

ARTICLE SUMMARY

Do cooperations really pay? Contribution based on strategy process theory for the case of small and medium sized ski area companies

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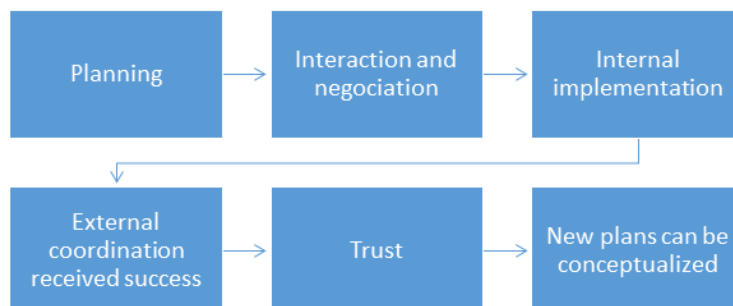
It has many times been suggested that small and medium enterprises (SME) should try to put themselves together and work as partners in order to get over the difficulties, such as scale, scope and density. However, reaching cooperation synergies represents complicated processes, which often fail because of mismanagement or misunderstanding.

In order to obtain a good cooperation the research focuses on strategic key points. The first step is to select the right cooperation partner. Once we have found the right collaborator we define together what will the cooperation area and the cooperation goals be. And last but not least comes the agreement about the cooperation management and control. This type of research can be referred to as a strategy content research.

Sadly this schema usually remains a basic theory. Indeed, very often cooperations don't reach the planned stage. This is due to the fact that a collaboration cannot be set up in one step. It requires coordination and control. In order to reach a good working collaboration a very long process of discussions, negotiations, agreements about intermediate goals and further dealings on achieved levels of cooperations is needed. This development is costly in terms of time, money and efforts.

Surprisingly most cooperations don't emerge from deliberate planning processes but rather appear when a sudden unexpected possibility comes up.

The cooperation process is a succession of events or actions with clear and concise output. A major dimension of it is the trust and social interaction. Discussions, negotiations, commitments and executions are social interactions that all lead to trust. The schema below illustrate the process that leads to trust, and then, as a result, in new projects.



Here are the main success factors:

- ✓ Cooperations have to be dynamic.
- ✓ Collaborations have to be constantly readapted and reinterpreted.
- ✓ Importance of a positive feedback-process.

Cooperations are created and directed through individual workers with individual motivations and both the cooperation process and the success factors are key points to keep in mind.

External pressure on the cooperations should not be feared because they can be both a helping accelerator and a barrier to success. If we manage to transform that pressure into motivational factors, the gains through cooperation can be big for both partners.

This article is really interesting because it shows us basic concepts of cooperation process theory and its derived success factors at the example of SME ski stations in Switzerland. First it describes the succession of steps to arrive to a cooperation, second it gives us the keys of a good cooperation and finally gives us more information about the success factors.

Other articles

Zemla, M. (2008), Failures in Building Partnership for Success in the Competitive Market: The Case of Polish Ski Resorts, *Managing Global Transitions*, pp. 421-444.

Cassidy K. / Guilding C. (2010), Defining an Emerging Tourism Industry Sub-sector: Who are the Strata Titled Tourism Accommodation Stakeholders?, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*.

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