
Successful managerial choices in innovation management: their socio-economic implications

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- 1 Although it was possible to identify different innovative strategies (see the works of Ansoff and Stewart on one side, or that one of Miles and Snow on the other) [1,2], innovation propensity was once essentially a characteristic of excellent Companies. In present times this is no more the case. Innovation is a very widespread strategy, defined and implemented by a lot of Companies struggling for maintaining their competitive position or even for survival.

Thus, while at those times innovation and success were more immediately linked (innovative Companies were almost naturally successful), in the modern competitive arena, we experience many cases of in Companies innovations not followed by success (see Teece for an early analysis of the reasons for this possible gap) [3]

What I want to suggest with this statement is that we need to shift our focus, as management scholars or practitioners, from Innovation Management per se to Successful Innovation Management.

- 2 The previous point implies a couple of matters. The first is the concept of success and its definition; the second is the identification of factors leading innovative processes to succeed.
 - 2.1 The concept of success in Innovation is not an easy one to define. No doubt that a multiperspective attitude must be adopted. There are, by consequence, multiple and different perspectives of evaluation of innovation activities, and likely, the most effective method is that one leading to a good balance among different points of view.

People, process, output, internal customers, external customers, society (environment) are considered to be main elements (perspectives) for the evaluation of success in Innovation (see the contribution of Schumann et al on a model for measuring R&D performance) [4].

From a more subjective point of view, in a Company arena, technologists, business leaders and entrepreneurs have different focuses in evaluating innovation success. More operationally and technically centred the first ones, economic results oriented the seconds, focused on global strategy and internal-external equilibrium the latters (Chiaromonte [5])

Furthermore there are at least two different levels: the evaluation of the success of an individual innovative project, and that one of the whole innovative organisation.

Both are relevant, but they answer to different needs and require different techniques; however they must be combined.

- 2.2 As far as the success factors are concerned, the work of Ch. Freeman with his Sappho Project constitutes a milestone [6]. Since then a lot of contributions have explored the area turning the attention from the individual factors to the concept of critical areas (for a review see Chiaromonte [7]).

Although also the first matter should be clarified and more deeply analysed, for obvious reasons of time and focus, our Workshop tried to shed lights on the second one (factors of success and critical areas). More specifically we focused on a peculiar issue: the managerial choices for successful innovation management. We consider this point extremely important, although somewhat underestimated in favour of more structural factors.

- 3 A step further in organising our Workshop has been the analysis of the implications of the identified managerial models. We focused on two main issues:

- social implications, that is to say the consequences of these models on human resources and their management, both from a quality of work point of view and from the employment perspective
- economic-managerial implications, that is to say the changes brought in the Companies organisation by the adoption of these models, and, at the same time, the organisational requirements needed to adopt these managerial models.

Shortly speaking this is the reasoning path we followed in organising our Workshop on “Successful managerial choices in Innovation Management: their socio-economic implications”.

The papers selected, for the publication of this Special Issue, mark, in my opinion, relevant steps in analysing the above areas; although with different and personal perspectives, belonging to the individual scholars that authored them.

We grouped these papers in two parts.

First one contains the contributions more oriented to discuss the relations between innovation management, human resources, culture and intellectual capital:

- Chiaromonte reports the findings of a research project on different models of innovation management and their implications on competitive advantage and employment
- Corti and Torello, starting from the importance of business ideas and their selection criteria, illustrates the experience of an Italian University in sustaining Academic Incubators of Business Idea
- Giardini and Kyllönen deal with the improvements that can be achieved by innovative Companies in innovation lead times and organisational climate with a smart HR policy
- Koponen, in a framework of a larger research on cultural differences, tests the hypothesis of a positive relation between innovativeness and cultural flexibility
- Pulic states that value creation is the core problem of modern Companies, and discusses the current methods for measuring the value creation efficiency of IC (Intellectual Capital).

The second part deals with the management and organisational implications of Innovation Management:

- Andreotti examines the structural problems implied by the development of global Companies, mainly focusing on Organisation, Work and Employment
- Berg et al. deals with R&D measurement problems, reporting the experience of four Companies in applying a QMM (Quality and Maturity Method)
- Bitran and Conn illustrate the SMART method for supporting strategic alliances
- Ishii et al. focuses on competitive power of different Innovation Management Systems
- Littler, reporting on an extensive research, discusses cooperation and networking among HighTech Companies.

References

- 1 Ansoff, H.I. and Stewart, J.M. (1967) *Strategies for a Technology-Based Business*, Harvard Business Review, No. 45.
- 2 Miles, R.E. and Snow, Q.C. (1978) *Organization Strategy, Structure and Process*, McGraw Hill, New York.
- 3 Teece, D.S. (1986) 'Profiting from technological innovation: implications for integration, collaboration, licensing and public policy', *Research Policy*, No. 15.
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- 5 Chiaromonte, F. (1999) 'International survey on strategic technology management and evaluation systems: a comparison between the experiences of German and Italian companies', *Research Report*, IRI Management, Rome.
- 6 Freeman, Ch. (1982) *The Economics of Industrial Innovation*, Pinter, London.
- 7 Chiaromonte, F. (1992) 'La gestione dell'Innovazione nella strategia delle imprese' *Giappichelli*, Torino.