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Title	Managing high-tech strategic alliances in the open standards environment: Framework for strategy development in the converging industries		
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Abstract

In the high-tech information economy companies compete increasingly in groups rather than alone. The emergence and increasing use of information and communications technologies (ICT) and open standards are expected to foster the use of co-operative strategies and strategic alliances. The study describes and analyses in qualitative terms such strategic alliancing that can be used to manage a firms's resources in co-operation with other companies in accordance with strategy in a complex and uncertain high-tech information economy evolving toward the open standards environment.

The aim of the study is to create a theoretical framework for strategy development in the converging industries. The aim is supported by the study framework consisting of five factors: (1) an identification of what is called the high-tech information economy and the open standards environment, (2) an analysis of the organisation design task and (3) the managerial task, (4) a presentation of the metaframework consisting of the metacapabilities needed for competitive advantage, (5) as well as an analysis of the strategy formation and formulation task.

The methodology is driven by the need to develop understanding on a complex phenomenon with rich research tradition. The method chosen is based on qualitative analysis. The study makes use of a number of theories and perspectives, which are thematically arranged on the basis of an extensive literature review. Therethrough the study framework is developed into the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework presents a model offering clarity and organisation of concepts and ideas in alliance research. For reaching the level of a theory, however, the framework calls for further verification in future research.

The main material findings of the study include the following: (1) The open standards environment widens the pool of possible resource combinations, speeds up lifecycles and has a cultural impact on inter-firm co-operation. In general, the open standards environment is increasingly characterised by environmental uncertainty. (2) Organisations evolve towards e-communities combining productive capabilities with a broad innovations strategy. (3) The managerial work is increasingly defined in terms of configurations, social networks, learning and business model experimenting. (4) The metaframework consists of unique capabilities and provides sustainable competitive advantage through autonomous adaptation. (5) Companies in the target industry tend to drive strategic options that emphasise the co-operative strategy paradigm, the open innovations paradigm and horizontal interlinking of firm resources.

Key words	Strategic alliance, strategy, open standards, technology, information economy, environment, organisation, management
Further information	