

Preface

Writing my dissertation has been an inspiring and shaping personal experience. It was an exciting journey during which I have gained important knowledge and valuable skills. Today, I am so happy that I have realized this personal dream and that I have overcome all associated obstacles. For many years I considered pursuing a PhD and in 2010, finally, a window of opportunity popped up in which I was able to synchronize my personal version of the magic PhD triangle: Having a topic, a professor, and a funding for my PhD journey. Then, the organizational frame was settled, but the journey was yet to begin.

Fortunately, all edges of the triangle very well aligned, so that I could focus most of my energy on research instead of being stuck in other non-value-adding tasks. In this setting, I was able to shape my PhD topic in my own preferred way and to follow and achieve my goals. The research topic was inspired by the work that I had done before joining SAP's research organization. For many years, I have worked in one of the world's leading software firms and studied the specifics of the software industry. I was curious to understand how software firms manage their business in such an ever and rapidly changing industry sector. Finally, my PhD topic was shaped in the light of the rising importance of business models that were commonly referred to as key success factors for software firms.

In retrospective, more than three years went by in which many important things happened while trying to proceed in my PhD work. Not only the world has shifted a lot, but also my personal life has changed, significantly. Among many other things, Arno fell into a coma, my godson Jonah was born, Ecaterina and I got married, and we decided to leave Germany in order to move to one of the world's most vibrant cities, New York City. So, I am looking forward entering a new period of life, while still looking back at the things that I am about to leave behind.

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