

Enabling Open Innovation with Strategic Roadmapping. Intercos case study

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Open Innovation is currently one of the most debated topics in management literature. Nevertheless, there are still many unanswered questions in Open Innovation research. Especially one issue requires further investigation: how firms implement Open Innovation in practice. The paper addresses this topic by studying, through an in-depth case study, the journey that an Italian Company has undergone to move from a Closed to an Open Innovation paradigm.

The paper shows that the Open Innovation paradigm is implemented along a three-phase process that comprises the stages of unfreezing (understand and accept the need), moving (find a right commitment and motivation to proceed in opening boundaries) and institutionalising (study and implement a procedure to govern the Open Innovation process). Moreover, it emerges that the changes through which Open Innovation has been implemented involve culture, procedures and skills.

Companies can take different routes to OI, depending on what is driving the impetus to adopt OI in the first place. The approach for most companies is either a top-down, strategically-driven process or one that evolves more naturally from the bottom-up. This paper focuses predominantly on the second model and, in particular, the impetus from R&D department.

Open Innovation is transforming the nature of commercial development. To compete effectively in today's business environment, firms are using strategic alliances to link their resources with the complementary resources of other world-class organizations. They are replacing the "not invented here" syndrome with the "invented anywhere approach". Unfortunately, many alliances fail. Managers must deal with the complexities of allocating rights to jointly developed intellectual assets, protecting proprietary know-how and trade secrets, linking decision-making structures and utilizing financial models that allow both firms to share the risks as well as rewards of collaboration.

In the last decades, Companies utilize more and more often intermediaries to search and solve their

innovation problems not only in a technological way. Open innovation intermediaries are increasingly growing and changing the market profoundly.

The objective of this study is to show and discuss one of intermediation technique that we, as intermediaries often use to help companies applying Open Innovation. This method gives particular emphasis on effectiveness, characteristics, challenges and market implications. Based on the “*Want, Find, Get, Manage*” *Model* ® theorized by Gene Slowinski (2004) the methodology exposed in this paper, shows how we help to solve managerial challenges in Open Innovation.

We identified in companies four recurring challenges: (1) enlisting internal scientists to work with the innovation intermediary; (2) selecting the (right) problems to investigate; (3) formulating problems to enable novel solutions; (4) take action to proceed and identify, research and engage the potential partner. In this paper, in particular, we explain how to deal with challenge 4.

Over the last five years, we have developed a number of tools and management techniques to facilitate integrating the activities of partnering firms. All these tools focus on handling intellectual assets, integrating decision-making processes, and linking project management systems.

We present a case study with two companies that work with the same innovation issue. In particular, in this paper, is presented how to avoid the damages and delays arising from trial-and-error solutions: the best practice is to identify and solve differences through a “Structured Table of Work”, either at the end of phase *Find* or at the beginning of the *Get* phase.

This method helps to coordinate and integrate the partners’ resources to meet the specified objectives. A common challenge is ensuring that each firm’s team members understand who does what, what types of information must be exchanged, and how information exchange should be carried out.

The development and management of Open Innovation relationships may be the most complex set of organizational activities carried out on a regular basis. Managers must coordinate and integrate the resources of two firms, each with different embedded processes and systems, each with formal and informal reporting structures, and do it in a market-relevant time frame.

Finally, managing the relationship to succeed is not an ad hoc process. The normal skill sets of middle managers are necessary, but not sufficient to implement a collaborative relationship. Use the “Structured Table of Work” to build a common understanding of the relationship help partners understand conflict resolution techniques and employ them in the alliance.

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