

## Competitive Research Article

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# Identify Innovative Business Models: Can Innovative Business Models Enable Players to React to Ongoing or Unpredictable Trends?

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**Abstract:** Socioeconomic trends (such as makers, crowdsourcing, sharing economy, gamification) as well as technological trends (such as cloud computing, 3D printing technology, application, big data, TV on demand and the Internet of things) are changing the scenario and creating new opportunities, new businesses and, as a result, new players. The high level of uncertainty caused by the fast speed of innovation technology along with an enormous amount of information difficult to analyse and exploit are characterizing the current framework. On the other hand, businesses such as Netflix – with its 44,000 users and a long tail business model – show a new service based on TV on demand where innovation starts from the convergence between two different industries (TV and the Internet) and spreads on the need of new users. Quirky, with its innovative open business model, is manufacturing new products designed and developed by the community and finally produced with the use of 3D printing technology. While Google in a multi-sided model are giving their new glasses to different developers who build their own application on them, Kickstarter finds its business funders in the crowd, and pays them back with its future products, according to what the organization needs. Another element that adds complexity to the previous framework is the new customer. He or she is showing a social attitude in favour of transparency, openness, collaboration, and sharing. Every second more than 600 tweets are posted on Twitter and around 700 status updates are posted on Facebook. At the same time, people are receiving text messages, e-mails and skype or phone calls and simultaneously consuming TV,

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radio and print media. In this scenario characterized by trends where employees, funders, customers and partners do not play a stable role but work together with a sort of “platform organization” to create a product or service completely customized for different market niches, how can an organization set up an innovative business model in a defined trend? Is it possible to identify a sort of framework, able to inspire new business models, with an examination of trends? In this article we will use a mix of different approaches to inspire new business model.

**Keywords:** innovation, BIC methodology, trend

## 1 Introduction

New trends are emerging in the global framework, which seem to affect both organizations and human behaviour. Socioeconomic trends (such as makers, crowdsourcing, sharing economy, gamification) as well as technological trends (such as cloud computing, application, big data, TV on demand and the Internet of things) are changing the scenario and creating new opportunities, new businesses and, as a result, new players. The high level of uncertainty caused by the fast speed of innovation technology and global competition are pushing organizations to create and use different business models in order to achieve competitive advantages and increase their market share. From Netflix to Quirky, from Google to Kickstarter, organizations are running activities not to compete in a specific industry, but in innovative trends. These trends are defined by a combination of social, technological, psychological and economic features.

In a trend:

- customers gain more knowledge and skills by creating strong relationships with organizations;
- organizations are becoming “platform organizations”, where employees, funders, customers and partners do not play a stable role but work together to create a product or service completely customized for different market niches;
- organizations are defining different business model patterns to act and react to different trends;
- competition is moving away from industries.

Understanding which features of a trend need to be integrated in a new business activity is not an easy challenge but it is strategically important for sustaining and inspiring entrepreneurs in managing new activities.

Based on this challenge, we aim to define first which trends are emerging and can be an important framework for organization; then to analyse business models of those actors that seem to have recognized new trends and their patterns; and eventually to show the analysis to newcomers in order to stir them.

We named our framework of analysis as BIC methodology (business models, innovation and customers), because it is based on the analysis of three important factors:

- Business model (B): in order to define how an organization is structured in a particular trend
- Innovation (I): in order to understand what is generating innovation inside business models of a defined trend
- Customer (C): in order to understand why a customer prefers and buys one product or service to another

In order to investigate the previous elements we selected three frameworks of analysis: business model cliché (in order to identify common patterns in a business model analysis), epicentre of innovation (in order to identify which block into a business model creates innovation) and user experience (UX) (in order to define what inspires a customer in a new product or service).

This article is made of four different sections. First, we are presenting a literature analysis that highlights how the dominant studies of innovative business model definition in an uncertainty environment could be enriched by new research briefs. In Section 2 an introduction of our methodology is presented. In the final section, the conclusion states the main limitations of the research and suggests new and promising research strands.

## 2 Define a business Model: Theoretical Framework and Question Research

It has been acknowledged that starting up a business is a difficult and risky activity. The uncertainty, linked with starting up a business, is amplified by a continuum stream of innovations where emerging new trends and stable ones can change the roles of making businesses.

In this complex scenario entrepreneurs need an anchor to understand what features need to be considered in order to approach new activities. Can entrepreneurs define the essential, fundamental and inescapable features of a unique trend to consider in their business models creating an innovative business model able to survive?

The answer to this question is not easy and in the last decades researchers and practitioners have tried to define different methodologies, approaches or frameworks to guide the entrepreneur in the complex world of entrepreneurship.

In the earlier years of the modern venture capital boom – during the mid- and late 1970s – and again during the 1990s, if an entrepreneur presented an idea it was in the form of a business plan. Entrepreneurs needed to describe the team, product and service and have an idea of the marketing and operational plan. He/she had to set up both the management and the financial activities. The objective of a business plan helped the entrepreneur to make a good business concept credible, understandable and attractive to someone who was unfamiliar with the business, thus, reducing the odds of failure. As the rate of innovation increased and the number of organization failures grew, new methodologies were implemented to help the organization to adapt its business model to market opportunities.

Important frameworks such as Canvas create the bases for a common language around the business model to help business model creation, communication and improvement. In Osterwalder, Pigneur and Tucci's (2005) vision, a business model is a conceptual tool containing a set of objects, concepts and their relationships with the objective to express the business logic of a specific firm. In order to create a business model, Osterwalder, Pigneur and Tucci (2005) have considered which concepts and relationships allow a simplified description and representation of what value is provided to customers, how this is performed and with which financial consequences. In the final version of Canvas 9 some business blocks were set up: customer, value proposition, channel, customer relationship, revenue, partners activities, resources and cost, all well linked and related to each other to communicate to the final customer the company's value proposition.

Business model innovation and improvement were run by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) who used an iterative process, or rather a systematic, repetitive and recursive process approach. The iterative business model development process provides an agile opportunity *to investigate customer's problems and needs and react early enough to find new solutions to the changed customer requirements*. Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) present five phases, mobilize, understand, design, implement and manage, as a sequence of tasks of the business model design process. In the "mobilize" phase the manager's task is to plan and assemble all the elements for the successful business model design and communicate the reason and motivation behind the new business model project. The manager's role is to create a common language to describe, design, analyse and discuss the business model with the design team. The elements that are relevant for the design of a business model are selected by observing the

“understand” phase. The design and implementation phase means action. Alternative and viable business model prototypes are brainstormed and team’s task is to evaluate and validate the best business model options for testing and implementation. In the final “manage” phase, the business model is adapted and modified to respond to customer and market actions. The role of the business model design team is to constantly monitor and evaluate, adapt and if necessary transform the current business models (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010).

Magretta (2002) and Sosna, Trevinyo-Rodriquez, and Velamuri (2010) indicated that trial-and-error is the manner to discover *the most appropriate business model*. However, the right business model might not be apparent from the beginning and may depend on learning and trial-and-error adjustments. Teece (2010) highlights the role of discovery learning and adaptation in the process of business model innovation. Furthermore, Teece (2010, 189) suggests that a business model should be evaluated against its current ecosystem of suppliers, competitors and customers and against how the ecosystem may evolve. Chesbrough (2010) outlines technological innovation as a new way to capture value into a business model, continuing to exploit the established business model can lead firms to miss the potential value of exploiting new technologies with a refined business model (Chesbrough 2010, 359).

Ries (2011) proposes the lean start-up method, which is based on testing business hypotheses, product iteration and validated learning can shorten the product development cycle and reduce market risks before moving into the next stages of business development.

These experiments provide firms with the necessary information on when it is the most appropriate time to shift resources from established business models into new business models. Kijl et al. (2005) try to identify external influences that drive business model change or have a disruptive effect on a firms business model (Kijl et al. 2005, 4). The authors also classify the type of innovation that is at the root of a firm’s business model. A distinction is made between incremental versus radical innovation. Both radical and incremental innovations can lead to changes in the building blocks of a firm’s business model.

Sosna, Trevinyo-Rodriquez, and Velamuri (2010, 384), like Achtenhagen, Melin, and Naldi (2013) and Kijl et al. (2005), view continuous business model innovation as a dynamic capability to react to market changes and survive in the longer term.

Sosna, Trevinyo-Rodriquez, and Velamuri (2010, 384) seek to contribute to the emerging view in business literature, which considers business model development as an experiment, followed by revision and adaptation based on trial-and-error learning. Trial-and-error learning is characterized by its iterative

nature of experimentation, retaining actions that produce wanted results and discarding actions that produce negative results (Argyris and Schön 1978).

The results of Sosna, Trevinyo-Rodriquez, and Velamuri (2010) show that the metamorphosis of Naturhouse’s business model can be categorized into four different stages: initial business model design and testing, business model development, scaling up the refined business model and sustaining growth through organizational learning (Sosna, Trevinyo-Rodriquez, and Velamuri 2010, 388–96).

Table 1 resumes the literature analysis.

**Table 1:** Theoretical framework.

Author	Year	Business model creation	Description	Driver
Osterwalder and Pigneur	2010	Iterative process	Iterative process five phases, mobilize, understand, design, implement and manage	Customer change
Sosna	2010	Trial-and-error approach	Design testing, business model development, scaling sustaining growth	Environmental circumstances
Tecee	2010	Learning approach	Discovery and learning adaptation	Current ecosystem of suppliers, competitors and customers and their change
Chesbrough	2010	Technological approach	Exploit new technologies	Technology innovation
Ries	2011	Lean approach	Testing business hypotheses, product iteration and validated learning	Customer –product
Kijl	2005	Incremental or radical approach		Incremental and radical innovation

### 3 Need of a New Approach: The BIC Framework

As the previous paragraph has shown, we can highlight the importance of a business model innovation thanks to its analysis, validation and evolution driven by different factors such as technological innovation (Chersbrough

2010), environmental circumstances (Sosna et al. 2010), ecosystem (Tecee 2010), product (Ries 2011). Since defining an innovative business model is not creating a new business model but creating a business model able to define and identify opportunities for innovation, we need a framework richer than a simple business model framework able to inspire continuously innovation in a dynamic environment, instead of refining, evolving and iterating a first draft of business model. To reach our objective and create a framework able to absorb the dynamicity of the environment we have identified three pillars as extremely important:

- Business model cliché or rather similar business model patterns in a dynamic environment
- Epicentre of innovation or rather where innovation starts in a business model of a dynamic environment
- UX or rather what important experience links the customers to a particularly product or service

In addition, we selected Canvas model as a first step of the analysis is useful to create an easy base where to link our analysis. Structuring business models in nine blocks is a simple way to understand what the business patterns are, where the UX and the epicentre of innovation are placed and eventually – in accordance with the entire analysis – define which trend features are important to create a new business model. To analyse the business model we have applied a technique that is able to identify common behaviour in a business model: the cliché analysis. This analysis identifies how insiders (and often outsiders) translate of an industry, segment, or category into patterns in their business model. In other words, the clichés are the widespread, hackneyed beliefs that govern the way people think and do business in a particular space. As Ridderstrale and Nordström (2007) said in their book *Funky Business* “clichés are everywhere” (omiss) “A surplus of similar companies, employing similar people, with similar educational backgrounds, coming up with similar ideas, producing similar things, with similar prices and similar quality.” We have used the methodology innovatively and applied it not to obtain the disruptive innovation creation (as normally is applied) but to better define the cliché features in a trend, thanks to the cases analysis we have identified three cliché categories: the product cliché – the interaction cliché – the resource cliché. With the product clichés we have analysed the cliché related to the product, with the interaction clichés we have analysed the cliché related to the customer; while with the resource clichés we have analysed the cliché connected with the key resources used by the organization to develop its products and services.

The UX and the epicentre of innovation represent two important drivers in understanding the reasons of a business model structure. The UX is

defined as perceptions and reactions of a user resulting from the use or expectation of a product, system or service (Alben 1996; Law 2008). The UX is related to experiential and affective aspects, attribution of meaning and value of the ownership of a product and the interaction with it, but it also includes aspects such as perceptions of usefulness, ease of utilization and efficiency of the system. The UX has a subjective nature because it concerns the thoughts and feelings of an individual towards a system; it is also dynamic as it changes over time according to the mutable circumstances. From this perspective, the engagement is a particular category of the UX characterized by the attributes of challenge, positive effect, endurability, aesthetics and sensory appeal, attention, feedback, variety or novelty, interactivity and the user's perceived control. Today, the engagement is recognized as a key element for the success of a product, service or system. The customer UX is a very important element that should elicit our choices regarding value proposition, distribution channels, customer relations and revenue streams for what concerns business models. The customer's experience is extremely important for customer perspective because it can persuade customers to select one product or service instead of another. Finally, the epicentre of innovation identifies which element gives birth to innovation. The business innovation can yield from each of the canvas blocks. In our analysis we were able to distinguish four epicentres of business model innovations: infrastructure driven; customer driven; finance driven. The infrastructure-driven epicentre of innovation regards all the blocks in the left side of the canvas: activities, new resources or key partners (think about new material for nanotechnology, prosthesis, and so on, or new type of activities such as 3D printing technologies). The customer-driven epicentre is linked to new types of value proposition (Netflix, Apple store and Uber are only a few examples), new channels, new customers (think about Netjec) or new customer relationships (e.g. Quirky's relationship with its customers). Eventually analysing business model through cliché, UX and epicentre of innovation we identified useful patterns in order to define the business model types such as long tail, B to B, B to C, multi-sided platform, etc.

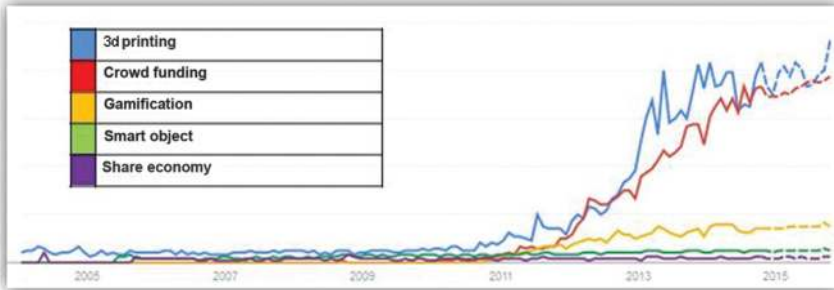
## 4 BIC Methodology into Action: Trend Definition and Analysis

Through the trend analysis we have selected eight trends belonging to the socioeconomic and the technological trends, which have been recognized as

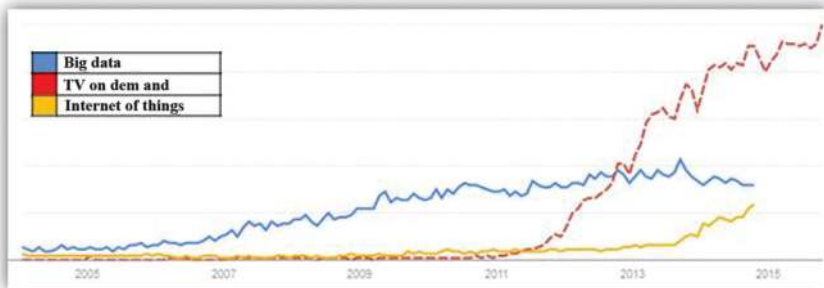


important trends for the number of Internet searches done on each trend (Graphs 1 and 2).

In the following graphs we presented two separate pools of trends: the socioeconomic and technological trends so as to have a better understanding of the different trajectories of the selected trend.



**Graph 1:** Socioeconomic trend.



**Graph 2:** Technological trend.

Both graphics are structured as follows:

- Axis X: time (year).
- Axis Y: no. of Internet searches done on each trend using the Google application for identifying trend.
- The application shows how many searches were done in a particular term, compared with the total number of searches done on Google over time.
- We defined a period of analysis that goes from January 2013 to September 2014 and considered the whole world. Moreover, we normalized and presented the data on a scale from 0 to 100. Each point on the graph is divided by the highest point and multiplied by 100. When we didn't have enough data, 0 is shown.

The trends identified have the following characteristics:

- The makers (Anderson 2012) are a contemporary subcultural community, which is an extension of the traditional world of DIY (do it yourself) and crafts.
- Unlike the traditional handicraft counter-culture, makers use technology to create objects: makers are interested in engineering achievements such as electronic equipment, robotic creations, 3D printing, as well as more conventional activities and traditional handicrafts.
- The term crowdsourcing refers to the ability to use independent contributions from a crowd for a business purpose (or a fundraising purpose in case of crowdfunding), without any organized structure. In the business context, crowdsourcing is a business model in which a company or an institution entrusts the design, implementation or project development, object or idea to a group of previously unorganized people.
- The sharing economy refers to the economic and social systems that make it possible to have a shared access to goods, services, data, and skills. These systems have many shapes, but all of them use information technology as a lever to equip individuals, enterprises, non-profit organizations and Governments with information that enables to distribute, share and re-use surplus goods and services. A common premise is that when information on goods is shared, the value of these goods grows for the company, the individuals and the community.
- The term cloud computing refers to a set of technologies that allow, typically in the form of a service offered by a provider to the customer, a centralized data storage and/or data process (using CPU or software) thanks to the use of hardware/software resources distributed in a typical client–server architecture. Today in this context is the trend of individuals and companies that use the same tools for personal use or for business (Bring Your Own Device), which leads to addressing the issues of safety and availability of content with a different eye.
- Internet TV flips the concept of television, widespread until today in broadcasting, where the program schedule is established by the television provider, not the user. However, with video on demand it is the users that define the schedule according to their wishes and needs. The only limitations are the variety of television programs to choose from.
- The Internet of things (or IOT) refers to the extension of the Internet to the world of concrete objects and places. The IOT is seen as a possible evolution of the use of the network. The objects (smart objects) are recognizable and acquire intelligence, thanks to the ability to communicate data about themselves and have access to aggregate information from others.

- Big data is the term to describe a collection of large and complex data from different instruments at all stages of the process which go from acquisition, storage and sharing, to analysis and visualization. Big data also represents the interrelationship of data from potentially heterogeneous and unstructured sources.

Inside each trend we have selected a practice cases sample chosen for theoretical rather than statistical reasons (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Yin 2003), with the specific purpose of extending an emergent theory (Eisenhardt 1989). Our cases were defined to obtain a more robust theory because the propositions are more deeply grounded in varied empirical evidence (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007:27). However, choosing right and accurate cases in very small samples is a challenging endeavour (Seawright and Gerring 2008). In order to justify the choice the cases have to represent some quite unique and outstanding phenomena or practices in relation to the subject undergoing study (Siggelkow 2007). From each trend we analysed a pool of 15 organizations in the previous 2 years. We collected information about companies using secondary sources and we selected a final sample with the use of unstructured interviews and meetings with innovation and business model experts in three different universities (University of Torino, Westminster University of London and the Polytechnic of Milan). The interviews were useful to better discuss the trend and the linked organizations giving consistency to the organization selection. The output of our interviews resulted in defining the cases for each trend.

Table 2 resumes the list of trends and the final business selection.

Each organization was analysed with the application of the BIC methodology (a case example is presented in detail in Appendix 1). Then, we analysed the cases belonging to each trend in order to find similar patterns and trajectories. With the previous analysis we were able to define the characteristics of each trend as shown in the following table.

As can be seen, the common patterns identified for each trend in Table 3 are presented for illustrative purposes as the outcome of the applied methodology to inspire and not to follow as a formula containing the elements that a new start-up firm should include in its business model.

For a deeper methodology description we have applied the complete methodology to the company Cubify ([www.cubify.com](http://www.cubify.com)), which is a hub for all 3D printing lifestyle objects. Cubify offers everything including co-creation with their favourite brands, a curated shopping experience, customized fashion items, furniture, toys and more for children, a community to draw inspiration from the latest in 3D printing and the easiest access from home 3D printers as well as all of the products related to this matter.

**Table 2:** List of trend and organizations.

Trend	Organization
Cloud computing	Funambol MobileIron
Makers/3D printing	Shapeways Makoo Cubify
Crowdsourcing/crowdfunding	VodafoneLab Kickstarter Eppela
Big data	A3Cube
Internet TV	Netflix Minerva Networks
Gaming	Zynga
Smart objects/IoT	Nest Qardio
Sharing economy	Gnammo UBER

They turn to innovative, fashion-addicted people, passionate creative people and designers, trends and technology companies who resell trend products, designers, architects (b2c and b2b).

The channel that reaches the Cubify ideal consumer and their relations with clients is only virtual and is maintained with the use of websites, social networks, webinars and e-mail marketing tools.

Key resources include an e-commerce platform, 3D printers, a network of creators and designers and the relationship between all of them.

Their key activities are the management of e-commerce platforms, the logistics management, marketing, research and product development and customer relations management. Their key partners include 3D Systems, manufacturers of 3D printers, FedEx and UPS for logistics (Tables 4 and 5).

The *epicentre of innovation* depends on resources such as 3D printers as well as new customers' attitudes (such as creativities and the attitude to make their own products).

*Users' experience:* the UX is related to creating and purchasing special products easily. The client is gratified by the realization of a project and the fact that it is sold in a beautiful, technological, and international environment, while the buyer is a design lover and gets a unique product.

Table 3: Trend patterns.

	Business model	Cliché	Epicentre	Users' experience (UX)
Makers 3D printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Open long tail</li><li>– B to B</li><li>– B to C</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Creative products</li><li>– Sell and communicate on line</li><li>– No quantity discounts</li></ul>	Customers Resources	Uniqueness Product
Cloud computing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Multi-sided model</li><li>– B to B to C</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Digital lifestyle, device independent</li><li>– Sell worldwide saas/on premise</li><li>– Try and buy</li></ul>	Customers	Content availability independent from device
TV on demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Long tail model</li><li>– B to B</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Broadband need</li><li>– Device independent</li><li>– Everywhere and every time access</li></ul>	Customers	Engaging TV experience
Gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Freemium model</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Not addicted gamers</li><li>– Social evidence</li><li>– Credits can be bought with friends help</li></ul>	Value proposition	Social engaging
Smart objects/ IoT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– B to C</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Connected objects</li><li>– Online and retail selling</li><li>– Premium price</li></ul>	Customers Resources	Wellness/comfort/self-knowledge.
Sharing economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Multi-sided model</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Useful products with high maintenance costs</li><li>– Social Lifestyle and sharing</li><li>– Low price vs. Experience</li></ul>	Customers Resources	Value for money Social and self-appreciation Experience
Crowdfunding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Multi-sided model</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Creative projects</li><li>– Rewarding system</li><li>– Low investment</li></ul>	Resources (\$)	Realization of a project Participation, self-realization in being part of a creative project

Table 4: Canvas model.

Cubify	<b>Key partners:</b> 3D Systems Shipping companies	<b>Key activities:</b> E-commerce management, Logistics management, MKTG, R&D	<b>Value propositions:</b> Cubify is the hub for all lifestyle objects in 3D printing. Cubify offers everything from co-creation with their favourite brands, a curated shopping experience, customized fashion items, furniture, toys and more for children, a community to draw inspiration from the latest in 3D printing and the easiest access from home 3D printers and all products related to the theme, including printers	<b>Customer relations:</b> Website FB Twitter Google + Pinterest YouTube Blog Newsletter	<b>Customers:</b> <b>B2C</b> Innovative fashion-addicted people, passionate, creative trends, designers <b>B2B</b> Technology companies who resell trend products, designers, architects
		<b>Key Resources:</b> E-commerce platform, 3D printers, designers		<b>Channels:</b> Online	
Cost stream			Revenue stream		

Table 5: Clichè.

Clichè	Product	Interaction	Price
Cubify	Creative products with high technological content, it focuses on lifestyle technology concept; it is aimed at buyers of niche creative products, innovative fashion-addicted people, trends, creative fans and sells worldwide	It sells online and through a reseller channel and it communicates only online	The selling price applied rewards the work of designers, there are no Quantity discounts, but offer by time on certain categories

*The user experience is different regarding designers or not designers.*

*Not designers:* the UX is tied to the object itself and the ability to dispose of it as soon as possible (manufacturing and logistics).

*“Designers”:* the UX is related to the use of platforms (system efficiency, speed of loading files, UI).

Table 6: Methodology application summary.

	Business model	Cliché	Epicentre	UX
Cubify	Open long tail	Creative products	Customers	Uniqueness product
	B to B	Sell and communicate online	Resources	
	B to C	No quantity Discounts		

## 5 Conclusions and Future Research Trajectories

In this article we have focused on analysing the trend features that could help entrepreneurs to create, modify, change or re-define their business models. Any new trend could change the competitive arena which is potentially open to disruption by new entrants using new technologies which lower costs, change the terms of trade and/or enable a more convenient or direct access for customers in an innovative way.

The pace at which several economic trends (such as Makers, Crowdsourcing, Sharing Economy, Gamification) as well as technological ones (such as Cloud computing, 3D printing technology, application, big data, TV on demand and the Internet of things) have been advancing is transforming the business landscape. These trends have swiftly moved to a set of capabilities that need to be deeply embedded across functions and operations, enabling managers to have a better basis for understanding markets and making business decisions. Meanwhile, social technologies are impacting on the organizational infrastructure that links and engages employees, customers and suppliers as never before. The borders of the digital and physical world have been blurring for many years as consumers learned to shop in virtual stores and to meet in virtual spaces. In these cases, the ICT industry will mirror experiences of the physical world. Increasingly, we’re seeing an inversion in real-life activities, from shopping to factory work, becoming rich with digital information and giving the physical world digital characteristics.

The BIC methodology proposed tends to inspire new comers in defining the features needed in a business model in order to create innovation in a trend pattern. This methodology is a sort of “complex lens” based on a holistic approach that “translates” the competitor’s new trends approach into a guideline for a new business model. Whilst identifying the main characteristics required, the BIC methodology defines the change of business models and the strategic and operative path that organizations have to take. By applying the BIC methodology of other firms’ business model, a start-up company could find inspiration to define its own original and maybe innovative business model.

On the basis of the results reported in this article, this methodology supports newcomer organizations in making decisions based on key factors relating to business models, customers' relations and innovative competitive advantages.

Of course from the deconstructions of the business models of other firms that operate within a given trend, start-ups cannot gain a magic formula but can get the inspiration to design their own business model according to the specificity of the firm. The value of the methodology lies in the holistic view which provides the possibility to recognize eventual patterns that are common to some firms and that are working toward a particular trend, although not always what is common is better. Sometimes more can be learned from deviant cases than from similar cases.

Starting from the results related to the case study proposed, a further investigation could strengthen the presented insights by exploiting a qualitative analysis on a wider sample of cases. Furthermore, future investigations would be centred not only on defining similar cliché but also on finding innovative cliché in the same trend.

# Appendix 1

## Questionnaire

**Which trends do you think have become relevant since 2011?**

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**Which features better characterize the trends you have suggested?**

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**Why do you think these trends are important?**

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**Which companies, in your opinion, better represent each trend?**

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**Which features of the organizations you have highlighted better represent the trend you suggested?**

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**Why, in your opinion, are these organizations important in the trend?**

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**If you were to choose a feature for each organization, which would be the most important for the improvement and growth of the organization?**

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