach. Part 2 elaborates on the 10 steps and covers the following topics: step 1 (Chapter 3: leadership) addresses the importance of leadership capabilities during a transformational process and provides examples of different companies to illustrate the importance of top level commitment. Step 2 (Chapter 4 - vision and purpose) revolves around the formulation of a clear vision or purpose that goes beyond making profits and involves societal and environmental aspects. Step 3 (Chapter 5 - selecting your pilot) describes the selection process of a pilot to test the pilot project in a time- and resource efficient way. Step 4 (Chapter 6 - sketching the system) broadens the scope of the selected pilot by focusing on the mapping of a system where collaboration can take place. Step 5 (Chapter 7 - visioning with partners) provides an approach to creating a shared vision among the potential project partners. Step 6 (Chapter 8 - internal transformation) focusses on internal collaboration including the soft and hard factors to accelerate the internal transformation. Step 7 (Chapter 9 - circular business and revenue model innovation) addresses the need for business and revenue model innovation with an emphasis on shared value creation and business models for closing and slowing loops. Step 8 (Chapter 10 - internalising externalities) revolves around internalising externalities causing a resilient system and improved collaboration. Step 9 (Chapter 11 - contract) provides advice on securing the previous steps in contracts. Finally, step 10 (Chapter 12 - scaling up from pilot to circular business) provides key criteria for scaling up the pilot to a more circular business. With these steps being provided in a logical order, continuous evaluation and

learning are essential parts of the process. The book finalizes with an epilogue that provides a summary of the steps, the biggest circular economy opportunities, and encouraging words for the readers to start their circular business.

As part of the growing attention for corporate sustainability and circular economy, the book has a clever timing by offering guidance to businesses that want to become more sustainable and, consequently, contribute to a more circular economy. Although the book builds on recent models found in literature (i.e. Sinek's Golden Circle model (2009), the FSSD framework (Robèrt, 2009), and the value mapping tool (Bocken et al., 2013)) and explains main focal points of innovation and strategies describing the specific environmental focus, an elaboration on the related barriers is missing. Since physical and socio-cultural proximity between project partners is a prerequisite for a successful collaboration (Dietrich et al., 2010; Hannon, 2012; Witjes and Lozano, 2016) addressing barriers to increase physical and socio-cultural proximity will make actors see the consequences of strategic decisions while striving for a more circular business.

As the concept of circular economy is gaining attention, companies are in the need of a practical guidance on how to become more sustainable and contribute to a more circular economy. By providing the 10-step approach and emphasizing the necessity for collaboration, the book offers practitioners a toolkit for developing projects whose results contribute to the development of a more circular economy. The book provides an essential source of information for sustainability managers while using ‘the circular economy as a driver for wider sustainable development that will reduce the negative impacts of human on the planet’ (Kraaijenhagen et al., 2016, p.15).

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