

## **Business Markets, Networks and Sustainability**

Deadline for submission: 1 December 2020

*Industrial Marketing Management* announces the call for papers for a special issue on business markets, networks and sustainability.

### **Overview and Purpose of the special issue**

Incorporating sustainability into strategies, tactics and operations constitutes a fundamental challenge for contemporary industrial firms (IPCC, 2012; WWF, 2012). Many obstacles exist, ranging from climate change denial (Fischer, 2019), management challenges (Hoejmoose et al., 2012) technical (Ventketesh et al., 2020) and regulatory (IPCC, 1990; Veal & Mouzas, 2011) issues, alongside organizational silos (Frostenson & Prenekert, 2015) and fundamental economic challenges (Trebeck & Williams, 2019).

The relative urgency of the matter exacerbates the challenge (Raworth, 2017). There is scientific consensus that keeping global warming under an average 1.5° centigrade increase compared to the pre-industrialized era is essential in order to prevent severe climate changes (Hansen, et al., 2008; IPCC, 2018; Walther, et al., 2002). However, sustainability is not only about climate change and rising global atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels; it is also about social inclusion, justice, membership and emancipation (Elkington, 2018; Sovacool et al., 2020). Modern societies are being polarized into those who have and those who do not, those who have a say and those who do not, and those who feel that they can contribute and those who do not. While recognizing the urgency and need to transform our societies into sustainable ones in the future, we still rely on our economies, financial systems and global trade to ensure a certain level of material standard and social development. Hence, we must include all aspects of sustainability into an analysis of the transformation needed (Elkington, 2018).

Sustainability issues impacts various aspects and parts of industrial firms differently depending on whether it is production (e.g., Cicconi, 2020), distribution (e.g., Wang et al., 2015), marketing (e.g., Keszey, 2020; Sharma et al., 2010) or end-consumption (Li, Long, & Chen, 2017). This adds complexity to the issue and it is therefore unlikely we will have a one-size-fits-all solution, but many variants and types of both models and practical tools.

With some exceptions, business marketing and management has hitherto been slow to develop new theoretical frameworks and relevant tools to aid companies in the sustainability transformation process (Skoglund, 2015). This lack of theoretical development and paucity of engagement with sustainability issues stands in contrast to business practice where, for example, carbon trading schemes (Veal, & Mouzas, 2012), sustainability reporting standards (Bayne, Purchase & Tarca, 2019), investment guidelines (Pereira, Cortez & Silva, 2019) and sustainable supply chain management (Brindley & Oxborrow, 2014) have been developed. This discrepancy is what this special issue seeks to alleviate. The aim is to tap into the hitherto unrealized potential of industrial management and business research to address a wide array of sustainability issues.

The purpose of this special issue is twofold: First, it is to understand how sustainability practices are developed and deployed in networked business markets as a part of a sustainable economy. Secondly, it is to explore the potential of the networked economy and an

interactive business landscape for our understanding of sustainable economies and sustainable industrial systems. One approach that can provide insight is the business networks view that emphasizes the interactive nature of networks (Johnsen et al., 2017; Waluszewski et al., 2019). It emphasizes time and process (Paliwoda, 2011), joint efforts (Waluszewski et al., 2009) and collaboration (Anderson, et al., 1994; Håkansson, et al., 2009) and provides a complex systemic approach to economic organization and industrial systems (Prekert, 2017; Wilkinson & Young, 2013). Both collaboration and a systems overview on complex issues are two main issues identified as crucial for the transformation of our economies (Andersson & Sweet, 2002; Skoglund, 2015).

For this special issue we seek contributions that depart from a networked economy viewing markets as networks. Papers can be theoretically as well as empirically driven and employ a wide array of methodologies to investigate sustainability issues. However, the relevance for the business actor, and/or for the network and/or for wider society should be explicit, as well as the focus on sustainability issues – although we acknowledge that they can vary greatly under the umbrella of sustainability. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Implications of a networked economy for our understanding and framing of sustainability issues
- Developing sustainable industrial/business networks
- Conceptual developments of sustainability based on a markets-as-networks perspective
- Sustainable supply chains and networks
- De-carbonization of industrial networks and supply chains
- Circular economy and resource utilization in network contexts
- Up-cycling, down-cycling and valorization of resources in industrial networks
- Value, value creation and value appropriation in sustainable business networks
- Sustainability reporting and communication in business networks
- Networked sustainability accounting
- Measuring sustainability and sustainability practices
- Developing relevant indexes to describe sustainability in networked economies
- Decoupling, non-expansion and economic development from a network perspective
- Sustainable production networks and manufacturing
- Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship and sustainable development

- Technology, technological development and sustainability
- Sustainability, consumer demands and supply networks
- The role of regional networks for sustainable development in various geographies and cultures

### **Preparation and submission of paper and review process**

Papers targeting this special issue have the opportunity to submit to a special track at the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual IMP Conference in Örebro. The deadline for abstract submission is January 26, 2020. Full papers are due on March 13, 2020. See the conference website for details ([www.imp2020.se](http://www.imp2020.se)). While we encourage authors to submit papers to the conference and use it as a quality control mechanism, this special issue is open to all, and not only participants at the IMP 2020 Conference.

Papers submitted must not have been published, accepted for publication, or presently be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Submissions should be about 6,000-8,000 words in length. Copies should be uploaded on Industrial Marketing Management's homepage through the EVISE system. You need to upload your paper using the dropdown box for the special issue on "Business markets, networks and sustainability". For guidelines, visit [http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws\\_home/505720/authorinstructions](http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505720/authorinstructions). Papers not complying with the notes for contributors (cf., homepage) or poorly written will be desk rejected. Suitable papers will be subjected to a double-blind review; hence, authors must not identify themselves in the body of their paper. (Please do not submit a Word file with "track changes" active or a PDF file.)

### **Please address all questions to the guest editors:**

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