

Call for Papers
Special Issue of *California Management Review*:
Firm Openness and Industry Dynamics
Conference Submission Deadline: February 1, 2026

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If innovation strategy in the 20th century was about proprietary barriers and control (Porter, 1980; Chandler, 1990), in the 21st century such strategies have emphasized opportunities from openness and cooperation (Arora et al, 2004; Teece, 2007; Laursen & Salter, 2014; Baldwin, 2024). The impact of such strategic openness on industry and competition dynamics is the subject of this special issue, along with the managerial and theoretical implications of such impacts.

One factor behind openness has been the broad dispersal of innovative knowledge and capabilities, reflected in Henry Chesbrough's (2003) observation that "not all the smart people work for us." Such dispersal was the basis of Chesbrough's open innovation paradigm (Chesbrough, 2006a, 2011, 2024), perhaps the best known and most influential application of openness for developing and explaining firm competitive advantage. Over the past two decades, this paradigm has demonstrated its impact both on past innovation challenges (Chesbrough, 2024) and its relevance for future ones (Holgersson et al, 2024).

In this century, openness has been incorporated both into new business models (Chesbrough, 2006b; Kortmann and Piller, 2016) and into the processes for creating them (Vanhaverbeke and Chesbrough, 2014; Lu & Tucci, 2024). More generally, firms have practiced open strategy by incorporating external parties both into their strategies and into their strategy-making processes (Chesbrough and Appleyard, 2007; Birkinshaw, 2017).

Research has repeatedly demonstrated how such openness has been made possible by the complementarity between the value created by the firm's openness efforts and its own proprietary interests (Alexy et al, 2018; Baldwin et al, 2024). At the same time, firms face inherent tradeoffs between these two conflicting goals (West, 2003; Laursen & Salter, 2014; Laursen et al, 2024).

Thousands of articles have examined the processes of open innovation, what open business models are, and the benefits of open strategy. Less often, researchers have studied how different forms of openness have changed the nature of firms and what sort of firms are created, succeed, or fail. Also less common are studies of the dynamics of openness and how such dynamics must be managed.

In this special issue, we seek articles that provide further evidence on two larger questions:

- **What impact has openness had on the shape of firms and industries?**
- **What are the implications of such impacts for management?**

Openness in innovation, business models, and strategies has helped fuel new forms of organization (Chesbrough & Teece, 1996; Tushman et al, 2012). Researchers have identified it

as a driver of new, open approaches to ecosystem (Adner, 2006; Rohrbeck et al, 2009; Randhawa et al, 2021) and platform strategies (Gawer, 2021; O'Mahony & Karp, 2022; Baldwin, 2024). At the same time, the expiration or other termination of such external ties create other changes for firms and industries (Holgersson et al, forthcoming).

The purpose of this special issue is to provide evidence of any or all such potential effects that can be traced to the conception and use of openness over the past two decades. Possible research questions about firm-level impacts include:

- How does openness impact the traditional hierarchical structure of firms? Does it lead to more decentralized forms of organization?
- How does openness influence the role of middle management?
- What are the implications of openness for human resource management practices, such as talent acquisition, development, and retention?
- How does openness affect decision-making processes within firms?
- How does a firm's increasing openness lead to changes in its processes and structures for external collaboration?
- How has inbound and outbound licensing changed how firms are structured and internally cooperate?
- How can novel, digitally-generated databases explain how openness is impacting firm organizations and processes?

Meanwhile, research on industry-level impacts might include:

- How does openness reshape industry boundaries and create new opportunities for inter-industry collaboration?
- What are the implications of openness for industry dynamics, such as competition, cooperation, and innovation ecosystems?
- How does openness affect the role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in innovation processes?
- How has outbound licensing changed how firms orchestrate ecosystems of partners?
- How can emerging data analytics techniques (e.g., machine learning and natural language processing) explain changes in the nature and relationships of firms in an industry or ecosystem?
- How has the rise of openness affected the policy levers and success measures for promoting innovation and economic development?
- How can openness be a source of regional or national (dis)advantage? (Heikkilä, 2025)

Given potential confounding influences during this era of openness, we encourage the use of evidence and research designs that will potentially mitigate such confounds.

For managers, such research can improve decisions about partner selection, resource allocation, and knowledge management, as well organizational design, business models, and innovation management. For policymakers, it can suggest opportunities to foster the creation of innovative firms, industries, and ecosystems. For researchers, it will identify new concepts and measures of the impact of openness, as well as potential moderators of success at the innovation, product, division, or firm level.

Authors should keep in mind the journal's unique audience and its goal to provide "evidence-based research that inspires, informs, and empowers stewards of modern organization" by

disseminating ideas “that engage scholars, educate students, and contribute to the practice of management.” Submissions should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words for the body of the article, and should conform to the journal’s other editorial guidelines provided by <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/resources/submit>

Special Issue Conference and Schedule

A festschrift conference honoring Henry Chesbrough and his career will be held April 20-21, 2026 in Rome, hosted by Luiss Business School. This conference will serve as a paper development workshop for all submissions to this special issue.

The CMR track at the conference will include research presentations on a variety of topics related to Chesbrough’s research (including open innovation, open business models, and open strategy) and is intended both to develop individual papers and foster cross-pollination and shared understanding between the participants.

All papers intended for the special issue must be submitted to the conference via the conference website (www.chesbrough2026.com). Additional information about the conference and the submission process can be found on the website.

January 2, 2026	Conference submission system opens
February 1, 2026	Deadline for electronic submission of papers to the conference
March 1, 2026	Notification of authors regarding acceptance to the conference
April 20-21, 2026	Special Issue Conference held at Luiss Business School
August 1, 2026	Deadline for emailing revised papers to guest editors
Fall 2027	Publication date for special issue of <i>California Management Review</i>

While conference submissions will be managed by the guest editors using the conference submission system, all subsequent submissions will be managed through the journal’s website. **Do not submit your paper through the California Management Review’s online platform unless you’ve received a personalized invitation link to do so.**

Further Information

Please feel free to contact the corresponding guest editor* at CMR@chesbrough2026.com or any of the other guest editors:

- Oliver Alexy, Technische Universität München
- Marcus Holgersson*, Chalmers University of Technology
- Christopher Tucci, Imperial College London and NEOM
- Wim Vanhaverbeke, Antwerp Management School
- Joel West, Hildegard College

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