Platform Ecosystems & Servitization

Outlining the context and purpose of the study

**Context**

A manufacturer’s product-driven internal capabilities are mostly insufficient for successfully achieving their servitization goals. This necessitates the need to develop technology and service-related relational capabilities that facilitate co-creation amongst actors within a network to produce novel value offerings. Evidence from latest research suggests that manufacturing firms are increasingly collaborating with their network actors in their transformation journey towards servitization to produce innovative services-based offerings. Such collaboration could occur at an internal level to enable coordinated and back-office innovation, or externally, to link actors and customers in the supply chain across a wider business ecosystem.

There is, however, a lack of understanding as to what constitutes such collaborative ecosystems in manufacturing, and what roles they play in a manufacturer’s transformation journey towards servitization. Many companies and their senior executives use the terms platform ecosystems, platform thinking, and platform approach very loosely in this context and inadequate clarity limits the applications and adoption of such concepts. Given that every manufacturing firm relies on its ecosystem of actors to some extent to deliver valued offerings, we need to move beyond the firm and its offerings to also account for their ecosystems, in the interest of presenting a holistic understanding of this concept.

**Aim**

The aim of this study is to address the abovementioned gap and study and explain servitization-based offerings from a collaborative ecosystem lens. We are looking to engage with multiple manufacturing firms that have started their journey towards servitization to understand the role of their ecosystems in developing and delivering service offerings. Therefore, we would like to invite you to take part in this study. As part of this, we need to interview 1-2 people who are directly engaged in the development and delivery of a services-related offering (intermediate/advanced offering) in your company. These will be telephone/Skype interviews and last up to 45 minutes.

**Outcomes (expected)**

* Clarify the concept and establish an ecosystem-related vocabulary in the servitization context.
* Establish criteria (characteristics/KPIs) that will help identify and map the relevant network actors in an ecosystem for a manufacturing firm
* Assist manufacturing firms (engaged companies) in identifying the dominant players (actors) within their ecosystem and help them understand the influence of network effects triggered as a result of such actor interactions
* Assist manufacturing firms in understanding which ecosystem type (internal/supply chain/external) is best aligned with their strategy to develop and deliver servitization-based offerings

**Confidentiality**

In accordance with Aston University’s ethics guidelines, all raw data (e.g. from interviews and other sources) will be kept confidential. Throughout the project, raw data will be kept under password and/or lock protection and destroyed one year after the conclusion of the research. Collected, collated and analysed data may be published in case studies, academic journals and presented at conferences. The name of the company and the specifics related to the offering will be anonymised in any publication. Also, any information and opinions that you provide will not be attributed to you or your organisation, and you will not be identified in any way unless you give explicit permission. You have the right to withdraw from the study until data collection and analysis has been completed.

Yours Sincerely,

The Advanced Services Group