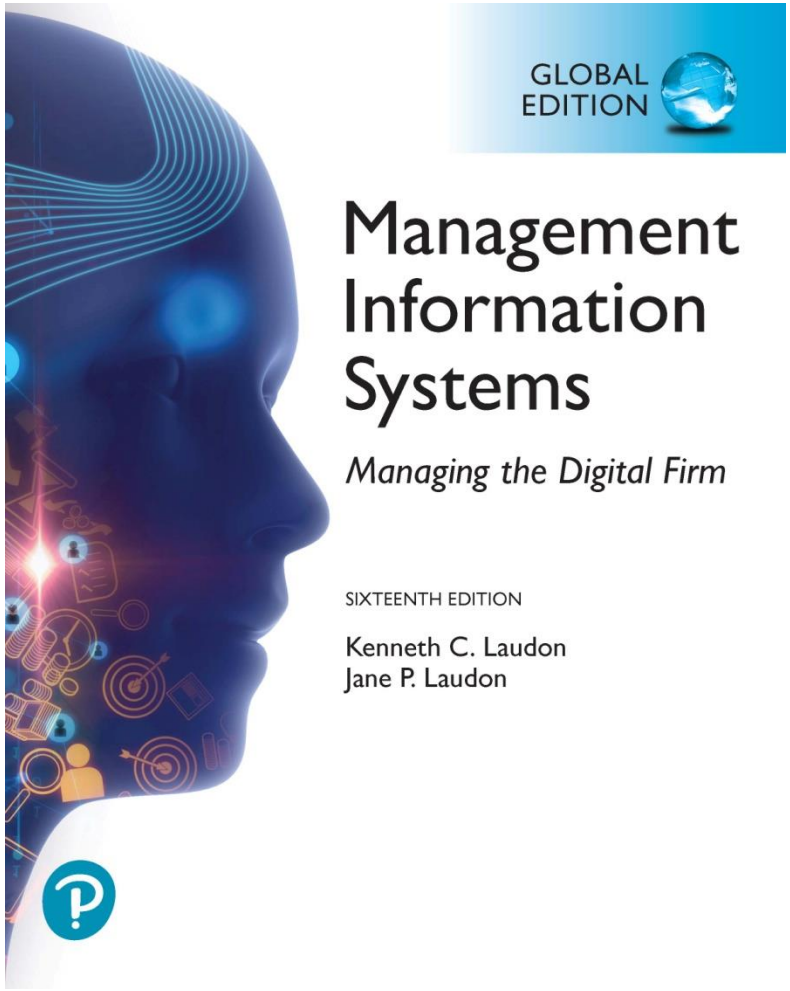
Management Information Systems: Managing the Digital Firm

Sixteenth Edition • Global Edition



Chapter 3

Information Systems, Organizations, and Strategy

Pearson

Learning Objectives

3.1 Which features of organizations do managers need to know about to build and use information systems successfully?

3.2 What is the impact of information systems on organizations?

3.3 How do Porter's competitive forces model, the value chain model, synergies, core competencies, and network economics help companies develop competitive strategies using information systems?

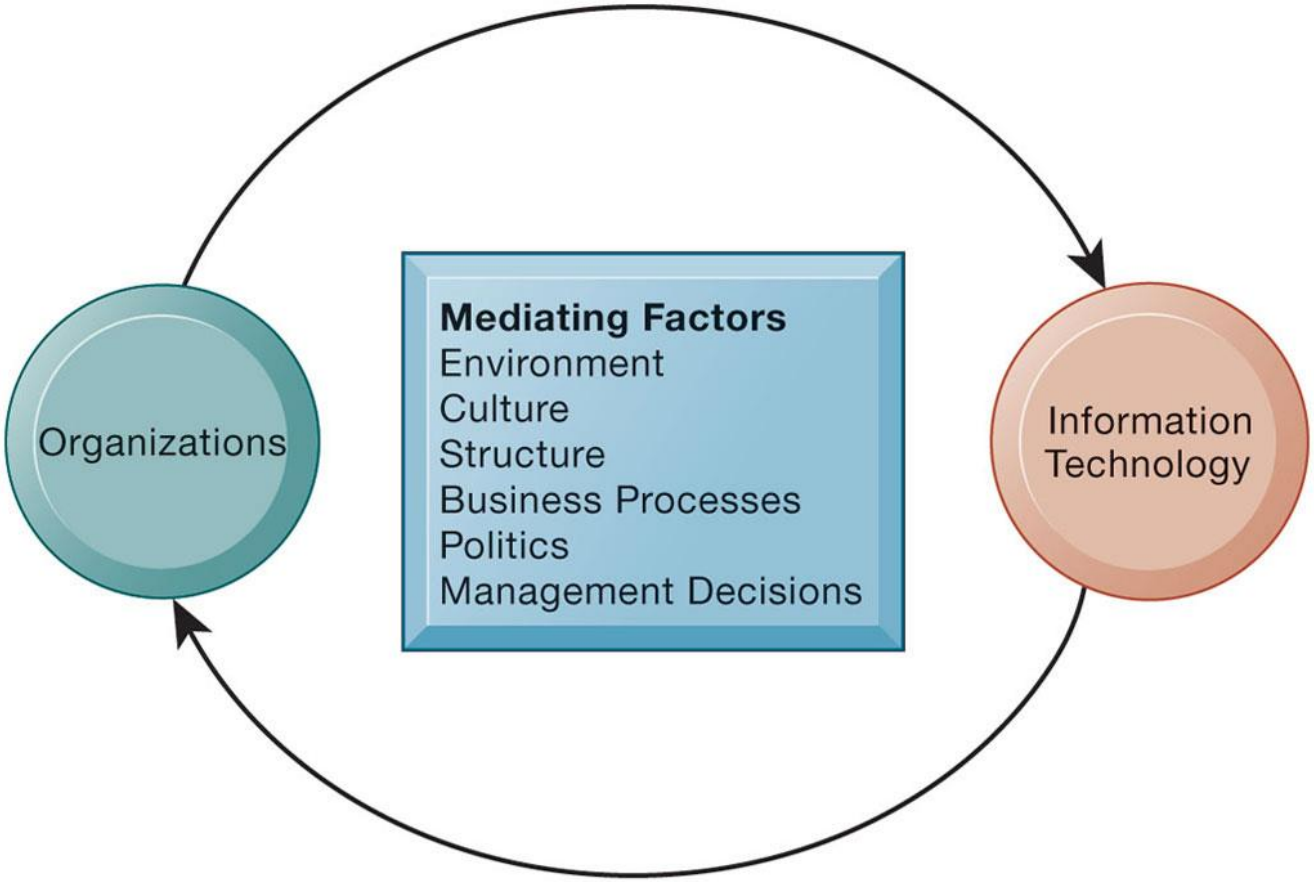
3.4 What are the challenges posed by strategic information systems, and how should they be addressed?

3.5 How will MIS help my career?

The Relationship Between Organizations and Information Technology

- Information technology and organizations influence each other
  - Relationship influenced by organization's
    - Structure
    - Business processes
    - Politics
    - Culture
    - Environment
    - Management decisions

Figure 3.1 The Two-Way Relationship Between Organizations and Information Technology



What Is an Organization?

- **Technical definition**
  - Formal social structure that processes resources from environment to produce outputs
  - A formal legal entity with internal rules and procedures, as well as a social structure

- **Behavioral definition**
  - A collection of rights, privileges, obligations, and responsibilities that is delicately balanced over a period of time through conflict and conflict resolution

Figure 3.2 The Technical Microeconomic Definition of the Organization

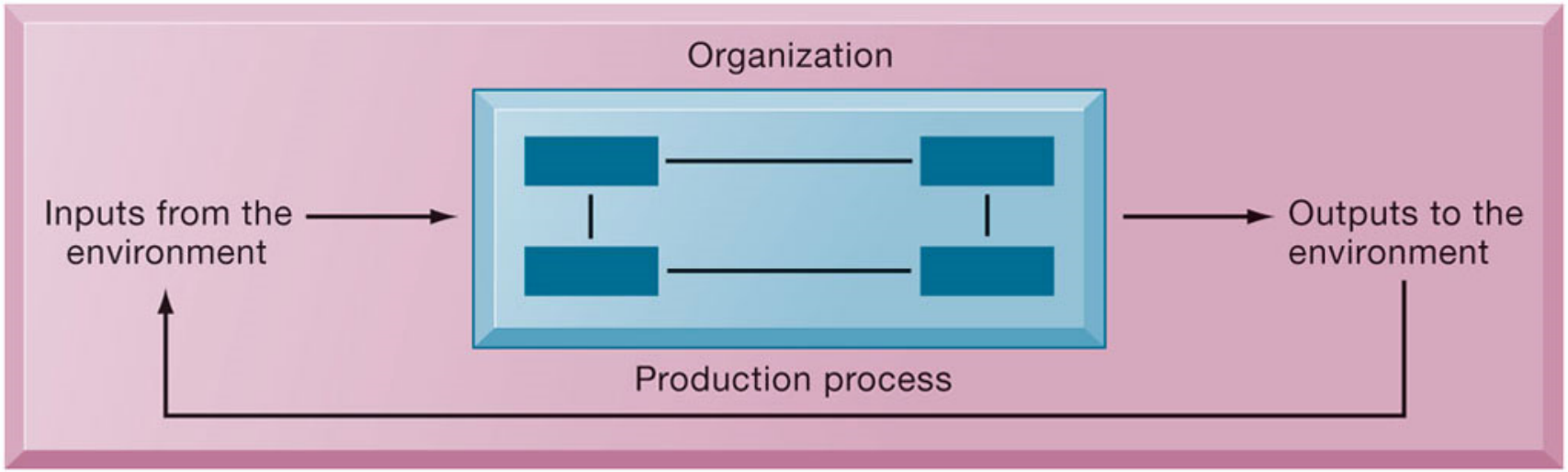
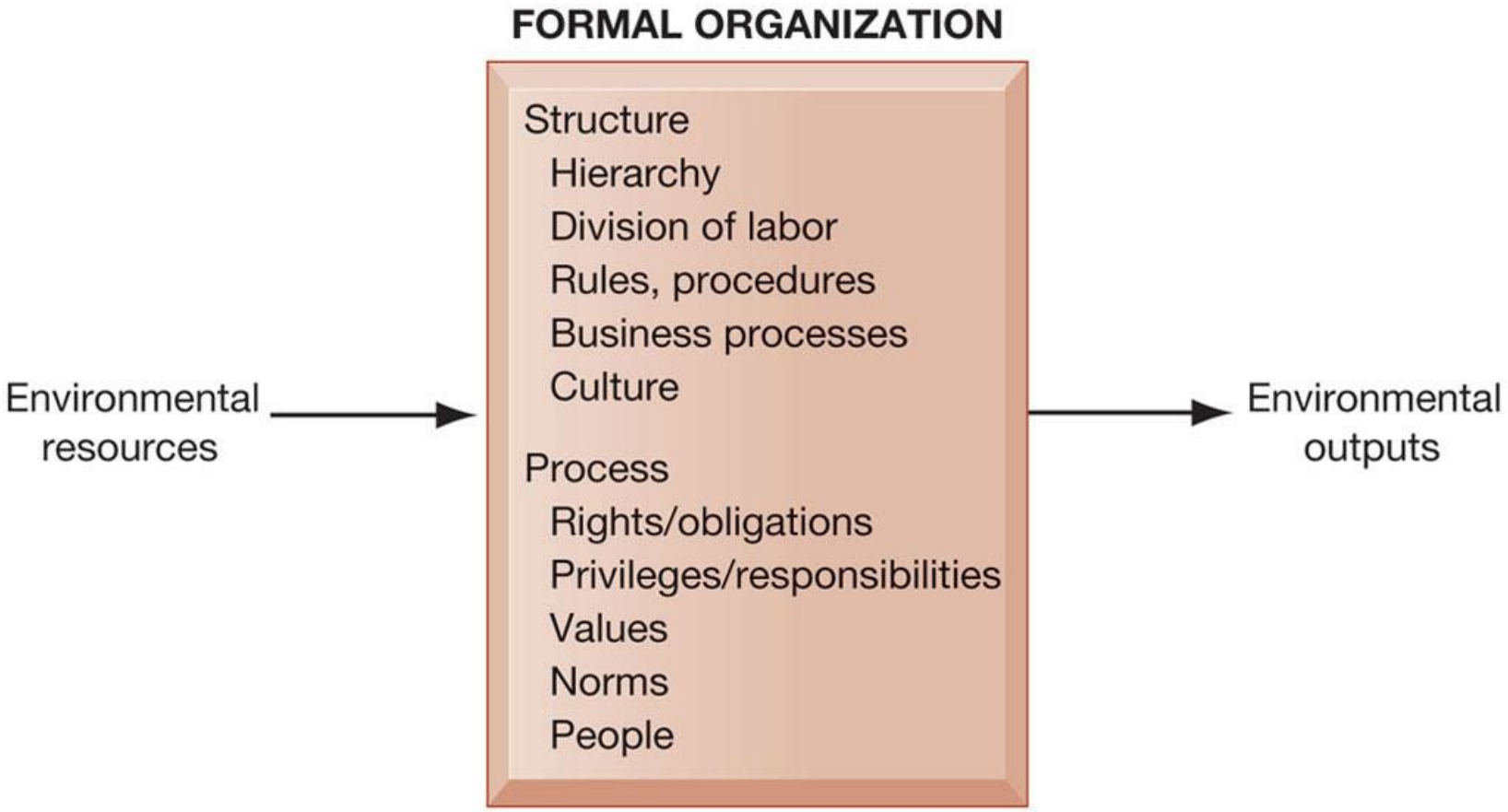


Figure 3.3 The Behavioral View of Organizations



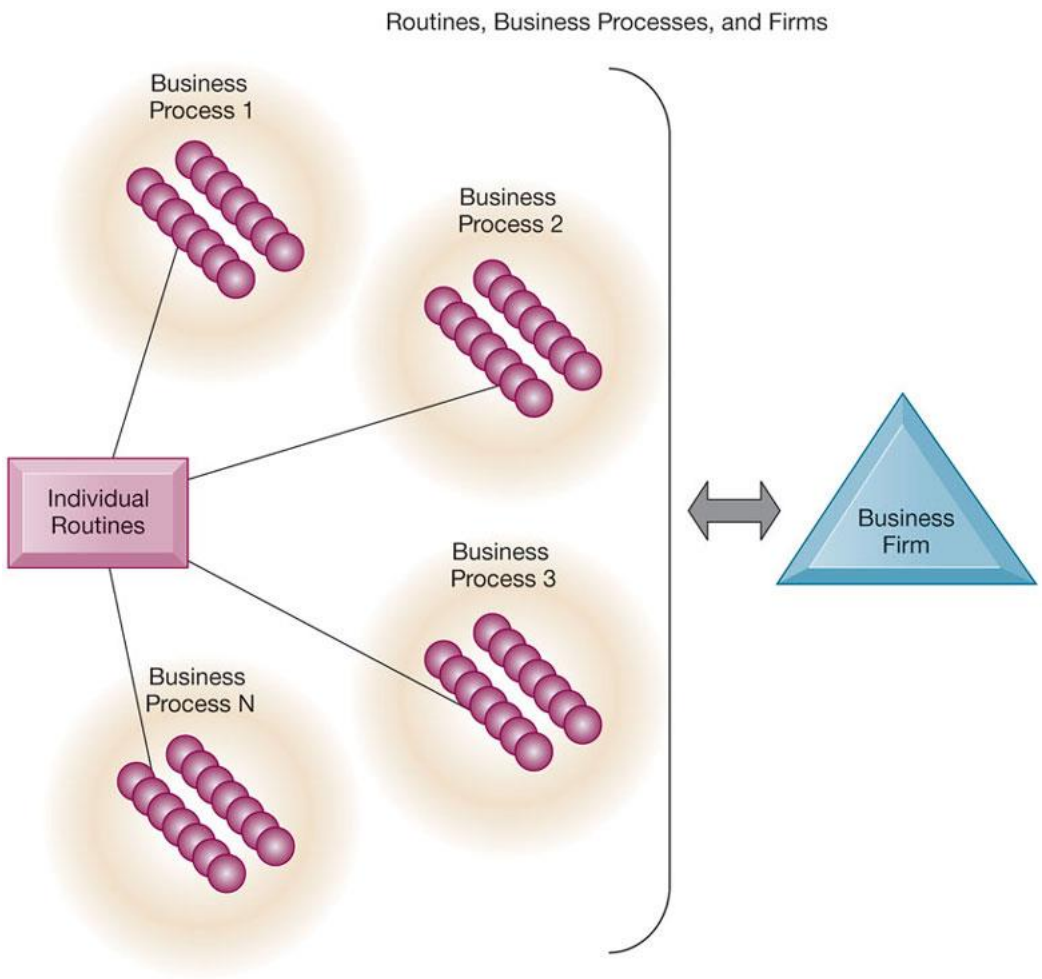
Features of Organizations

- Use of hierarchical structure
- Accountability, authority in system of impartial decision making
- Adherence to principle of efficiency
- Routines and business processes
- Organizational politics, culture, environments, and structures

Routines and Business Processes

- Routines (standard operating procedures)
  - Precise rules, procedures, and practices developed to cope with virtually all expected situations
- Business processes: Collections of routines
- Business firm: Collection of business processes

Figure 3.4 Routines, Business Processes, and Firms



Organizational Politics

- Divergent viewpoints lead to political struggle, competition, and conflict

- Political resistance greatly hampers organizational change

Organizational Culture

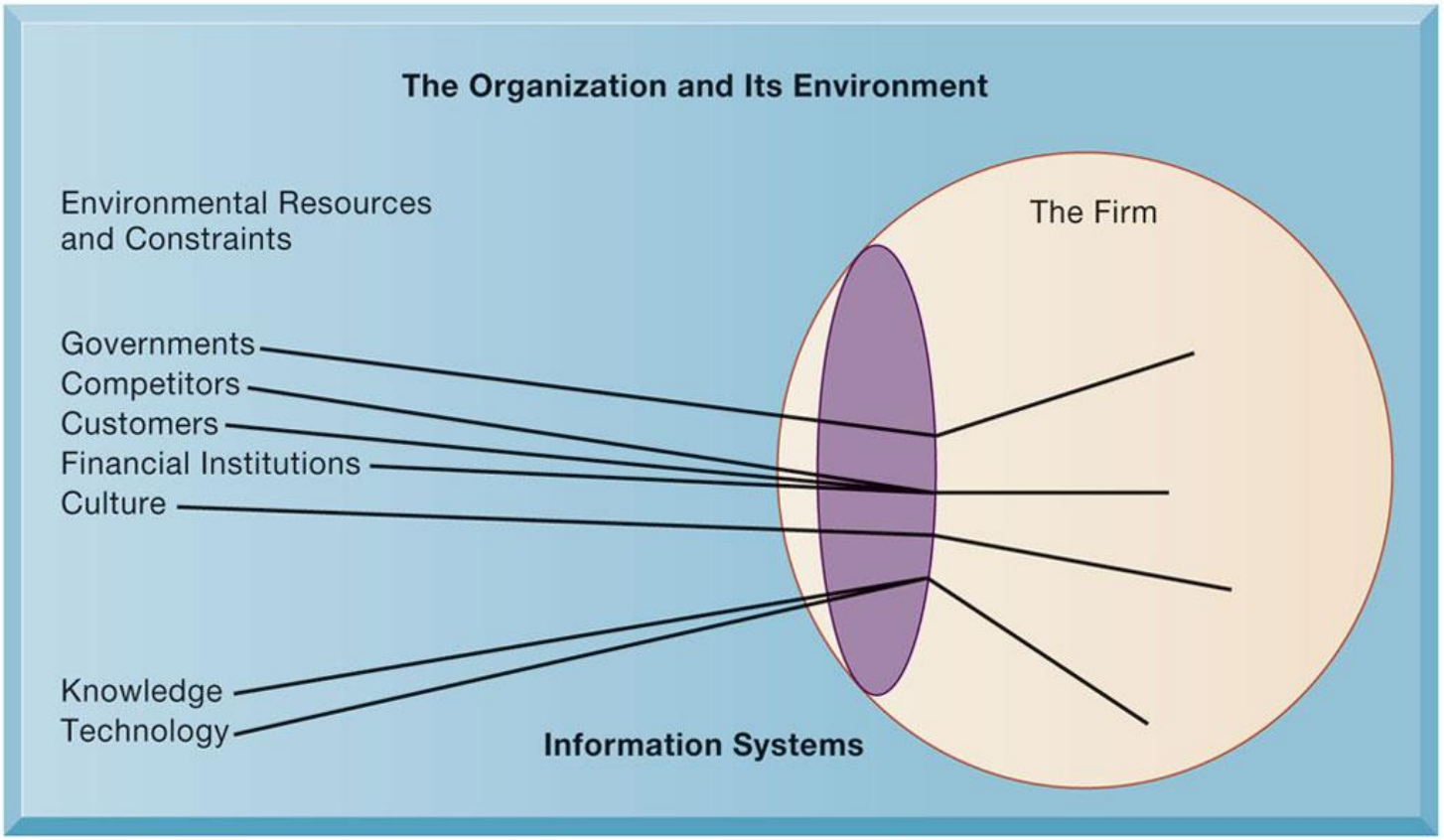
- Encompasses set of assumptions that define goal and product
  - What products the organization should produce
  - How and where it should be produced
  - For whom the products should be produced

- May be powerful unifying force as well as restraint on change

Organizational Environments

- Organizations and environments have a reciprocal relationship
- Organizations are open to, and dependent on, the social and physical environment
- Organizations can influence their environments
- Environments generally change faster than organizations
- Information systems can be instrument of environmental scanning, act as a lens

Figure 3.5 Environments and Organizations Have a Reciprocal Relationship



Disruptive Technologies

- Substitute products that perform as well as or better than existing product
- Technology that brings sweeping change to businesses, industries, markets
- Examples: personal computers, smartphones, Big Data, artificial intelligence, the Internet
- First movers and fast followers
  - First movers—inventors of disruptive technologies
  - Fast followers—firms with the size and resources to capitalize on that technology

Organizational Structure

- Five basic kinds of organizational structure (Mintzberg)
  - Entrepreneurial
  - Machine bureaucracy
  - Divisionalized bureaucracy
  - Professional bureaucracy
  - Adhocracy

- Information system often reflects organizational structure

Other Organizational Features

- Goals
  - Coercive, utilitarian, normative, and so on
- Constituencies
- Leadership styles
- Types of tasks
- Different environments

Economic Impacts

- IT changes relative costs of capital and the costs of information
- Information systems technology is a factor of production, like capital and labor
- IT affects the cost and quality of information and changes economics of information
  - Information technology helps firms contract in size because it can reduce transaction costs (the cost of participating in markets)
    - Outsourcing

Transaction Cost Theory

- Firms seek to economize on transaction costs (the costs of participating in markets)
  - Vertical integration, hiring more employees, buying suppliers and distributors

- IT lowers market transaction costs, making it worthwhile for firms to transact with other firms rather than grow the number of employees

Agency Theory

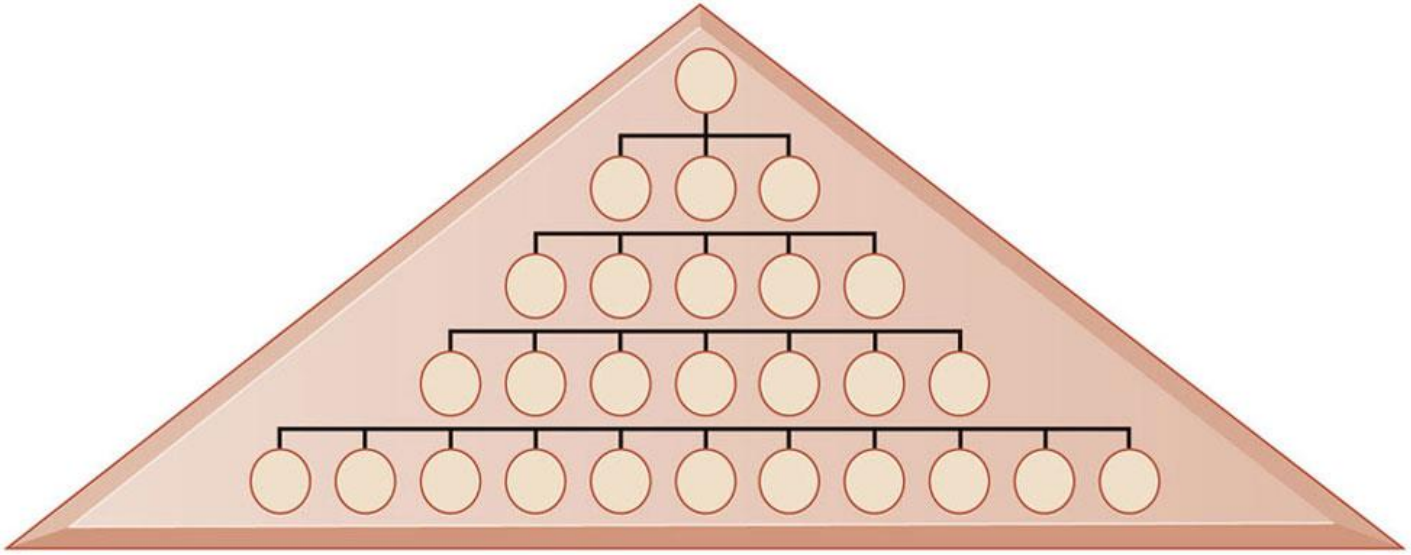
- Firm is nexus of contracts among self-interested parties requiring supervision
- Firms experience agency costs (the cost of managing and supervising) which rise as firm grows
- IT can reduce agency costs, making it possible for firms to grow without adding to the costs of supervising, and without adding employees

Organizational and Behavioral Impacts

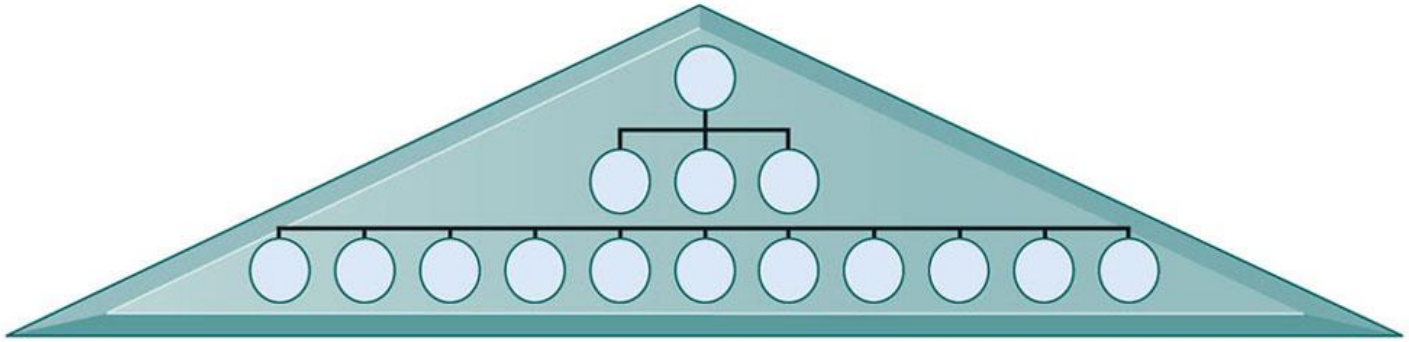
- IT flattens organizations
  - Decision making is pushed to lower levels
  - Fewer managers are needed (IT enables faster decision making and increases span of control)

- Postindustrial organizations
  - Organizations flatten because in postindustrial societies, authority increasingly relies on knowledge and competence rather than formal positions

Figure 3.6 Flattening Organizations



A traditional hierarchical organization with many levels of management

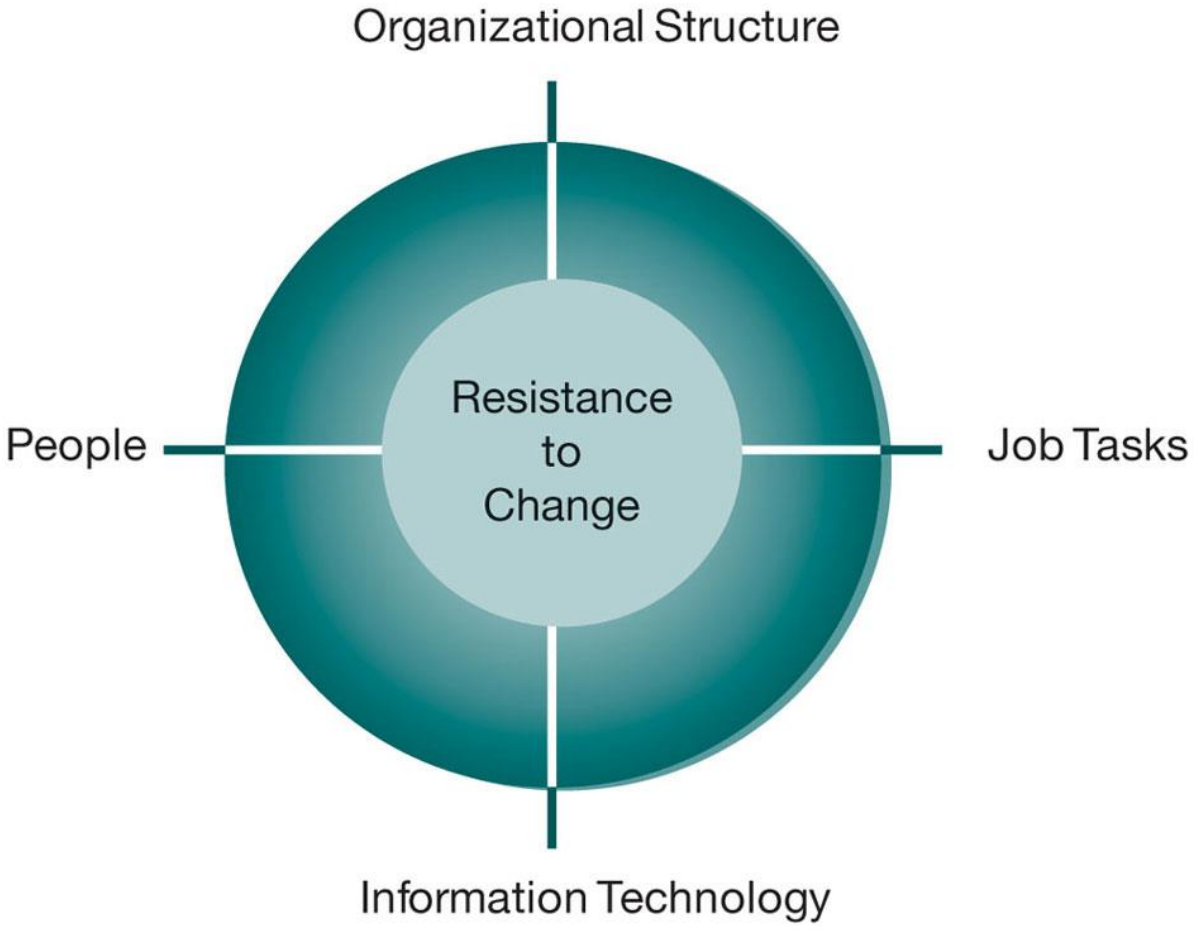


An organization that has been “flattened” by removing layers of management

Understanding Organizational Resistance to Change

- Information systems become bound up in organizational politics because they influence access to a key resource—information
- Information systems potentially change an organization's structure, culture, politics, and work
- Four factors
  - Nature of the innovation
  - Structure of organization
  - Culture of organization
  - Tasks affected by innovation

Figure 3.7 Organizational Resistance to Information System Innovations



The Internet and Organizations

- The Internet increases the accessibility, storage, and distribution of information and knowledge for organizations

- The Internet can greatly lower transaction and agency costs
  - Example: Large firm delivers internal manuals to employees via a corporate website, saving millions of dollars in distribution costs

Implications for the Design and Understanding of Information Systems

- Organizational factors in planning a new system:
  - Environment
  - Structure
    - Hierarchy, specialization, routines, business processes
  - Culture and politics
  - Type of organization and style of leadership
  - Main interest groups affected by system; attitudes of end users
  - Tasks, decisions, and business processes the system will assist

Porter's Competitive Forces Model (1 of 3)

- Why do some firms become leaders in their industry?
- Michael Porter's competitive forces model
  - Provides general view of firm, its competitors, and environment
- Five competitive forces shape fate of firm:
  - Traditional competitors
  - New market entrants
  - Substitute products and services
  - Customers
  - Suppliers

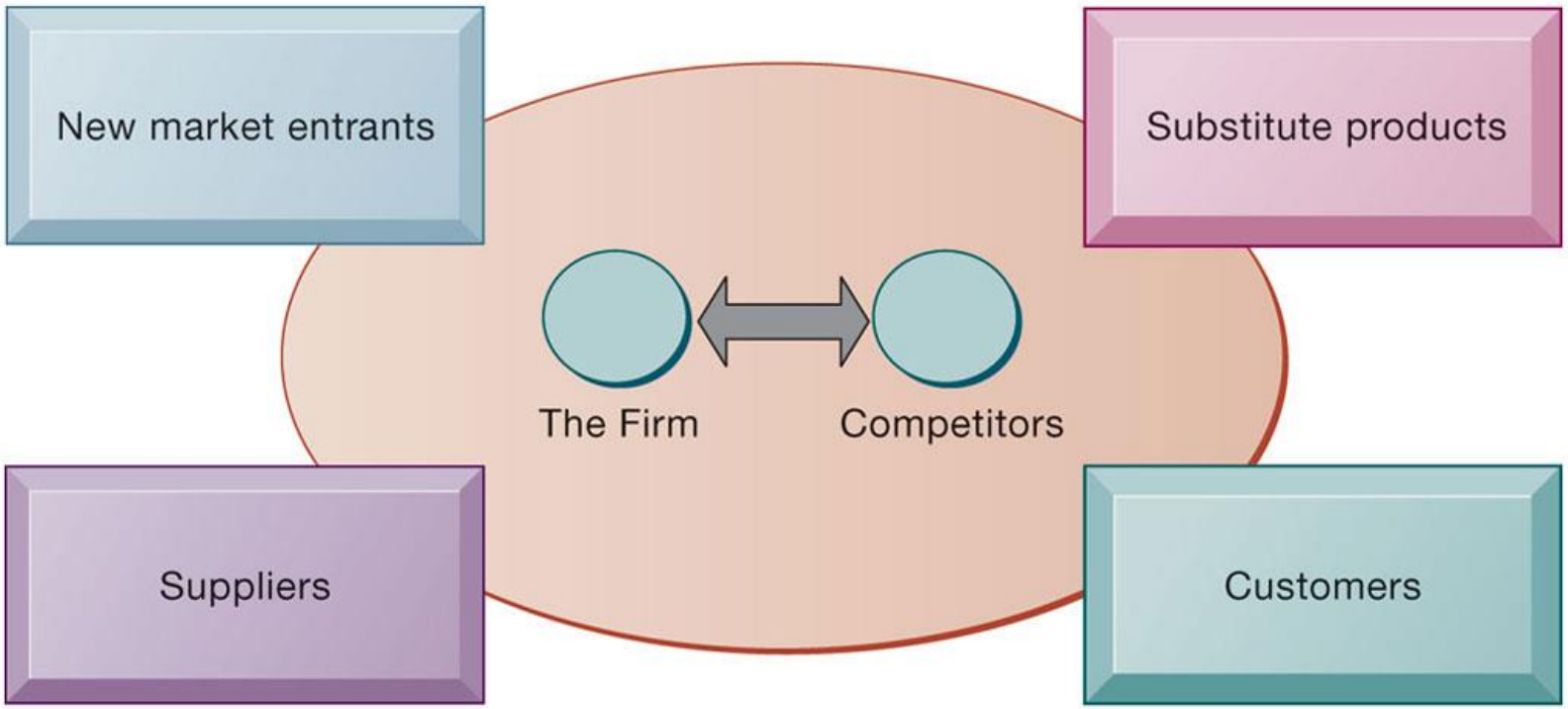
Porter's Competitive Forces Model (2 of 3)

- Traditional competitors
  - All firms share market space with competitors who are continuously devising new products, services, efficiencies, and switching costs
- New market entrants
  - Some industries have high barriers to entry, for example, computer chip business
  - New companies have new equipment, younger workers, but little brand recognition

Porter's Competitive Forces Model (3 of 3)

- Substitute products and services
  - Substitutes customers might use if your prices become too high, for example, iTunes substitutes for CDs
- Customers
  - Can customers easily switch to competitor's products? Can they force businesses to compete on price alone in transparent marketplace?
- Suppliers
  - Market power of suppliers when firm cannot raise prices as fast as suppliers

Figure 3.8 Porter's Competitive Forces Model



Information System Strategies for Dealing with Competitive Forces (1 of 3)

- Four generic strategies for dealing with competitive forces, enabled by using IT:
  - Low-cost leadership
  - Product differentiation
  - Focus on market niche
  - Strengthen customer and supplier intimacy

Information System Strategies for Dealing with Competitive Forces (2 of 3)

- Low-cost leadership
  - Produce products and services at a lower price than competitors
  - Example: Walmart's efficient customer response system
- Product differentiation
  - Enable new products or services, greatly change customer convenience and experience
  - Example: Google, Nike, Apple
  - Mass customization

Information System Strategies for Dealing with Competitive Forces (3 of 3)

- Focus on market niche
  - Use information systems to enable a focused strategy on a single market niche; specialize
  - Example: Hilton Hotels' OnQ system
- Strengthen customer and supplier intimacy
  - Use information systems to develop strong ties and loyalty with customers and suppliers
  - Increase switching costs
  - Examples: Chrysler, Amazon, Starbucks

The Internet's Impact on Competitive Advantage

- Transformation or threat to some industries
  - Examples: travel agency, printed encyclopedia, media
- Competitive forces still at work, but rivalry more intense
- Universal standards allow new rivals, entrants to market
- New opportunities for building brands and loyal customer bases

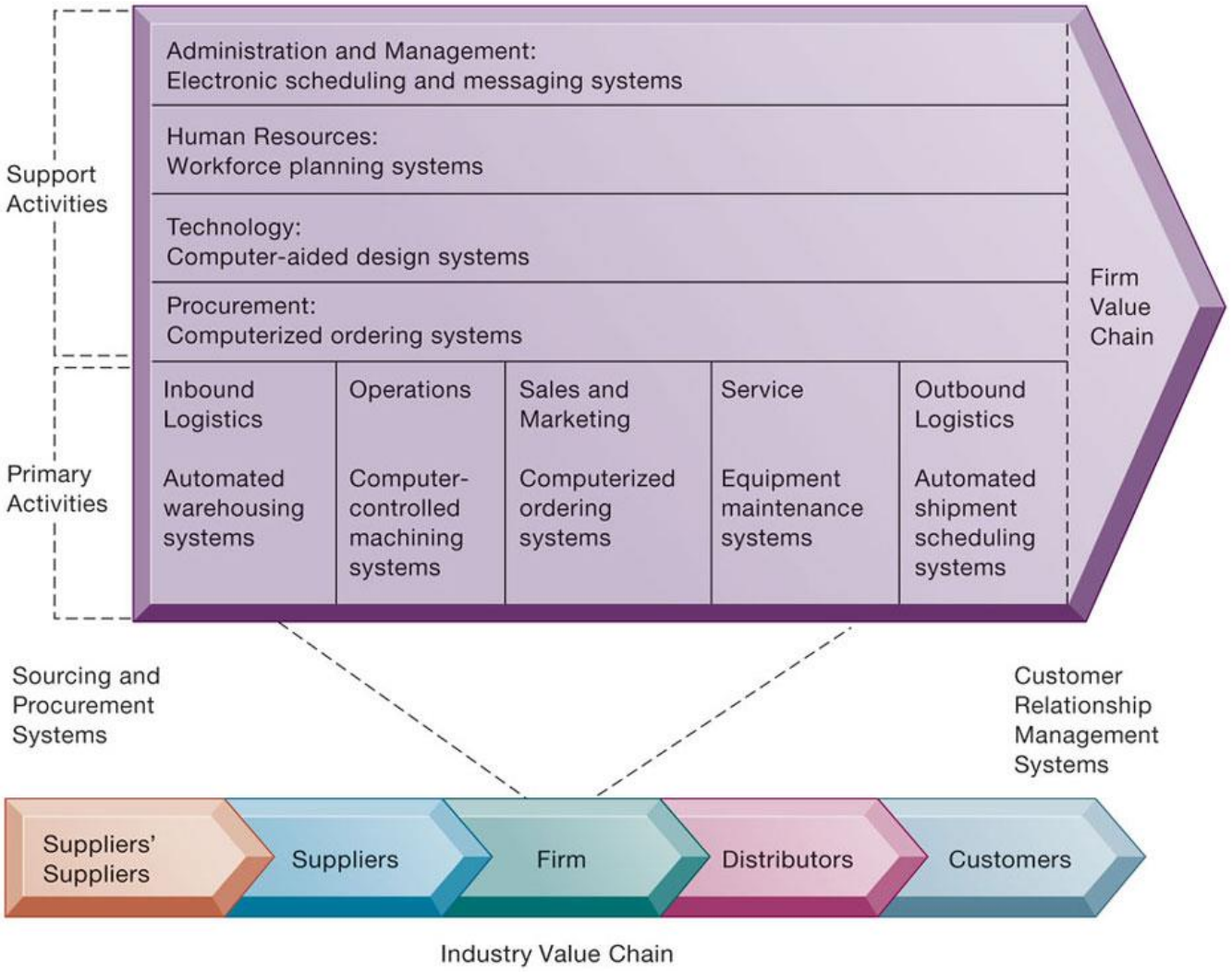
Smart Products and the Internet of Things

- Internet of Things (IoT)
  - Growing use of Internet-connected sensors in products
- Smart products
  - Fitness equipment, health trackers
- Expand product differentiation opportunities
  - Increasing rivalry between competitors
- Raise switching costs
- Inhibit new entrants
- May decrease power of suppliers

The Business Value Chain Model

- Firm as series of activities that add value to products or services
- Highlights activities where competitive strategies can best be applied
  - Primary activities vs. support activities
- At each stage, determine how information systems can improve operational efficiency and improve customer and supplier intimacy
- Utilize benchmarking, industry best practices

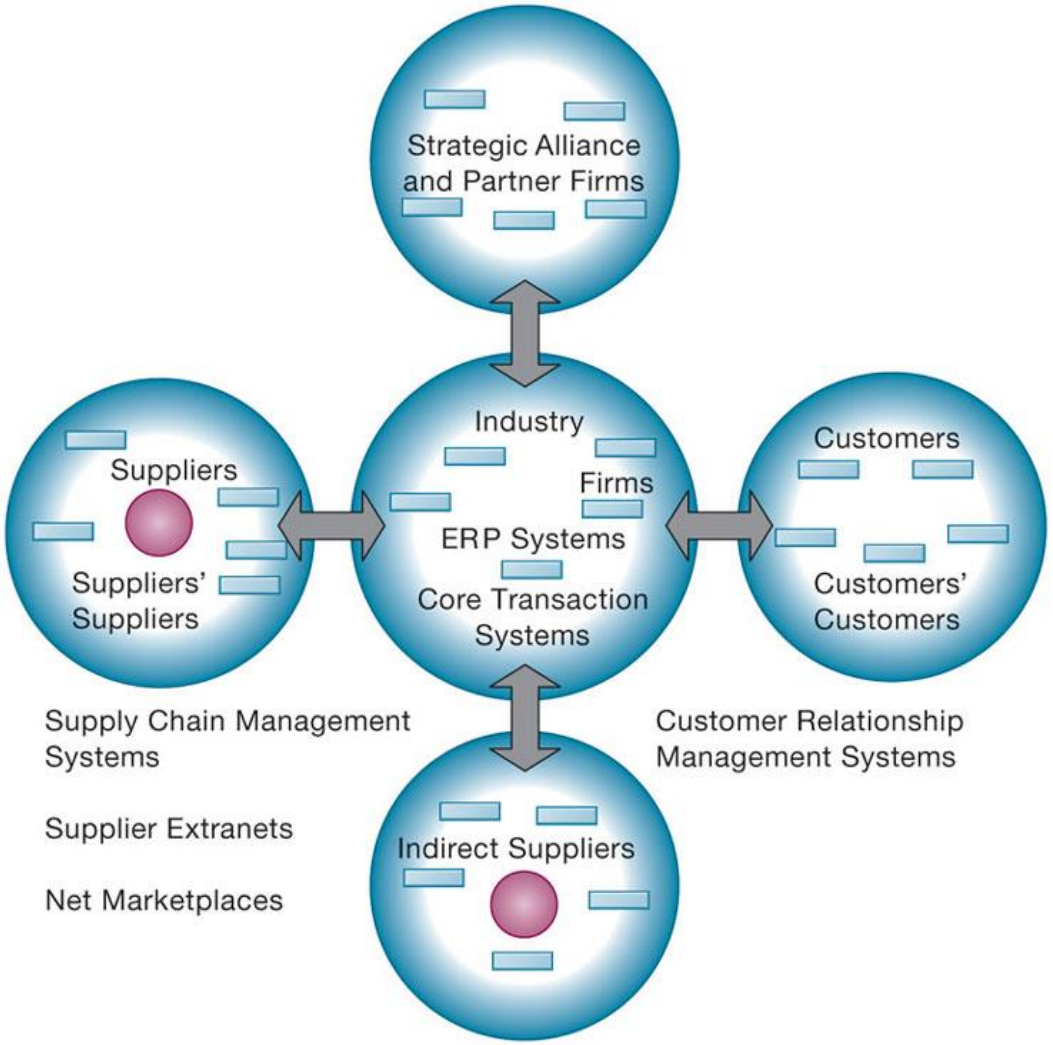
Figure 3.9 The Value Chain Model



Extending the Value Chain: The Value Web

- Firm's value chain is linked to value chains of suppliers, distributors, customers
- Industry value chain
- Value web
  - Collection of independent firms using highly synchronized IT to coordinate value chains to produce product or service collectively
  - More customer driven, less linear operation than traditional value chain

Figure 3.10 The Value Web



Synergies

- When output of some units are used as inputs to others, or organizations pool markets and expertise
- Example: merger of Bank of NY and JP Morgan Chase
- Purchase of YouTube by Google

Core Competencies

- Activity for which firm is world-class leader
- Relies on knowledge, experience, and sharing this across business units
- Example: Procter & Gamble's intranet and directory of subject matter experts

Network-Based Strategies

- Take advantage of firm's abilities to network with one another
- Include use of:
  - Network economics
  - Virtual company model
  - Business ecosystems

Network Economics

- Marginal cost of adding new participant almost zero, with much greater marginal gain
- Value of community grows with size
- Value of software grows as installed customer base grows
- Compare to traditional economics and law of diminishing returns

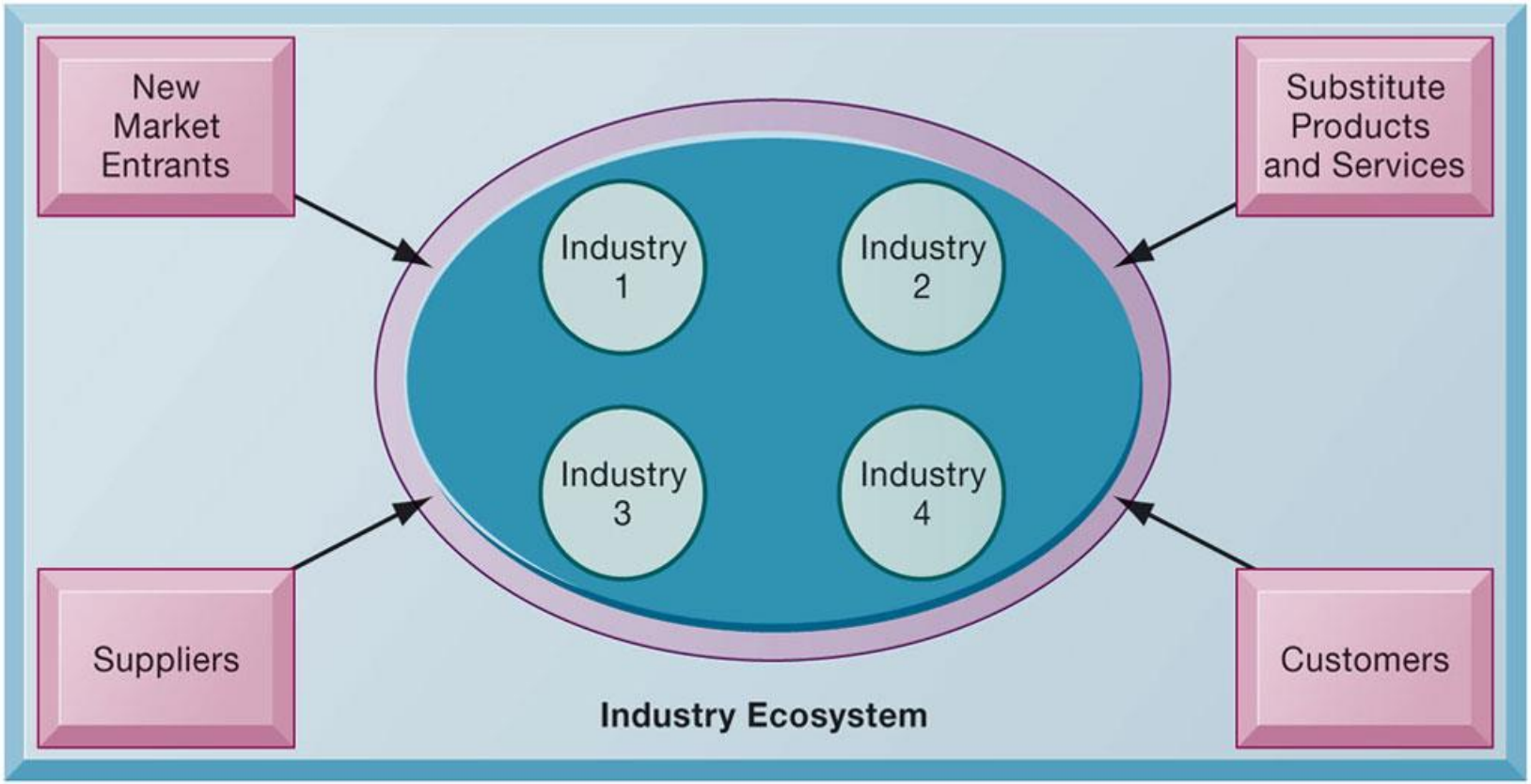
Virtual Company Model

- Virtual company
  - Uses networks to ally with other companies
  - Creates and distributes products without being limited by traditional organizational boundaries or physical locations
  - Example: Li & Fung
    - Manages production, shipment of garments for major fashion companies
    - Outsources all work to thousands of suppliers

Business Ecosystems and Platforms

- Industry sets of firms providing related services and products
- Platforms
  - Microsoft, Facebook
- Keystone firms
- Niche firms
- Individual firms can consider how IT will help them become profitable niche players in larger ecosystems

Figure 3.11 An Ecosystem Strategic Model



Challenges Posed by Strategic Information Systems

- Sustaining competitive advantage
  - Competitors can retaliate and copy strategic systems
  - Systems may become tools for survival
- Aligning IT with business objectives
  - Performing strategic systems analysis
    - Structure of industry
    - Firm value chains
- Managing strategic transitions
  - Adopting strategic systems requires changes in business goals, relationships with customers and suppliers, and business processes

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