

PREFACE

The PhD thesis by Aline Krämer focuses on low-income consumers as a source of innovation. In the first part „Insights from Theory“ Aline Krämer gives an overview of the relevant literature, including open innovation, and idea competitions as a method of user integration. In the second part she shares „Insights from the Field“, describing and analysing idea competitions conducted in the context of the Base of the Pyramid (BoP) in Brazil as one of the emerging economies. While there are numerous studies on open innovation in the context of developed countries and markets, they are scant in the context of developing countries, particularly the BoP. It is no surprise, since it is quite challenging to gain access to this field. Aline Krämer is one of the first ones to collect data in this area, and conduct high-quality research. Her empirical findings show that idea competitions are feasible instruments to involve BoP consumers in the innovation process, generating creative ideas and concepts. Furthermore, idea competitions help companies identifying trends and lead users in BoP markets. This has strong implications for theory and practice alike. It is research with impact in terms of science and society.

Researchers interested in open innovation, particularly user integration, will find interesting insights and findings for theory and method development. Practitioners, who seek to explore and exploit the opportunities in BoP markets, will find useful information to enhance the innovation process. This holds true for SMEs and large, multinational companies. Thus, the present PhD thesis by Aline Krämer targets a broad readership, and I hope the theoretical insights and empirical findings will be widely disseminated.

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