

The Energy & Strategy Think Tank (ESTT) at WU's Institute for Strategic Management (ISM) (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/ism/energy-strategy-think-tank/>) invites applications for a master thesis.

**Working Title:** *Inclusion in Corporate and Marketing Strategies through Open Strategy: Best-in-Class Process and Best Practices in the Energy Industry*

**Scope, Aims, Methods, and Initial Literature:** More and more corporations consider including externals in their strategy process, which is referred to as open strategy (Gegenhuber & Dobusch, 2017; Hautz, Seidl, & Whittington, 2017; Seidl, von Krogh, & Whittington, 2019). One essential external stakeholder group for corporates are customers, which have recently gained more attention to be included in respective open strategy activities (Smith et al., 2018). Including externals in addition to internal stakeholders along the strategy process that is traditionally separated into the three phases of 1) strategic analysis/idea generation, 2) strategy formulation, and 3) strategy implementation (Rothaermel, 2017), becomes increasingly important. Focusing on regional and non-international energy providers in the DACH region, this thesis aims to

- identify which customer segment(s) are most promising to include and why
- develop a best-in-class process model that covers all phases to include customers (including screening and after-inclusion phase) in corporate and product/marketing strategy within the energy industry, highlighting similarities and differences between these strategies
- identify best practices within each process phase

To that end, grey literature should be analyzed (Adams, Smart, & Huff, 2017) and expert interviews with organizations and experts from the energy industry should be conducted (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009; Cassell, 2009).

**Thesis Language:** English or German (only if you are enrolled in a program with German as main language)

**Corporate Partner and Certificate:** Wien Energie – *Austria's biggest regional electricity company*. Upon thesis completion, you will be awarded a certificate that states your tasks, gained expertise, and the corporate partner.

**Expectations and Support:** Constant feedback and regular meetings with faculty and, possibly, the above-mentioned corporate partner will facilitate a high-quality thesis with impact on management practice that is completed in a timely fashion. You will be provided with a guideline that details the supervision and writing process, expected deliverables beyond the final thesis, and grading as well as a package to kick off your thesis.

**Targeted Students:** Excellent and ambitious students of all MSc and MBA programs at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business are eligible and encouraged to apply. In principle, it is possible to write the thesis together with another student.

**Interested?** Send CV and grade certificates of all your studies to [christian.bruck@wu.ac.at](mailto:christian.bruck@wu.ac.at)

### Initial References:

- Adams, R. J., Smart, P., & Huff, A. S. (2017). Shades of Grey: Guidelines for Working with the Grey Literature in Systematic Reviews for Management and Organizational Studies. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 19(4), 432-454.
- Bogner, A., Littig, B., & Menz, W. (Eds.). (2009). *Interviewing Experts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cassell, C. (2009). Interviews in organizational research. In D. A. Buchanan, & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The sage handbook of organizational research methods*: 500-515. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gegenhuber, T., & Dobusch, L. (2017). Making an Impression Through Openness: How Open Strategy-Making Practices Change in the Evolution of New Ventures. *Long Range Planning*, 50(3), 337-354.
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- Rothaermel, F. (2017). *Strategic Management* (3rd ed.). McGraw Hill Education.
- Seidl, D., von Krogh, G., & Whittington, R. (2019). **Defining Open Strategy: Dimensions, Practices, Impacts, and Perspectives**. In D. Seidl, G. von Krogh, & R. Whittington (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Open Strategy* (pp. 9-26). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, P., Callagher, L., Crewe-Brown, J., & Siedlok, F. (2018). Zones of Participation (and Non-Participation) in Open Strategy: Desirable, Actual and Undesirable. *M@n@gement*, (1), 646-666.