

Media release

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1+1=3 – how business eco-systems will change the world of business

Business eco-systems result in more than the sum of their parts. When companies join forces to create a business eco-system, together they are in a position to offer products and services over and beyond what the individual companies can offer. In this, Helvetia sees great opportunities to simplify customers' lives and to develop new business models. In an opinion paper, the insurance company, in collaboration with the Helvetia Innovation Lab of the University of St.Gallen, illustrates the effects that business eco-systems have on customers, investors, employees and partners.

Business eco-systems (BESs) can supply customers with products and services that individual companies could not provide on their own, as shown in a joint opinion paper authored by Helvetia Insurance and the Helvetia Innovation Lab at the University of St.Gallen (HSG). "Business eco-systems will permanently change our economy. We assume that individual companies will be unable to compete with the more comprehensive offerings of BESs", explained Oliver Gassmann, Professor of Technology Management at the University of St.Gallen, when the opinion paper was presented. "Business eco-systems will simplify customers' lives. That's what makes them attractive", explained Philipp Gmür, Group CEO Helvetia. Martin Tschopp, Head of Corporate Development at Helvetia, added: "We see eco-systems as an opportunity to expand our business models and to develop new sources of income."

Great added value

The idea of a BES is simple: A group of companies together provides a service geared towards a customer need. However, this service is more than the sum of the individual contributions of everyone involved. One and one should not make two, but as far as possible three. As a result of the joint offering, customers can satisfy their needs easily, conveniently and in full from a single source.

Effects of business eco-systems on customers, ...

BESs have consequences for customers, investors, employees and partners of all the companies involved, as demonstrated by the opinion paper. Customers benefit because in an eco-system they get better products or services from a single source, which comprehensively cover their requirements. At the same time customers are offered a high degree of reliability and transparency via all the contact points.

... investors, employees and partners

The investors' perspective is also changed: BES enables new markets to be developed and new customers to be accessed. Thanks to superior products, better margins can be achieved or competitors can be displaced, as a bigger proportion of the value added chain is covered. At the same time competencies can be established through partners, reducing capital investment and risks. The demands placed on employees also change in an eco-system: The ability to adapt to different procedures, processes and cultures becomes more important. The partners develop customer-oriented solutions together, leading to the closer interdependence of the partners participating in the eco-system.

"Home" eco-system at Helvetia

Helvetia is convinced that BESs will fundamentally change the economy. Helvetia is currently in the process of establishing a "home" eco-system. This is based on MoneyPark, Switzerland's biggest mortgage broker, and is positioned as a competent and independent advisor for all questions related to home and real estate. The "home" eco-system incorporates other services from partner companies. The benefits described in the opinion paper are also of significance for the "home" eco-system. For example, Helvetia gains access to new customer groups and additional sources of income.

The opinion paper on eco-systems is available on the Internet at www.helvetia.com/opinion-papers.

This media release is also available on our website www.helvetia.com/media.

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About the Helvetia Group

In 160 years, the Helvetia Group has grown from a number of Swiss and foreign insurance companies into a successful international insurance group. Today, Helvetia has subsidiaries in its home market Switzerland as well as in the countries that make up the Europe market area: Germany, Italy, Austria and Spain. With its Specialty Markets market area, Helvetia is also present in France and in selected regions worldwide. Some of its investment and financing activities are managed through subsidiaries and fund companies in Luxembourg and Jersey. The Group is headquartered in St.Gallen, Switzerland.

Helvetia is active in the life and non-life business, and also offers customised specialty lines and reinsurance cover. Its business activities focus on retail customers as well as small and medium-sized companies and larger corporates. With some 6,600 employees, the company provides services to more than 5 million customers. With a business volume of CHF 8.64 billion, Helvetia generated underlying earnings of CHF 502.4 million in the 2017 financial year. The registered shares of Helvetia Holding are traded on the SIX Swiss Exchange under the symbol HELN.

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