Medium and small sized enterprises are increasingly reliant on innovation to be successful. A new paradigm to exploit joint forces for creating innovative products and services is Open Innovation, in which companies open specific phases of their innovation process to collaboration with others in order to profit from novel ideas, or alternative external paths to market.

Especially in the field of the digital economy, which is highly innovation-driven, successful examples of value-creating open partnerships can be found: customers, researchers or partners join the innovation process, and thus may complement a necessary competency portfolio that a single company may be unable to provide.

Managing and facilitating Open Innovation processes does, however, require appropriate competencies and experiences. In that regard, support in terms of infrastructure and analytical frameworks can be very helpful and even necessary.

This book includes theories, tools and support mechanisms that were presented at the International Symposium on Support for Open Innovation processes. Researchers and practitioners active in the field of Open Innovation describe their experiences and ideas in this area.

The first part of the book elucidates several approaches to support the management of Open Innovation processes. Special attention is given to the topics of competence development and management, awareness and the reputation of Open Innovation community members, and the implementation of the Open Innovation paradigm in enterprises. Furthermore, social software based services to foster and facilitate the Open Innovation process are proposed.

The second part of the book focuses on case studies in Open Innovation conducted within SMEs in the digital economy sector. Three case studies – on Web 2.0 learning, Open Source Innovation and Virtual Worlds platforms – are introduced and analysed with theoretical frameworks that are described in the first part of the book.

With a foreword by Dr. Ursula Reuther, Project Management Agency in the German Aerospace Center DLR (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e. V.)
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