

Preface

This book is based on my dissertation, which I have conducted at the Institute for Technology and Innovation Management at Hamburg University of Technology from 2008-2012. It focuses on innovation by embedded lead users, meaning employees who experience emerging needs and profit from solutions to these needs (i.e. who exhibit lead user characteristics) in relation to one or more of their employing firm's products or services. In three subsequent studies I explore, how embedded lead users contribute to corporate innovation. I show which factors foster lead userness of employees and what characterizes embedded lead users' behaviors. This holds various implications for firms, e.g. with respect to the integration of user knowledge for innovation.

The successful completion of my dissertation has been made possible thanks to the support of my supervisors, colleagues, friends, and family.

First, I want to express my gratitude to my doctoral adviser and supervisor, Prof. Dr. Cornelius Herstatt. His openness to different theoretical and methodological approaches and his open-minded leadership style provided a unique environment to spark creativity. Yet, I never felt a lack of guidance during this time and I was always thankful for his knowledgeable advice on academic and personal questions. I have much enjoyed the time we spent together during our joint trips to conferences, research settings, and projects all over the world. I also thank my doctoral co-advisor, Prof. Dr. Hugo Tschirky from ETH Zürich for his generous support during the dissertation process. The many discussions with him and his enthusiasm for the phenomenon of embedded lead users have been a great motivation for me.

I am also grateful for the support of my colleagues, some of which have become true friends to me. We had lots of engaging and thoughtful discussions on academia, private matters, and trivia, and I always enjoyed the friendly and respectful atmosphere at the institute. My special thanks go to Dr. Christina Raasch who has been a mentor to me during the dissertation process. It was great to work with her and I am positive we will keep up a long and fruitful collaboration. I also thank my students who have supported me with sometimes tedious yet incredibly helpful administrative work, the interview partners whom I talked to, and the firms who took part in my surveys.

Finally, I want to thank my friends and family. Without them it would not have been possible to complete this research project. A major finding of this dissertation is that experiences outside our professional lives profoundly impact our beliefs and behaviors, at work and during leisure time. Spending my free time with my friends and the people I lived with has always been a great source of both recreation and diversion. Each of them has supported me in his or her special way during these days. My greatest thanks go to my family for their love and support during all stages of my life.

<http://www.springer.com/978-3-658-00065-3>

Embedded Lead Users inside the Firm
How Innovative User Employees contribute to the
Corporate Product Innovation Process
Schweisfurth, T.
2013, XX, 221 p. 19 illus., Softcover
ISBN: 978-3-658-00065-3