

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to describe the far reaching business potential of offering innovative DIY services and goods. Such offerings can enable businesses to do significant good for the world, while doing well for themselves.

approach

– This paper provides a business-oriented summary of, and makes reference to, survey research and action research carried out over five years.

Design/methodology/a

Findings

– Innovative DIY offerings can enable anybody anywhere to develop, produce, use and/or sell physical goods that are both original and sophisticated. Businesses introducing such innovative DIY offerings reverse two trends that have dominated since before the Industrial Revolution. First, they radically reduce financial and professional barriers against the participation of ordinary individuals. Second, they cut back mass production by enabling individual development and production of physical goods that spring from the imaginations of individual people. In doing so, businesses can avoid many of the challenges that they typically face, such as margins shrinking due to core products becoming more and more interchangeable. Also, they can directly address the three principal goals of sustainability: better enabling people to meet their needs, and express their potential, while preserving natural eco-systems.

Practical implications

– Businesses are facing many challenges as they try to do well for themselves. At the same time, businesses are uncertain as to how they might do good for the world. In this paper, it is explained how offering of do-it-yourself (DIY) services and goods is already enabling some businesses to do well and to do good at the same time. Moreover, an overview is provided, together with references to more detailed information, of how introducing innovative DIY offerings can open many more opportunities for businesses to do well and to do good.

Originality/value

– The originality of the paper is that it describes a practical option for businesses that aim to do both well and to do good. The value of this paper is that provides a referenced overview of relevant business examples and relevant enabling technologies.

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