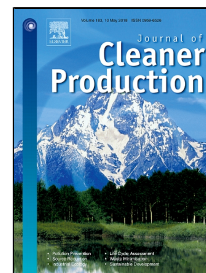


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Corporate-Entrepreneur Collaborations to Advance a Circular Economy

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This paper examines the role of small entrepreneurial companies and their partnerships with large corporations to advance the circular economy (CE). The authors provide insights from a U.S.-based empirical study that involved 12 companies and examined the emerging drivers, current challenges and future opportunities for advancing waste repurposing and product reuse. Many large companies fail to incorporate CE principles into their business strategy due to lack of mandates, costs, logistical hurdles and inertia. This presents an opportunity for entrepreneurial companies with innovative business models to fill the gap and provide critical links for corporations in reverse supply chains while creating new business opportunities with social benefits. The study found that despite the lack of federal regulations in the U.S. a growing number of corporations are partnering with entrepreneurs to reduce waste and advance product reuse. Key drivers for such trends include sustainability commitments and zero waste goals by companies and municipalities, European Union and U.S. state mandates, reputation and the growing focus on local sourcing. Technology, knowledge, and strategic partnerships between entrepreneurs and corporations play a critical role in reducing financial costs, time, energy, environmental impacts and resources, thus helping establish viable business models. The authors propose a new framework for corporate-entrepreneur collaborations to advance a CE. The study contributes to the research on the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and the development of CE principles within corporate supply chains, a field that is still in its infant stage.

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