

## Preface

Inter-organizational value creation based on the accessibility of complementary assets has become an imperative in the field of technological innovation. The popularity of the concepts 'open innovation' and 'innovation networks' emphasizes this trend within a specialized economy. However, certain barriers remain to engage in co-innovation projects specifically if high innovation risk is at stake. Thus, a certain co-innovation competence may be required to effectively explore and exploit the entrepreneurial opportunities arising from the corporate environment.

In this work a networked approach to value creation processes of young knowledge-intensive entrepreneurial firms is critically analyzed by assessing precise strategies and tactics for these firms to exploit their surrounding regional economic structures. In this context, the concept of co-innovation competence is introduced and empirically analyzed. Thus, this work, on the one hand, contributes to entrepreneurship research by inter-relating regional characteristics and corporate competences to performance and, on the other hand, offers practical implications for entrepreneurs as well as entrepreneurship and innovation promoters with regard to the establishment of inter-organizational knowledge exchange and co-innovation.

This work is based on a doctoral research project at the Center for Entrepreneurship of the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. During the time at the Center I had the chance to be involved in an industrial research project empirically analyzing the knowledge networks and the value creation competence of the Ingolstadt region. This work greatly took advantage from the project by offering an insight into the 'real' challenges that dynamic regions and the corporations within them have to face, either to maintain or in case of young entrepreneurial firms to establish their competitiveness. In this regard, I particularly like to thank my academic advisor Professor Dr. Harald Pechlaner who, on the one hand, was a supporting mentor on an academic and professional level as well as, on the other hand, a transformational leader contributing intensively to my personal development on various stages within this time. Furthermore, I am greatly thankful for the co-supervision of my dissertation by Professor Dr. Michael Kutschker. His profound knowledge of strategic management and mutual critical discussions have positively influenced the quality of this work. In addition great thanks belongs to my colleagues and friends from the academic world who have been extremely valuable sparring partners as well as coaches certainly influencing my academic development. In particular, I would like to mention Professor Dr. Marc-Michael Bergfeld, Munich Business School, acting as expert and specifically as relational promotor opening the doors of the international academic

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This work is dedicated to my most important network of promoters, my family. The deepest gratitude belongs to my lovely wife Dr. Anna-Katharina Doepfer, who created an environment which allowed me to drift off into the depth of the academic world and to keep the problems of daily life in the back seat. Furthermore, I greatly thank my parents Reinhild Otterbein-Doepfer and Dr. Bernhard Doepfer for always supporting and implicitly guiding my curriculum vitae as well as providing a safety net for all the paths I have taken within this time. Additionally I would like to thank my parents-in-law Dr. Karin and Dr. Carsten Timm and my grandmother Ruth Otterbein for taking strong positions in my promotor network.

In memoriam of my grandfather Dr. Heinrich Otterbein.

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