Toolkits for Mass Customization
Customer-centric configurator architecture based on problem solving

A phenomenon also known as **Co-Creation**, where customers **design their own product**, which can be produced with nearly **mass production efficiency**.

Customers use **online configurators** – so called **toolkits** - to customize their products.

Toolkits for Co-Creation:
Customize your own product!

material
colour
size

---

1. **Although some scientists and practitioners claim Co-Creation as the product design of the future...**

Customers are willing to pay a **price premium up to 200%** (Jiang et al. 2015; Valenzula et al. 2009; Schreier 2006).

market research tools for firm's new product developments (Prügl and Schreier 2006)

Co-Creation "can be viewed as the **ultimate form of niche marketing**" (Townsend et al. 2015, p. 234)

customers receive **individualized products** (e.g. Cil and Pangburn 2017)

Reduce the rate of **product complaints** (Jiang et al. 2015)

❖loyal customers for **long-term relations** (Park and Yoo 2018; Jiang et al. 2015; Valenzula et al. 2009)

---

2. **... toolkits have not fulfilled these expectations yet.**

Very few consumers actually use online toolkits to create their ideal product (e.g. Franke and Hader 2014)

Customers tend to get **overwhelmed** by self-design processes via toolkits and experience the **process** as **frustrating and time-consuming** (e.g. Junker et al. 2016)

If they attempt to co-create, **very high termination rates** are observed (e.g. Franke et al. 2017)

As a consequence of this unsatisfactory issue, many **companies have abandoned their co-creation programs** (Walcher and Werger 2011)

---

3. **This might be explained by the fact that the design process is primarily production-oriented...**

Origins of co-creation are in the field of **Supply Chain Management.**

the structure of the design process is very often still based on the **transfer of product specifications** into the toolkit (as in the case of a functional and performance specification).

In this **conceptual research project** reasons for this discrepancy should be identified.

---

4. **... instead of user-oriented.**

To make the design process easier for the customer, it should become **more intuitive** for them

To improve toolkits, the process should therefore be oriented on **creative problem solving.**

WIRTSCHAFTS UNIVERSITÄT WIEN VIENNA UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Stefan Bolzenius, M. Sc.
Research Associate

Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (WU Wien)
Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Welthandelsplatz 1
1020 Wien
Mail: stefan.bolzenius@wu.ac.at