ABSTRACT
The purpose of this paper is to examine the business network metaphor in relation to strategizing in business and to tentatively propose an alternative metaphor, that of the business meshwork. The paper reviews existing work on strategy and strategizing within the IMP literature, particularly the literature on networks and network pictures, and identifies several shortcomings of this work. To develop the notion of business meshworks as an alternative for understanding strategizing practices in business interaction, the paper draws on recent writings within anthropology and the strategy-as-practice literature.

Keywords: Interaction, meshworks, networks, strategizing

Track: Managing industrial networks
INTRODUCTION

In the paper, we discuss how the two metaphors of business networks and business meshworks lead to different ways of thinking about strategy in inter-organisational interaction, indeed to very different strategy practices. The main contribution of the paper is to propose the metaphor of the business meshwork as an alternative to the dominant network metaphor. In the meshwork metaphor, business actors are conceptualised as knots, not nodes, and are related through the entanglement of lines, not connectors. Furthermore, the notion of meshworks highlights the dynamic and continuously evolving nature of business interaction and strategizing, acknowledging that firms do not have fixed positions, that their roles are continuously being renegotiated and that resource constellations are only temporary.

Strategy and strategizing are not major themes explored within the interaction and networks (IMP) approach (Gadde et al., 2003), but it is nevertheless possible to discern a coherent perspective on strategy (Baraldi et al., 2007). Within the IMP community it is widely accepted that firms are embedded in wider networks of actors, as no business is an island (Håkansson and Snehota, 1989). Whatever a firm does or tries to accomplish not only draws on the resources and activities of other actors, but also affects resources, activities and other actors directly and indirectly. The strategy of a firm is therefore based on interactions with major counterparts within its network (Håkansson and Snehota, 1989). Business networks are defined as structures where a number of nodes are related to each other through specific treads (Håkansson and Ford, 2002). The nodes in the business network are typically business actors in the shape of firms, but may also be non-business organizations or other types of actors, such as individuals, NGOs, political organizations or a consortium of firms or investors (Bengtson et al., 2009). The connections between nodes are described in terms of different forms of personal bonds, resource ties and activity links that diverge in terms of commitment, symmetry, formality, etc. Because firms are seen as interdependent entities, managerial discretion for controlling resources and activities is limited by the bonds, ties and links that have been formed to other actors (Baraldi et al., 2007). The resources of a firm are thus partly controlled by its counterparts, while external resources, owned by counterparts, are partly controlled by the firm (Araujo et al., 1999). The network is jointly constructed and changed by the strategic activities of the actors within it. Hence, networks are seen as both enabling and constraining the strategic options and actions of individual and collective social actors (Håkansson and Ford, 2002).

The business meshwork metaphor introduced in this paper implies a different perspective on strategizing in interactions and relations between firms. Rather than seeing individuals or firms as nodes in a network, business actors are seen as knots in a tissue of knots, whose strands, as they become tangled up with other strands, in other knots, comprise a meshwork (Ingold, 2011). Business actors are argued to be involved in weaving the world through the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment. Furthermore, it is argued that the strands of the meshwork are not connectors, as suggested by current thinking on business networks, but rather that they are lines along which business actors travel as they go about their tasks. What is normally conceptualised as the context or environment of the business actor is therefore better envisaged as a domain of entanglement. It is within a tangle of interlaced lines, continually raveling here and unravelling there, that business actors (individuals and firms) grow or ‘issue forth’ along the lines of their relationships. The world of the business actor is continually and endlessly coming into being around her as she weaves her way through the world. The better a
manager knows the environment her firm is entangled in, the greater the clarity and depth of her perception and the better she is to identify new opportunities and new potential business partners.

The remainder of the paper is divided into five main sections. First, we review the literature on business networks and strategizing and discuss limitations of the network metaphor. Second, we introduce the concept of meshworks as an alternative for thinking about strategy practices in business interactions. Next we describe the methodology used to study an empirical case, Grundfos LIFELINK. This case is then presented and discussed in order to demonstrate the differences between the two metaphors. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of implications of the metaphors and our analysis of the empirical case for theory and practice.

**BUSINESS NETWORKS AND STRATEGIZING**

Within the IMP research community, the role of strategizing and the (ir)relevance of existing strategy research has been discussed, although from a research output perspective, it is not one of the major themes explored by this community (Baraldi et al., 2007, Gadde et al., 2003). Indeed, the very notion that business strategy is a useful concept in relation to a business network approach has been questioned (Ford and Mouzas, 2008, Håkansson and Ford, 2002).

Interaction and network researchers are guided by a basic shared understanding, or ‘root metaphor’, which broadly guides the types of research questions and approaches used among researchers in this community. There is no formal definition of this root metaphor, but building on several key references (Easton, 1992, Håkansson and Ford, 2002, Håkansson and Snehota, 1995), a network can be portrayed as a web of actor, resource and activity nodes that are related to each other by specific threads, signifying some form of social exchange relationship. Business actors are thus viewed as interdependent entities, with managerial discretion for controlling resources and activities being limited by the bonds, ties and links formed to other actors. Firms are embedded in relationships that have evolved over time and which on the one hand provide firms with opportunities for acting, while on the other hand constraining their actions (Håkansson and Ford, 2002).

Strategy research within the IMP approach builds on very different assumptions about the relationship between firms and their environments than those of conventional strategy research (Baraldi et al., 2007), which often assumes a clear boundary between the firm and its environment (Axelsson, 1992, Smircich and Stubbart, 1985).

The competitive strategy tradition is a case in point (Porter, 1979, Porter, 1985). This tradition emanates from neoclassical economy disciplines such as industrial economics (Mathews, 2006), and builds on core assumptions regarding the boundaries of the firm and the discretionary power of managers for allocating resources and managing activities within that boundary in order to achieve strategic fit with the contingences of their task environment and position themselves against others in the market in order to enhance their own (competitive) performance (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The assumptions about the nature of firms, environments, boundaries and managerial action that underpin the competitive strategy perspective do not square easily with the core assumptions regarding firms, networks and the intersection between these two in the business network perspective. Whereas Porter views strategy as a question of creating a unique
position *against* others, IMP researchers view positioning *in relation* to others (Baraldi et al., 2007). A firm is seen as having a unique network position with strong strategic implications (Johanson and Vahlne, 2011). Hence, what firms should strive for is to strengthen its network position, not market position (Johanson and Mattsson, 1992). Furthermore, IMP researchers do not consider activities to be under the direct control of a single firm (Baraldi et al., 2007).

This last criticism can also be levied at the resource-based view of competitive advantage, an approach to strategy that also has roots in neo-economic thinking. The resource-based view assumes that firms are heterogeneous in terms of their control of important (firm-internal) strategic resources (Barney, 1991). A firm is only assumed to be able to develop sustainable competitive advantages to the extent that it controls physical, human and organisational resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable. According to the resource-based view, firms should focus on internal resources, whereas IMP research has an external focus because the individual firm is seen to be reliant on its relationship partners. Therefore, the firm’s portfolio of relationships and its network position are viewed as key factors in strategy formulation (Baraldi et al., 2007).

Reflecting their roots in neo-economic theory, both the competitive advantage tradition and the resource-based view thus assume that a firm is able to act independently, whereas IMP researchers emphasise that resources and activities important for strategic action are interlocked in exchange relationships and therefore not subject to discretionary allocation decisions of individual firms.

Baraldi et al. (2007) argue that there is a lot of common ground between Henry Mintzberg’s approach to strategy and that espoused by IMP researchers writing explicitly about strategy. In particular they highlight commonalities in terms of the concept or content of strategies, their process and their context. Strategies are understood as emergent patterns of choices and actions (Mintzberg et al., 1976, Mintzberg and Waters, 1985), where learning-by-doing and experience play a central role in the strategy formation process because the context of the firm is too complex and uncertain to be fully analysable and hence controllable before acting within it (Mintzberg et al., 1998). With regard to the complexity aspect of strategy context and formation, IMP researchers can be said to extend Mintzberg’s work through their focus on interactions within external actors (Baraldi et al., 2007). Baraldi et al. (2007) thus seem to be in thrall of Mintzberg’s ‘sophisticated’ and ‘nuanced’ view of strategy and the strategy formation process, which they suggest has not been fully exploited by IMP scholars in their empirical research. Furthermore, they suggest that IMP researchers could use Mintzberg’s thinking on strategy formation and learning to develop a more fine-grained view of strategy processes as they ‘unfold within otherwise rather statically conceived network contexts’ (Baraldi et al., 2007: 887).

We would like to question whether Henry Mintzberg has much to offer researchers interested in understanding strategy and strategizing in business interactions and networks. Mintzberg views strategy formation as an emerging process and argues that realised strategies (understood as consistency in action over time) can emerge unintentionally in response to an evolving situation (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). However, Mintzberg is not very clear about the processes through which strategies emerge and although intuitively appealing, most of Mintzberg’s writings are so vague as to be pliable to almost any interpretation or use and his work provides little actual guidance for either researchers or managers. Furthermore, the work of Henry Mintzberg is very
manager and firm-centred and overlooks the importance of relationships and networks for strategy formation (as Baraldi et al. acknowledge).

Other researchers have followed a different tack to capture the notion of strategizing in business networks and tried to conceptualize strategic management in accordance with the core assumptions of business actor interdependence and limited managerial discretion found in the network metaphor. Typically, these contributions use the network perspective as a lens for mapping and thereby making sense of the context in which the business actor is situated.

Early on, Johanson and Mattsson (1992) suggested that the firm’s position vis-à-vis other actors in a system of exchange relationships would provide a useful way to understand the strategic possibilities and limitations in relation to the overall business network and the intricate dependencies in the system that the firm is part of. Johanson and Mattsson (1992) also coined the notion ‘network theories’ to describe individual managers’ subjective interpretations of the value creating logic of the network and their strategic role therein. The concept of network horizon describes the firms and relationships of which an actor is aware in its strategy development (Holmen and Pedersen, 2003). Subsequently, the notion of network pictures has become influential as a concept for making sense of strategic possibilities in business networks. Network pictures are understood as an individual managers’ ‘interpretation of the logic behind the value creation and role distribution among actors in a network’ (Kragh and Andersen, 2005: 643). They are assumed to be anchored in individual managerial cognition and to shape the underlying subjective logic of managerial action (Henneberg et al., 2006). The concept of network pictures builds on the notion of a ‘snapshot’ – an internal model or map representing salient aspects of reality for further managerial analysis and action (Purchase et al., 2010). In this connection, a map is commonly understood as ‘a means of depicting the world so that people understand where they are and where they can go’ (Fiol and Huff, 1992: 267). Although network pictures are argued to be socially constructed rather than objectively given (Henneberg et al., 2006), there is a tendency in much of the research on network pictures to take a realist approach and to use a correspondence-theory-of-truth perspective, as writers try to evaluate, test and determine the extent to which individual or collectively-held network pictures correspond to the world around them (e.g., (Mouzas et al., 2008). As an alternative, it has been proposed to think of network pictures as tools and practices embedded in and mediating actors’ distributed cognitions and emerging practices within an industrial context (Geiger and Finch, 2010). From this performative perspective, network pictures can be seen as actants that are actively involved in the enactment and framing of reality (rather than just representing it). The mediating role of maps for strategic action has been discussed elsewhere. Like in market exchange, they are a representative practice that bridges understandings of actors through time and space (Harrison and Kjellberg, 2010). Although network pictures have clear and precise boundaries, these boundaries are themselves manifestations of instability and network pictures can therefore play a role in re-framing exchange and value creation processes through re-disentangling, re-ordering and re-calculating the roles and positions that the ego and alter have in the network (Geiger and Finch, 2010).

More recent work within IMP focuses on value creation and the fact that networks are often developed intentionally (Möller and Rajala, 2007). For instance, Corsaro et al. (2012) focus on how different network configurations influence the value outcomes for different value recipients. Network configurations are understood as ‘incorporating the structure of the strategic net of a
focal actor with regards to its patterns and intensity of relationships with other actors, as well as the focal actor’s positioning and (strategic) configuring activities’ (Corsaro et al., 2012: 56).

PROBLEMS WITH THE BUSINESS NETWORK METAPHOR

The network metaphor has proven useful to researchers and practitioners because it helps the make sense of the complex world of business interaction. Furthermore, it has been fruitful in the sense that it has stimulated a small, but important body of conceptual and empirical research on strategy from an interaction and network perspective. The different ways that strategy has been studied from a network perspective illustrate the plasticity of the network metaphor. The fact that network metaphor can thus be moulded in many different ways to suit a wide variety of analytical purposes is its central strength. As with any metaphor, however, there are some problematic aspects with the network metaphor.

A metaphor can be defined as a trope of resemblance: by ‘seeing something as …’ a metaphor has the power to re-describe reality (Ricouer, 2003/1977). As Gareth Morgan (2006) has pointed out, the use of a particular metaphor implies a certain way of thinking and a certain way of seeing the world. When using a metaphor, we attempt to see one element of our experience in terms of another. Metaphors are ‘constructive falsehoods’ that stretch our imagination by inviting us to see the similarities between two concepts (Morgan, 2006). The flipside of this is that metaphors always create distortions because they ignore the differences between concepts. Metaphors are therefore inherently paradoxical (Morgan, 2006).

Although the network metaphor has been used to develop valuable insights into strategy and strategizing in business interaction, it is also incomplete, biased and potentially misleading. A fundamental problem with the concept of networks, in all the various guises discussed above, is that the network metaphor logically involves a distinction being made between the firms being connected and the lines of their connection (Larson et al., 2007). Although the proponents of network thinking argue that individuals or firms are mutually constitutive by way of their relations and that network thinking encourages us to focus on the relationships between them, not on the firms themselves when thinking about strategy and strategizing, the establishment of relations between firms actually requires that firms and relationships are first separated. This is problematic because firms are their relations (Ingold, 2011).

Another problem is that the network concept implies a static situation (Larson et al., 2007), even though the network literature acknowledges that business relationships are constantly in flux. This problematic is exemplified by the concept of network position (Johanson and Vahlne, 2011), which implies that firms have their own unique position in networks and should strive to optimize it. The use of nouns rather than verbs to describe networks reflects this tendency to take a static view when conceptualisation and studying business networks (Bizzi and Langley, 2012, Weick, 1979). This problematic is exacerbated by the fact that networks are typically depicted in two dimensions, thus flattening time and suggesting that all relationships are operating simultaneously. There is thus a tendency to develop static, essentialist understandings of networks and interactions within market-as-networks research (Geiger and Finch, 2010, Lowe et al., 2008).
The concept of network pictures reflects an assumption that, in order to be able to act, actors must construct the world in consciousness. An actor is thus assumed to have copied a comprehensive description of the environment’s objects, features and locations, and the relations between them, before he or she steps into it or develops a strategy and implements its. Having determined his or her current position and desired destination within this strategic map (through strategic analysis), and having plotted the route between them (i.e., developed a strategy), it is assumed to be relatively straightforward for the business actor to get from A to B (compare (Ingold, 2000b). However, this approach to strategic action frequently results in a fallacy of misplaced concreteness, where the map is mistaken for the territory. Furthermore, an unstated assumption underlying the map metaphor is that the map affords a representation of things in space that is independent of any particular point of view (Ingold, 2000b). However, as Turnbull (1989) makes clear, it is never possible to wholly divorce any map from its makers and users. Another critique of this perspective is that it tends to overplay the importance of internal sensemaking at the expense of the interactive features of sensemaking and context (Whiteman, 2011).

**BUSINESS MESHWORKS**

In order to advance our understanding of strategizing in business interaction, we suggest looking more closely at strategy as something people do and thus align ourselves with the emerging strategy-as-practice perspective (Jarzabkowski, 2004, Whittington, 2006). Researchers within the strategy-as-practice perspective strive to be close to the world of practitioners and their concrete activities, but their work has been criticised for being too focused on intra-organisational phenomena (Baraldi et al., 2007).

In this section we propose the concept of business meshworks as a means to overcome the limitations of network metaphor identified in the previous section while taking into account that strategizing takes place in interaction between business actors. Rather than seeing them as nodes in a network, we thus propose that interacting managers and firms can be considered ‘knots in a tissue of knots, whose constituent strands, as they become tied up with other strands, in other knots, comprise’ a meshwork (Ingold, 2011: 70). Hence, we suggest that the world of business does not consist of a network of connected points in the form individual and/or collective actors, but is a meshwork of the interwoven lines of life, growth and movement of numerous interacting individuals and firms. Firms and individuals continually and reciprocally bring each other into existence through the transformative power of the field of relations in which they are entangled (Ingold, 2011).

For instance, the strands of two firms may become entwined for a period, as they explore the potential for collaborating and doing business, only to become disentangled once either or both firms determine that this is not a viable way forward. Another example could be two firms that have collaborated for many years on many organisational levels. In this case the lines of life of many different individuals within and between firms will have become tied up with each other, making it more difficult or even painful to dissolve the relationship.

According to the view that is being suggested here, an individual manager or firm does not develop and move along a single line, but rather along multiple trails. That is to say, they radiate
(Canguilhem, 2008). Therefore, a firm (or individual) should not be depicted as an entity (a node, a circle, etc.) that is clearly delineated within well-defined boundaries separating it from its environment (Ingold, 2011), even though it is common to do this within the strategy literature. An individual or firm is better understood as a bundle of lines (Ingold, 2011), or haecceity (Deleuze, 1987), where lines spread out and become tangled up with the life-lines of wide variety of different actors.

Firms operate in, not on, a market, and the strategic transformations they bring about are part and parcel of the market’s transformation of itself. Managers and firms inhabit their respective environments: they are part of it, and through practices of habitation the environment becomes part of them as well. Hence, the environment of a firm does not exist as a fixed entity in and for itself, it continually unfolds in relation to the individuals and firms making a living there (Gibson, 1979, Ingold, 2011). Managers perceive the environment of their firm along a ‘path of observation’ or movement (Gibson, 1979: 197), not from a fixed point of view, as the notion of network pictures implies (along with the related concept of cognitive maps). Instead perception of the environment is fundamentally about movement. In a sense, managers are wayfarers, who have embarked on a movement along a way of life. They live their lives, develop skills, make observations and construct understandings along the paths they follow (compare Ingold, 2011). What they are, or what they can be, is something that they continually shape through their actions (Ingold, 2011):

‘Action emerges from the interplay of forces along the lines of the meshwork. It is because organisms are immersed in such force fields that they are alive ... Living systems are characterised by a coupling of perception and action that arises within processes of ontogenetic development’ (Ingold, 2011: 64-5).

What is normally conceptualised as the context or environment of the firm might therefore better be envisaged as a domain of entanglement, as individual managers and firms grow or ‘issue forth’ along the lines of their relationships within a tangle of interlaced trails that are continually ravelling here and unravelling there (Ingold, 2011). The meshwork metaphor thus helps us understand the process through which realised strategies emerge, i.e., through all of the various interactions and relationships that individuals and firms are engaged in.

Social reality does not come to managers already patterned or ‘ready made’. On the contrary, the primary condition of human existence is that reality is ambiguous and fluxing. The features of the manager’s environment that appear to be fully formed, well-structured and clearly defined ‘are nothing more than islands of stabilised social order in a churning sea of chaos’ (Chia and Holt, 2009: 144).

‘It is only through [...] painstaking attention to the irregularities and non-conformity of the detailed and the mundane that we will be able to truly follow the actual goings-on in the world of business strategising’ (Chia and Holt, 2009: 150).

Strategies are not designed in the minds of senior managers or entrepreneurs and then implemented – they emerge through a process of growth within a morphogenetic field. The world of the manager’s experience is continually and endlessly coming into being around him or her as he or she participates in weaving the meshwork. To the extent that the manager’s world has a surface, it is like the surface of a coiled basket – it has no clearly defined ‘inside’ or
'outside' (Ingold, 2000a). The mind of the manager is in the weave of the surface itself. And it is within this weave that his or her projects of making, whatever that may be, are formulated and come to fruition. Thus, the ‘forms of objects are not imposed from above but grow from the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment’ (Ingold, 2000a: 68), with humans being peculiarly able to treat the manifold threads of their experience as material for further acts of weaving and looping (Ingold, 2000a).

Strategy as wayfaring is understood as a skilled performance in which the manager, as a traveller whose powers of perception and action have been fine-tuned through previous experience, ‘feels her way’ towards her goal, continually adjusting her movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of the environment (Ingold, 2000b). The better a manager knows the environment her firm is entangled in, the greater the clarity and depth of her perception, the better she is to identify new opportunities and new potential business partners. What distinguishes the expert from the novice is not a greater accumulation of mental content (a more detailed cognitive map or network picture), but a greater sensitivity to cues in the environment and a greater capacity to respond to these cues with judgement and precision (Ingold, 2011). It is a difference between how well trainees and experienced managers know, not how much they know.

As wayfarers, managers experience a progressional ordering of reality along a path of travel, with objects falling into and out of sight, as new vistas open up and others are closed off (Ingold, 2007). The wayfaring manager is always on the move and actively engaging with the environment that opens up along his path (Ingold, 2007, Ingold, 2011). Thus, wayfinding is not characterised by a plotted sequence of static positions but as ‘the coming-into-sight and passing-out-of-sight of various contoured and textured aspects of the environment’ (Chia and Holt, 2009: 163). The wayfarer apprehends the world from within. A manager’s knowledge of her environment undergoes continuous formation as she threads her way through it, not over or across it (Ingold, 2011). Movement is knowing, with the integration of knowledge taking place along the paths that the manager takes from place to place within the matrix of the travelling: managers do not apply knowledge of the environment and their organisations in their practice. They know by way of their practise (Ingold, 2011).

As a wayfarer, a manager is ‘instantiated in the world as a line of travel’ (Ingold, 2011: 150). This line of travel advances from the tip as the manager presses on in an ongoing process of growth and development, or self-renewal. Following Ingold (2011), the wayfaring manager ‘has no final destination, for wherever he is, and as long as life goes on, there is somewhere further he can go’ (150).

‘Wayfaring always overshoots its destination, since wherever you may be at any particular moment, you are already on your way somewhere else’ (Ingold, 2011: 162).

As inhabitants of the worlds they live in, individuals and firms participate ‘from within in the very process of the world’s continual coming into being’ (Ingold, 2007: 81). This is ‘a matter of intervening in the fields of force and flows of material wherein the forms of things arise and are sustained’ (Ingold, 2011: 178), and contributes to its weave and texture by laying a winding and irregular trail of life (Ingold, 2007).
The concept of meshworks highlights the emerging and constantly evolving nature of firms and their interactions and the futility of drawing network pictures, which are inevitably static and necessitate making a clear distinction between firms and their lines of connection. The concept of network pictures reflects an assumption that, in order to be able to act strategically, actors must construct the world in consciousness. An actor is thus assumed to have copied a comprehensive description of the environment’s objects, features and locations, and the relations between them, before she steps into it. Having determined its current position and desired destination within this map, and having plotted the route between them, it is assumed to be relatively straightforward for the business actor to get from A to B. In contrast, the meshworking metaphor implies that it is better to think of the business actor as working in ongoing, close interaction with its environment and thus better takes into account that strategizing occurs in interaction between business actors. The meshwork perspective abandons the fixity of relationship structures, positions and roles in networks and instead focuses on flow and change.

**METHODOLOGY – DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS**

Although the contribution of this paper is mainly conceptual in nature, we use insights gained through an explorative and ongoing case study of Grundfos LIFELINK to illustrate the differences between business networks and meshworks in relation to strategizing. Grundfos LIFELINK is a subsidiary of the Danish pump manufacturer Grundfos supplying clean freshwater to rural communities in Kenya. The case was developed from multiple data sources, including interviews and various documentary sources. We use the empirical material to show how the two theoretical perspectives discussed in this paper lead to very different interpretations of the case and to different practical implications.

The empirical basis for this study is an explorative and ongoing case study of Grundfos LIFELINK. Explorative in-depth case studies of organizations are useful for understanding underlying processes and dynamics in unfolding events (Van de Ven and Poole, 2005). Our approach to studying strategy processes in Grundfos LIFELINK can be characterised as sequential mapping in order to grasp processes in their contexts (Halinen et al., 2012). In particular, we focused on how the strategy of Grundfos LIFELINK developed in emergent processes of interaction between Grundfos LIFELINK and other parts of the Grundfos organisation and actors in its environment (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). The case was developed from multiple data sources as recommended by Yin (2009), including interviews and various documentary sources. Grundfos LIFELINK have been open and cooperative and have given us open access to all the material and respondents requested.

The second author conducted six semi-structured interviews with five respondents (see Table 1 for an overview of the people interviewed). Besides two managers from Grundfos LIFELINK, interviews were carried out with a marketing research manager operating in Kenya and an engineer involved in the technical development of the LIFELINK system. All interviews were conducted in Danish and most of them as face-to-face interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, amounting to 150 pages of interview material. Follow-up interviews were conducted with Louise Koch and Mads Prebensen in the spring of 2013.
### TABLE 1
Overview of persons interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Duration of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lars Laursen</td>
<td>Country manager (Kenya)</td>
<td>30 minutes (via Skype)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter T. Hansen</td>
<td>Managing Director, Grundfos LIFELINK</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20 minutes (via phone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Koch</td>
<td>Business developer, Grundfos</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lars Denning</td>
<td>Technical Manager, Grundfos LIFELINK</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mads Prebensen</td>
<td>Grundfos LIFELINK CEO and Head of the New Business division</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to conducting interviews, we gathered and analysed a large amount of documentary materials from Grundfos. These additional data sources include internal memos, company presentation material such as PowerPoint slides, video footage, physical objects and intranet access to real-time data on pump site performance. The interview and documentary data materials were used to develop a baseline case, which was co-authored with one of the key informants from the company.

The analysis of the empirical material has followed several iterative steps. We have used a time series approach to order unfolding events and their impact on beliefs and the negotiations of meaning over time. In alignment with Kaplan’s (2010) notion of PowerPoint presentations as a central device in the epistemic machinery of strategy making in organisations, a key focus in the analysis was to closely examine the PowerPoint slides presented at internal board meetings as critical events in development of the Grundfos LIFELINK strategy. There were such nine meetings in a 20-month period (2007-2008).

We have extracted the issues based on decision notes and power point slides from 10 meetings and several internal memos. We have analyzed the interviews and matched the managers’ recollection of the events with the PowerPoint slides and notes presented. We examined the identified themes, looking for the PowerPoint author’s framing of particular issues, in order to convey particular meanings and maintain legitimacy in spite of diversions from the original map. 14 themes were identified, of which three are seen as encompassing several of the other issues and as particularly critical for understanding strategizing practices in relation to Grundfos LIFELINK.

In the present version of the case, we have focused on identifying areas of tension between the map held by the board of Grundfos LIFELINK, which guided the initial decision to establish this new venture in the first place, and the territory experienced by what we can call the “wayfaring team” in Grundfos LIFELINK.

### GRUNDFOS LIFELINK

For communities in the developing world, the lack of potable water presents perhaps the most fundamental challenge for survival and prosperity. Developing a solution with the potential to
solve this problem is an important innovation in Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) markets. Grundfos LIFELINK (GLL) is a turnkey water solution that encompasses a solar-driven pump facility, a GPS-based monitoring system and a payment system based on digital payments of water credits. Together, these elements represent the business model of GLL.

Grundfos is a world-leading pump supplier, but although pumps are an important part of the project, they are not a centerpiece of the LIFELINK station and the underlying business model. The core capability of GLL is to establish and manage an active network of partners in which each partner adds significant value to the product being offered to the customer. Value is channeled back, allowing the technical system to be maintained and to remain in operation. The business model underpinning the LIFELINK system therefore draws on a plethora of local community partnerships.

Since 2007, GLL has expanded its operations in Kenya and has shown that it is possible to develop a market-based system that provides access to water for rural societies in BoP markets, which have led to several accolades. The pinacles – at least in terms of international recognition was winning a world business and development award at the United Nations conference for sustainable development, Rio+20, in June 2012 and an 8-minute report broadcast during prime time on BBC in the autumn of 2012.

The experiences gained from developing GLL and the increased recognition of the GLL model worldwide have led GLL and Grundfos to evaluate their activities and re-think the utility of their current business relationships in light of how they may be strengthened, abandoned or reconfigured.

The following narrative explains how Grundfos LIFELINK’s journey in time and space can be described as first following a traditional, strategy-as-plan approach in which a strategy and business plan was developed from ‘the comfort of an armchair’ far away from the hustle and bustle of Kenya (then better known as an interesting BoP business context). Secondly, we demonstrate how being active in Kenya led to a change of approach, that by and large can be said to correspond with a meshwork perspective, and how the landscape alters as a consequence of the changing perspective. positioning, rearranging and developing business positions (while creating actors and co-designing business networks). Third, we discuss the meshwork as it is seen in the rearview mirror. For the sake of simplicity we present the story in three chapters that follows the different phases of GLL’s journey into Kenya.

THE KENYAN ENVIRONMENT FROM THE COMFORT OF AN ARMCHAIR

The origins of the GLL venture can be traced back to a personal experience of the chairman of the Poul Due Jensen Foundation. In 2007, while visiting northern Thailand, he was surprised that the villages used expensive groundwater boreholes for their water supply instead of cleaning surface water. He called the head of the New Business Division (NBD) in Grundfos and asked him to look into the commercial possibilities of a water purification system driven by solar power. The NBD head suggested a system that could be organized around standard components. The real challenge was identified as how to organize a user interface and a feasible business model around the service and maintenance of the system in a developing country.
As firms are wont to do when contemplating a new business venture, a team started a feasibility study to detail the idea further. They soon decided to focus on rural townships in one country as a test market, settling on Kenya. In Kenya, 42% of the population has access to potable water, and collecting water consumes three to four hours daily. Focusing on a particular target country simplified matters a bit. It helped the development team to design a business model that met the conditions of one particular market, rather than taking into consideration the differences in business conditions across African countries. Kenya was chosen because Danish companies have a good standing in Kenya thanks to extensive foreign aid from Denmark to Kenya and a strong cultural link between the two countries. Furthermore, Kenya was seen as one of the most challenging markets from a business perspective: it would therefore be a demanding test-site from which GLL would be able to stress-test the business model they were developing.

The early idea was to develop a water kiosk where users could buy purified water and thereby could finance the establishment and maintenance of the system. At its technical core the system was to have a Grundfos submersible pump and an energy supply system; it should also solve the problems of servicing and payment. Grundfos already had a series of pumps that used solar panels or other local sources of power. The team also found a potential supplier of a water purification unit in Denmark and started to test the unit, using an external consultant to do so. Grundfos had a distributor in Kenya, who—with some support and knowledge transfer—could install the LIFELINK system in the chosen village. The technical solution would be based on manufactured or purchased standard components and existing global partnerships.

The team saw the realization of the commercial part as much more difficult. Grundfos had some in-house experience from working with NGOs on charity programs, but not with commercial aspects. Furthermore, even though emerging markets are a target area for the company, Grundfos’ experience with BOP contexts was limited. Nevertheless, it was important for how individuals made sense of the entire project that the commercial ambitions were kept intact. As an informant told us:

Taking our mission as new business developers into account, we did not want this to be another Grundfos charity program. The commercial ambitions were sacrosanct for us and always imperative in the new business development team’s thinking.

Collecting the local payments for water credits presented a specific puzzle. Individual payments would be relatively small and hard to collect and to transfer. By chance, a temporary researcher working on the project came from a consulting job in the telecommunication business. His background came to have a strong influence on the further ideation process. At the next meeting of the task force, he told the rest of the team that he had done some Internet research and found out that Safaricom, a local Kenyan company associated with Vodafone, operated the M-Pesa payment system; a successful mobile banking system. Even in the poorest part of the population in Kenya, mobile phones were used for a broad range of purposes. If the team used M-Pesa for water payments and linked the local water kiosks in the villages to the Internet to monitor water use, it would be possible to match usage with the payments made.

An additional problem that almost stopped the project was the initial testing of the water purification system. While the group concentrated on developing the commercial part, it had outsourced the testing of the water purification component. This system was to be supplied by a Danish company specializing in water purification systems. Rigorous testing of the system in
Denmark showed that it did not work as promised, but demanded much more maintenance than expected. The due diligence report showed that filters needed cleaning every day and that the quantity of clean water produced was not as large as expected. Negotiations with the Danish manufacturer became problematic, as the manufacturer believed that the contract was settled on the system it had developed, whereas Grundfos foresaw the need for considerable additional investment if the system was to be developed into one that would actually work under the harsh conditions in Kenya. After some discussion of the possibilities and challenges ahead, the team decided to present these issues to the board and suggest that the LIFELINK system should be designed for groundwater use to begin with. Later on, the system could be further developed for use at surface water sites as well. This was a radical break from the original idea and was not seen as a trivial issue by the board. For a period, the future of the entire project was uncertain. However, they agreed that there were plenty of other development challenges that could be tested and solved in a groundwater-based solution, then later transferred to a surface-based version. Consequently, the collaboration with the supplier of water purification systems was terminated and the LIFELINK team continued working on the project with a new perspective on the water source.

In their final meeting with the development team, The New Business Development board endorsed further development of the idea and provided 1 million euros in seed capital for the initial phase, with an option for more capital later. Before entering Kenya in 2008, GLL had already formed some of its critical partnerships or was negotiating them. Other components were already available and could be matched directly to the project, which meant that they could be purchased and used without using resources to develop collaborative partnerships. For instance, BP Solar had already developed a solar panel designed for the local conditions, which could be mounted on top of the water tower. Other “ready to wear” technical components were standard supplies, such as the server and communication unit, or already produced internally, such as the SQFlex pump. The key business aspects to be negotiated were related to the position and role of GLL in the business model, including issues of contracting and gaining buy-in from local communities and of governing local value capture.

How Grundfos initially approached Kenya and the development of a strategy and business model for what became Grundfós LIFELINK reflects a traditional approach to strategy, in which the Kenyan business environment was imagined in the mind before Grundfos stepped into it. Grundfos drew up a network picture and used this rather static picture as the blueprint for how to successfully supply safe, clear drinking water to small rural communities. Although thinking was very Grundfos-centric, there nevertheless was a realisation that success would depend on building and maintaining relationships with external partners in a wider business network. Using a network mapping procedure, we can display an overview of the actors and activities in the partner-based business model that GLL management had in mind. The network picture developed in 2007 suggests that the role of Grundfos would be to deliver only the technical “hardware,” whereas their partners would deliver all the cultural and business “software,” including contacts with important local, regional and global constituents such as the local villages, the regional water boards in Kenya and the sponsors (see Figure 2).
In the network picture constructed by Grundfos, LIFELINK would be financed primarily through the water purchases made by the local villages. The villages would either raise the capital for investing in the system themselves or be granted loans by local, regional or global sponsors, such as the government, local water boards, microfinance institutions or global organizations and NGOs such as the World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Most of the fundraising was to be taken care of by the local NGO, supported by Grundfos. The development team listed a number of reasons why a donor would find the project relevant. These included local economic growth, transparency and low administration costs. Besides the local NGO, Safaricom was seen as the primary partner, and because market expansion was closely connected to users’ access to mobile phones, further regional expansion was closely linked to this partner.

**In The Thick Of The Meshwork:**
**Positioning, Developing And Rearranging Business Relationships In Kenya**

A lot of energy was directed toward developing a corruption-free, workable payment system. LIFELINK ended up adding an intermediate step with a loadable memory card (a key fob) in the value stream connecting the customer and the local mobile banking system M-Pesa. This meant

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**FIGURE 2**

Imagined value network in Grundfos (before market entry in Kenya).
that M-Pesa could be used for bulk purchases of water credits that were then banked at the Grundfos server, divided and transferred to users in smaller amounts. This would allow users to buy collectively, paying only one SMS fee and thus dodging paying SMS fees for several micro-transactions. Later, payment could be divided among the users.

Further adjustments were needed. It was regarded as important that the village was of a sufficient size (more than 300 potential users), that it was within reach of the mobile network, and that the borehole was suitable. Second, and of equal importance, was the village’s attitude toward the idea. A new pumping facility on top of a local water borehole represents a potential intrusion into the life of the village. Granting an outsider the right to establish a water kiosk is therefore no small issue. In order to create a sustainable solution, Grundfos needed to get local buy-in, which was one of the reasons that collaborating with a local NGO who “knew the ropes” and was seen as a reliable negotiator was considered important.

In 2008, a plane left for Kenya with supplies for building 20 water kiosks. LIFELINK had formed an agreement with a small local NGO. In the original plan for the roll-out, the NGO’s task would be to find suitable villages and negotiate the terms with local authorities. The NGO had extensive experience and several local operations in rural Kenya. Grundfos and a local dealer would be responsible for constructing the site once an agreement was reached. Grundfos planned for LIFELINK to work with five different market segments: Farms and game reserves, small-scale agriculture, small rural centers, semi-pastoralists, and pastoralists. The team planned to expand to Tanzania and Uganda in 2009 and to Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa in 2010. However, over the next eight months very little happened. The board reluctantly realized that they had to revise several of their assumptions. In particular, they had miscalculated the interests of the NGO in the process. The NGO was primarily concerned with its own aid programs; they saw Grundfos as a potential contributor to these programs rather than the other way round. They had already established programs in some villages, and their choice of potential villages for the GLL project was strongly biased by their own current operations. These rural villages often lacked the basics needed for operating the system, such as capital flows and mobile telephones; had insufficient cattle-raising or agricultural activity in need of a water supply; and often even lacked a borehole.

In June 2008, the board made two important decisions: to change the name of the company to LIFELINK, and to transfer a manager to Kenya, with the mission to find 20 suitable sites and finalize the agreements with the local communities. Extending control over activities such as sales, lease agreements, and negotiations with the local telecom necessitated the establishment of a subsidiary in Kenya, which would also focus directly on the regional water boards in order to find suitable partners. LIFELINK also hired a local community consultant and replaced the NGO. In addition, they hired an anthropologist to conduct research in the villages in order to understand consumption patterns better.

The anthropologist’s fieldwork helped LIFELINK management develop a different approach to establishing their water kiosk. Rather than looking for prospective customers for LIFELINK, they should think of the water kiosk as an entrepreneurial project; their focus should be on how the kiosk could generate local growth once it was there. With the new approach, the LIFELINK initiative could be seen as a community development platform that could attract other organizations and donation capital. It became increasingly important to attract funds from donors
interested in developing countries as well as to raise funds through other means. Documentation of the sustainability of LIFELINK therefore became even more important than before. During 2009 and 2010 the number of sites grew, albeit at a far slower pace than originally envisioned. In 2009 Grundfos had launched five production sites, and in 2010 water facility stations were working in 14 villages. The realized value constellation differs in many respects from the network that, so to speak, had been imagined in the comfort of the armchair (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2**
Realized value constellation in Kenya

Rather than relying strongly on any particular partner, GLL acquired control over the processes needed to transfer the business concept from one BoP context to the next, without dependence on specific pre-existing partners. Instead, partnerships can be developed with local entrepreneurs on an ad-hoc basis. In this setup, GLL’s activities paralleled those of an NGO in many respects. Although on paper the organization has the organizational muscle to tackle most challenges in the market by themselves, GLL has become entangled with a wide variety of business and non-business actors.

In the end, the LIFELINK entry into Kenya turned out to be much more costly than expected, but it is also was critical for the further testing and expansion of GLL. As Mads Prebensen says:
Kenya is our laboratory and showcase for testing and rolling out new ideas in the LIFELINK business model. Until further notice, we need an extended presence here, so we can follow up with new initiatives and show the international NGOs present here as well as international stakeholders such as the World Bank that we can deliver and continue to do so.

Although far from the vast success originally envisioned, our contention is that GLL only began to evolve and become moderately successful once managers decided to leave the comfort of their armchairs behind them and instead ventured into the world and became enmeshed in the Kenyan environment. This allowed GLL to unfold itself in relation to various business and non-business actors and thereby gain the practical experience necessary to recursively fine-tune and adjust their business model in ongoing interactions with different actors in various local communities.

**THE MESHWORK IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR: THE BUSINESS NETWORK IN KENYA (AND BEYOND)**

GLL have managed to develop a success and a showcase that in many ways can be considered remarkable. The words by Mads Prebensen turned out to be quite prophetic. In a 2012 showcase, the GLL project was portrayed in the BBC science program Horizon. This created much awareness among investors, venture capitalists and decision makers related to BoP markets. On the other hand, GLL was increasingly pressured internally in Grundfos. One of the problems seen in relation to GLL was that its operations were to lesser and lesser extent linked to the rest of the Grundfos organization. Because the business model of LIFELINK is very different from the company’s main activities, it was considered disruptive. As Mads Prebensen explains:

> If anyone thinks that the same people who successfully sell our pumps will be equally successful in selling LIFELINK, I think they are mistaken. This business model differs from our conventional model on too many parameters. You create value another way and work with different partners. There is no way you can ask a salesperson to devote 10% of his time to this type of business while using his remaining time on other business areas.

Eventually, in a strategy meeting in February 2012, GLL decided that the way forward was not to develop community platforms by themselves and engage in processes that were too far removed from the rest of the organization. Even though the vision for Grundfos was to develop a business platform, which was less dependent on physical products such as pumps, a lesson that Grundfos drew from the GLL experience was that some alignment with the rest of the business activities of Grundfos was necessary in order to utilize shared resources the best way possible. Thus, GLL decided to focus on developing components (toolkits) and concepts and carry these out with local partners rather than implementing them themselves. In 2012 and 2013 GLL have thus focused on establishing partnerships with local venture capitalists in Africa and elsewhere (currently in Nigeria, India and Thailand).

In Thailand, the idea of using surface water has re-appeared. This time development is based on Grundfos’ own resources and what they learned from the early experiments with the Danish partner. This new system works with an automatic cleaning procedure that can be activated remotely and where the performance of the system can be monitored – much as in Kenya.

The original project in Kenya has not been developed further, but is expected to be sustainable as it is, and to be able to finance itself. GLL will keep tracking this project for future documentation.
and will use it as a showcase and a way to influence investors in water systems in BoP economies to take into account the self-sustainable qualities of systems, when evaluating new proposals. GLL no longer wishes to collect payments themselves for these systems and have abandoned the business ideas that related to this version of their business proposal. This also means that the resources deployed for finding more suitable villages in Kenya will be redirected and used for finding partners elsewhere. The community of villages with a functioning water kiosk system and expertise gathered from the GLL experiment has become a resource in its own right – it is quite influential in the current debate over sanitation water in Africa. In this way GLL hopes to bend investor interests in their direction, by bringing the notion of economic sustainability on the top of the agenda – and also by challenging the notion of local empowerment as being the only way forward for rural communities in developing economies. However, GLL will also withdraw their current commitment from Kenya and reestablish in South Africa, from where they will operate a network of sub-Saharan representations. Moreover, they intend to develop partnerships with local entrepreneurs in several other African countries. In its new transformation GLL looks more like a development house than an NGO. The intention is for GLL to become the hub firm that orchestrates the activities in a network of local venture capital firms and is responsible for capturing the further development of different versions of their business model. At the core is the technological ability to relate to customers and for remote surveillance of technologies using the Internet as well as their knowledge on circulation pump technology. Moreover, GLL draws more heavily on internal Grundfos resources to come up with technical solutions that are in alignment with the problems they are faced with. Hence, GLL is now more like a specialist task force within the Grundfos organization than a spin-off.

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

When the intended and realized business models and ensuing governance roles for GLL are compared, it is obvious that GLL has enhanced its presence and activities in Kenya considerably, compared to its original intentions. LIFELINK started out with a particular image of the context they were about to enter. They saw themselves positioned in this context as a supplier of components, with a strong relationship to a local NGO and local authorities. They learned from closer inspection and experience in situ that the business environment was much different from what it looked like from a distance. In fact, what looked like a network of positions and roles, turned out to be unconnected islands of resources or simply fata morgana. The lesson they learned from their commitment to the business context was that a strong presence along with extensive technological development in complementary systems was needed in order to bring together and keep together the interests of the other actors. Hence as they became enmeshed in their environment, they took an active role as weavers of their business model, co-designing roles and relationships for actors. Also, they took over some of the roles that had initially been played by other actors (such as the role of an NGO). These efforts were crowned with some commercial success and GLL was recognized as delivering a truly useful solution to a problem that others had given up on or expected could be solved only through empowerment of the locals. However, for GLL the consequence of “going native” and becoming everything but a pump supplier was that their relatives in Grundfos had growing trouble recognizing them as part of the Grundfos family. Therefore, with the success a new tack was needed.
Much in alignment with the suggestions from Johanson and Vahlne (2011), networks are truly opaque to outsiders and therefore impossible to map. Because insights are partly embedded in social systems and partly results from interaction co-production it is only gradually revealed through interactions and value proposals can also change as a consequence (Hayek, 1945). It seems obvious to us that well-developed notions such as network positions, roles, along with resource combinations and adaptations offer elusive conceptualizations of the strategizing processes that unfold in the GLL case. We have systematized these insights in the Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2**
**Summary of findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. The meshwork seen from the comfort of the armchair</th>
<th>II. In the thick of the meshwork</th>
<th>III. The Kenyan meshwork in the rear-view mirror</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLLs Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>We work through local NGOs and service contacts</td>
<td>We operate as NGOs and as system architects</td>
<td>We are an idea house which builds on pump technology know-how</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Role of GLL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>We are an offspring of a pump supplier and related technologies in search of a new pump-related source of revenue</td>
<td>We negotiate directly with local authorities and build our own ecosystem of local entrepreneurs</td>
<td>We develop key partnerships with local entrepreneurs, provide ideas for business models and corresponding technological solutions in alignment with Grundfos pump technology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Value creation and logic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Value is created through our sales of the pump system solution and the after sales service contract.</td>
<td>Value is created through our local presence, sales of water drawing rights, servicing and control of the payment system.</td>
<td>Value is created through multiple presence, recognition of GLL as a provider of sustainable solutions and through reducing cost of technology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Changed role of activities, resources and actors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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In order to be meaningful, the concept of a “position” requires a fix point with recognizable landmarks to suggest some form of change in this position has been made. In the case presented, the concept of position seems misplaced. An *ex ante* positioning (as made by the GLL managers when describing how they would position themselves *vis à vis* local actors) turned out to be meaningless if not a hindrance for learning, as GLL approached the business context and started interacting with local actors. Potential allies turned into rivals (such as NGOs and the providers of mobile banking solutions), and actors which had not been realized as relevant to the focal network of GLL turned out to be of key importance (such as local anthropologists, foundations and venture capital banks). Likewise, with the changes in position, the very identity and corresponding roles of GLL changed: from a supplier of pump-equiment to a bank and an NGO and back to a development house, with focus on both social design and technological development. Interestingly and following the process of learning and interaction, resource combinations and the nature of what comprises a resource and in what way the resource adds value has taken unexpected twists and turns.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper has argued that business actors are involved in weaving the world through the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment. Rather than seeing individuals or firms as nodes in a network, it was argued that business actors are knots in a tissue of knots, whose strands, as they become tangled up with other strands, in other knots, comprise a meshwork. Furthermore, it was argued that the strands of the meshwork are not connectors, as suggested by current thinking on business networks, they are lines *along* which business actors travel as they go about their tasks. This argument is illustrated by the case of Grundfos LIFELINK, a venture that only began to prosper once pre-conceived notions of the business environment and relationships with partners were cast aside and employees became tangled up with local actors.

What is normally conceptualised as the context or environment of the business actor is therefore better envisaged as a domain of entanglement. It is within a tangle of interlaced lines, continually ravelling here and unravelling there, that business actors (individuals and firms) grow or ‘issue forth’ along the lines of their relationships. The world of the business actor is continually and endlessly coming into being around it as the business actors weaves its way through the world. A business actor participates from within in the very process of the world’s continual coming into being and contributes to its weave and texture from within by laying a trail of life. Such trails are winding and irregular, yet entangled into a close-knit tissue or meshwork. The better the business actor knows the environment her firm is entangled in, the greater the clarity and depth of her perception and the better she is able to formulate new opportunities and new ways to go on.

Although the differences between networks and meshworks might appear to be subtle, they are important and have very different implications for strategy practices in business interaction, as the experiences of Grundfos LIFELINK demonstrate. Initially, the firm tried to design a network and position itself in it. However, when it tried to act on this network picture and attain the position it had envisioned, managers learned that it was only through feeling their way and continuously adjusting their activities that they were able to meet their aim of supplying fresh water to rural communities. Recently, the firm has been reverting to thinking more in terms of its position within a network and focusing less on actively engaging with its environment.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


