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Abstract

Software is considered to be one of the main growth industries. Therefore, numerous software companies have been born in the last decade all of which are trying to find means to compete and create their own niche or other competitive advantages to succeed in the software business. In response to all of these pressures, the number of software companies that offer solutions has rapidly increased. This would imply that software companies have begun to customize software and integrate services to help solve customers' existing problems. This is an efficient strategic move which drives the software companies' competitive advantage. This works as a driving force towards a networked way of doing business, and companies are forced to search for efficiency through alliances and partnerships with other companies.

Software companies clearly need to learn how to create an entity that is able to produce value for the end-customer. These nets of partnerships aim to grow into strategic-value-nets that result in competitive advantage for the entire network. The research was approached with the following main objective:

- To understand how can valuable sales nets be created during a software company's transformation into a software solution provider?

Sub-objectives:

- To distinguish the characteristics of existing software solution sales nets
- To understand how sales nets can be developed for software companies transforming into solution providing
- To understand what is valuable in a software solution sales net and how to obtain the value

The empirical data for the research was gathered from a joint research study written by the Turku School of Economics and Lappeenranta University of Technology and Business, and Technology Research Centre (TEKES) called the 'Global Network Management'. From the secondary interview material two case studies of software solution companies were established. The findings suggested that software solution companies need to develop a "fluctuating" sales net, each customer has different needs, and therefore different partners are needed. Thus, different partner selection criteria was distinguished so that software companies could understand how value adding sales nets can be developed.

Key words	sales net, value net, valuable sales net, software, software solution, solution providing
Further information	