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THE MESH

Why the Future of Business is Sharing

LISA GANSKY

LISA GANSKY was cofounder and CEO of GNN, the world's first commercial Web site. When GNN was acquired by AOL in 1995, she then directed Internet services for AOL until 1997 when she left to cofound and become chairman of Ofoto. Ofoto was subsequently acquired by Eastman Kodak and Lisa Gansky stayed on until it reached 45 million customers. She left Ofoto and has since become an investor and board member in more than twenty internet and mobile services companies. Lisa Gansky is currently a board member of Me Please, Squidoo, TasteBook and Dos Margaritas, an environmental foundation.

The Web site for this book is at www.meshing.it.

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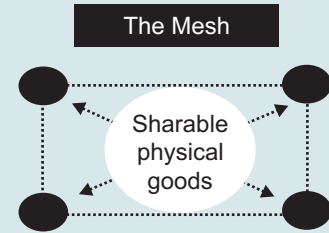
MAIN IDEA

Traditional businesses create a product or service, sell it and collect money. Mesh companies harness a fundamentally different business model – they provide customers the temporary use of the goods and services they need at the exact moment they need them, after which those goods can be returned or recycled. People get all the utility of various products without any of the usual standing costs which are part and parcel of conventional ownership.

Mesh businesses are thriving today because it's now feasible for information to be created, shared and used cost effectively. Social media, wireless networks and other information gathering tools have reached a stage of development at which they are robust and flexible enough to be used in a variety of real-world applications.

“For now, most companies stubbornly stick to various twists on a single tried-and-true formula: Create a product or service, sell it and collect money. Few businesspeople, including most entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, have imagined creating wealth any other way. Around these entrenched businesses, a new model is starting to take root and grow, one in which consumers have more choices, more tools, more information, and more power to guide those choices. I call this emerging model ‘The Mesh.’ In recent years, thousands of Mesh businesses have been created and scaled up, a few into well-known brands. These businesses understand and cleverly exploit the perfect storm of mobile, location-based capabilities, Web and social network growth, changing consumer attitudes, and the historically understood market benefits of shared platforms. The Mesh is that next big opportunity – for creating new businesses and renewing old ones, for our communities, and for the planet. And it’s just beginning.”

– Lisa Gansky



What is a mesh business? Page 2

Mesh businesses use data crunched from every available source to make available high-quality goods and services only when people need and want them. The focus is on local services and products which are used and then returned rather than purchased and retained.

What are the mesh advantages? Page 3

Mesh businesses are smarter because they have frequent customer contact and more detailed information services. That means they can create and offer superior experiences, partnerships, products and bundles. Mesh companies know their customers better.

How to design a mesh business and why now? Page 4

Mesh design is based on four qualities: Durability, flexibility, repairability and sustainability. Mesh businesses are possible and potentially rewarding today because of five disparate vectors which have come together within today's economic and cultural landscape.

The components of the mesh ecosystem Page 5

To thrive as a mesh business, you have to win and then continue to build your customer's trust every time they interact with you. There are seven keys to doing this time after time. You also have to build a mesh ecosystem which incorporates and integrates the work of your partners in the effort.

Open networks will trump proprietary control every time. Page 6

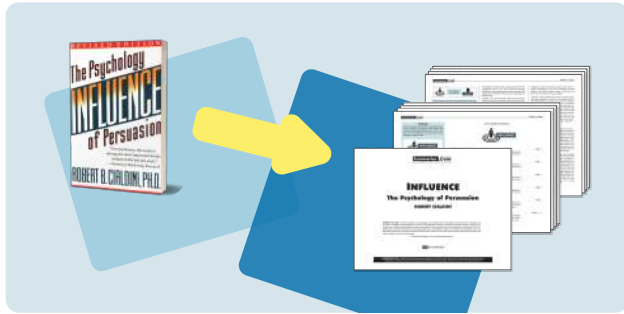
Companies traditionally made money by owning a proprietary technology and then churning them out. The mesh uses open networks where ideas are shared and improved upon. Open networks have been shown to outperform closed systems in industry after industry and the mesh is well positioned to take advantage of that fact.

Mesh and big business Page 7

Many of the world's largest corporations are already using mesh ideas and strategies to win market share and increase profits. Others have created platforms mesh enterprises can use. The mesh idea won't just apply to mom-and-pop operations – it will be right across the spectrum and corporate executives will ignore the mesh approach at their own peril.

Seed your own mesh startup Page 8

If the idea of starting your own mesh business appeals, the time is perfect to get started right away. The driving force has to be your own passion so choose a topic which gets under your skin. Right now, there are an uncountable number of ways you can leverage the Web to create richer and deeper experiences for your future customers. Make a start.



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