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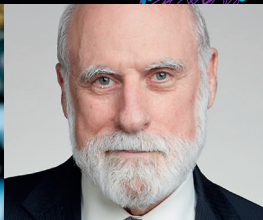
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THE POWER
OF ECOSYSTEMS

MANAGING IN A NETWORKED WORLD

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Father of the Internet

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Professor, HBS

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Digital Anthropologist

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Zhang Ruimin
CEO, Haier Group

Raj Sisodia
Professor, Babson College

Young Sohn
President Samsung Electronics

Amy Webb
Founder, Future Today Institute

Arthur Yeung
Senior Advisor, Tencent Holdings Ltd.

INTRODUCTION TO THE
11TH GLOBAL PETER DRUCKER FORUM 2019

by Richard Straub

Ecosystems are everywhere, not confined to natural environments — increasingly, we see businesses, public sector institutions, and third-sector organizations all moving beyond their traditional operational borders and creating or participating in new, flexible, and adaptive networks of enterprises jointly pursuing ambitious purposes. There are the ecosystems of developers that have been mobilized by powerful tech firms such as Microsoft and Apple; the innovation clusters embedded in certain geographic ecosystems; and the legions of lean, agile organizations that have proliferated as large infrastructure builders provide robust platforms. Long before these recent developments, Peter Drucker recognized that complementary organizations and institutions together make up a „social ecology"— a complex adaptive system that is new and man-made — in which entities of all sizes and strategies interact and operate in an increasingly fast changing and complex environment. In today's digitally enabled markets, Drucker's concept of a social, business ecology has become full-blown reality. With a new "nervous system" provided by digital networks and increasing machine intelligence, pioneering players such as Amazon, Alibaba, Tencent, and Google — as well as long-established companies such as BMW, Haier, Novo Nordisk, and Rio Tinto — are engaging in the new leadership imperative to leverage sprawling commercial ecosystems.

The 11th Drucker Forum will enlighten and equip leaders across economic sectors facing the growing opportunities and challenges of business ecosystems.
Discussions will address key questions such as

- What does it mean to be an effective leader in a business ecosystem? What new competencies are required in these more ambiguous and richly connected environments?

- As advanced digital technologies such as AI, machine learning, and the internet of things spread, how will business ecosystems evolve?

- What governance mechanisms make sense for ecosystems?

- Are there different types of business ecosystems and, if so, what are their distinguishing characteristics?

- Under what conditions do productive ecosystems emerge? What role should the state play as facilitator and/or regulator?

- Can more generative ecosystems be designed or can they only be cultivated?

- Is any business an island? Must every manager think more expansively about achieving performance gains?

- How should a company's broader ecosystem influence its own organizational design? In an era of networks and platforms, do we need a new "theory of the firm"?

- How do the competitive dynamics of ecosystems complicate strategy development and execution?

- Is management theory and practice keeping pace with the rapid emergence of complex business ecosystems? Do we have the concepts and tools to cope with—or better, to capitalize on—the shift?