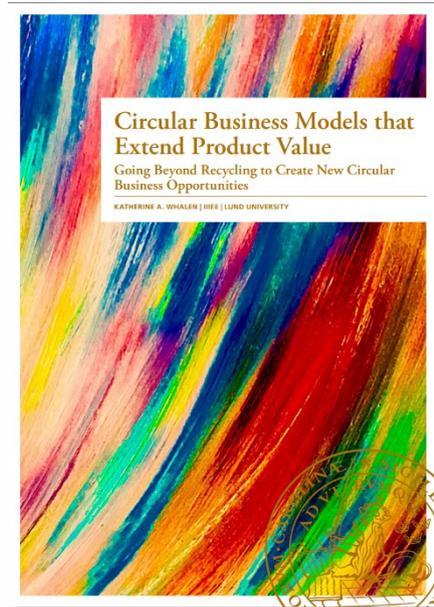


New dissertation maps circular success factors

Circular Business Models that Extend Product Value: Going Beyond Recycling to Create New Circular Business Opportunities, Katherine Whalen, 2020 February 10, Lund, Sweden: International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics, Lund University. 200 p.



In a new doctoral dissertation from the research program Mistra REES, Katherine Whalen at Lund University has mapped how companies can best apply circular business models in order to maximize profitability as customer satisfaction in their business. With the help of circular business models, companies can effectively reduce their environmental and climate footprint. The overall purpose of her research work has been to create a deeper understanding of the factors that increase the chances of a circular business model to succeed. The dissertation is based on a series of in-depth case studies from a number of Swedish companies in various industries. The focus has been on companies that try to reduce costs and resource use by extending the technical life of products. Among other things, Katherine has taken a closer look at industry-specific conditions for companies in telecom and the maritime industry to adopt circular business models and alternative working methods.

An overall conclusion is that many companies are reluctant to invest circularly due to fears of high labor costs and limited demand for remanufactured and reused products. Several companies included in the study also experience that it can be difficult to compete with new products in terms of price. The collection of information has taken place with the help of surveys, interviews and practical observations at companies.

To shed light on precisely these issues, the study examines which factors are particularly important to consider for companies that want to succeed in adopting circular working methods and business models. The dissertation also shows that the conditions for success in circular business models differ significantly between different industries, but that customer segments and geographical domicile are also crucial.

Another important conclusion is that support from authorities and politicians is crucial to speed up the circular shift. Katherine drives an exhaustive discussion on different types of policy measures and economic instruments. The dissertation also contains a section with recommendations to administrators and officials at the national and European levels involved in the work of implementing the EU circular economy package.

As part of her research work, Katherine has also developed the game *In the loop*, which serves as an educational tool for those who want to learn more about material flows, resource efficiency and the circular economy. The game shows in an educational way the importance of the transition to a more circular economy and, at the same time, gives solid advice on how this transition best works in practice.