

Strategic management/ innovation management

These topics are most suitable for students who specialize in leadership or entrepreneurship and innovation. All studies can be designed either as large-scale surveys or case studies based on interview and/or survey data. If any of these topics is of interest to you or you wish to write your theses within strategic management or innovation management, please

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Innovation in established firms

Nokia, Sony, Microsoft and Telenor. These four household names are but a few examples of companies that strive to maintain their innovative ability under tough competition and pressure for cost cuts. Established firms need to balance between two profoundly different sets of activities. On the one hand, maintaining long-term competitive advantage and mere survival over time requires that established firms explore and enter into new technologies and markets. On the other hand, they simultaneously need to exploit their existing assets and competitive positions in a profit-enhancing way.

Many firms try to solve the problem by establishing separate units for each of these activities. Nokia, as we know the firm, started as a small and experimental Electronics department within a Cable Works business unit in Nokia Group whose main business was footwear (galoshes), tyres, rubber bands, industrial parts and raincoats. Nokia was able to renew itself by nurturing the new business inhouse from the 1960s to the 1990s – but seems to struggle in realizing a similar strategic shift in these days.

How do established firms renew themselves? How should a company organize the interface between its innovative unit and its operational units in order to ensure that the innovative business ideas have room to grow, but that they also later have potential for large-scale manufacturing and becoming the new “cash-cows” of the firm?

If you are interested in these very profound managerial problems, send me an e-mail and ask for more information about suitable literature and research method. Depending on your research questions, time of your thesis delivery and your own interests, there may be a possibility to connect your thesis to a larger pre-study and my ongoing research.

Bottom-of-the-pyramid strategies in the Norwegian companies

There are 4 billion people living in poverty – and they represent USD5 trillion worth of purchasing power. They are the bottom of the pyramid (BoP), and the world's most challenging but also most promising market. Easypaisa, an invention by Telenor Pakistan, is a typical example of products and services that not only are profitable but also help to solve a major societal problem. Approved by the State Bank of Pakistan, everyone can enjoy secure branchless banking service through Easypaisa with instant transactions. People do not have to travel long distances, wait in long queues at post offices or banks or be constrained by their working hours. Using Easypaisa Mobile Account Telenor subscribers will now be able to pay bills, transfer money and use many more services from their own mobile phones, anytime, anywhere. (Read more from www.easypaisa.com)

Yet most companies decide to stay out of the BoP-markets. It requires a special set of skills and a new type of mindset to successfully plunge into these markets. How have the Norwegian companies solved the challenges related to the BoP-markets? How do the Norwegian business leaders see the BoP market potential? How is BoP linked to the shared value creation where the companies take a more active role in solving the burning problems in the society? You can start by reading an article in Harvard Business Review: Karamchandani, M., Kubzansky, M. and Lalwani, N. 2011. Is the bottom of the pyramid really for you?. If this article captures your interest, read also an article by Mark Kramer and Michael Porter: "Creating Shared Value". Harvard Business Review; Jan/Feb2011, Vol. 89 Issue 1/2, p. 62-77, write down some of your own ideas related to this master's thesis topic and contact me by e-mail