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Business model for the university-industry collaboration in open innovation

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Abstract

The present paper proposes a preliminary business model for collaboration between universities and industrial partners (through projects). Imperatives and dimensions of this model are the analysis result of data obtained by observation applied to public information and market research. The study was conducted nationwide. This model is the companies' response to market demand. This model proposes a general framework for the creation of successful collaboration between universities and businesses. The industrial partners do not necessarily have all the competencies to perform each operation in-house for the development of competitive products. Therefore, collaboration with universities helps them in researching the problems that cannot be solved individually. In this sense, universities could be considered as partners for industries. The analysis undertaken shows that how the two entities, the university and industry collaborate, very much fits with the framework for collaboration shown. Although the open innovation model does not apply significantly and primarily in these entities, there is a high potential for its implementation and the creation of added value.

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1. Introduction

In the current competitive environment, companies must achieve a high level of performance, leading to the production of innovative products, rewarding customer needs and rapidly responding to market demands. In this

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direction of innovation, companies do not have all the needed skills to develop such products inside / in-house. Therefore, the best way of meeting these requirements is the collaboration between two or more partners. Depending on the type of activity, many other benefits of collaboration can be entered for each partner, such as: reducing costs, using a multidisciplinary approach, collaborators reputation, expertise in a particular field et al. (Draghici et al., 2015). Therefore collaboration between universities and the different actors of the economic environment leads to a series of benefits that have a favorable impact on business competitiveness. The university-industry collaboration (UIC) has gained widespread interest because of the high degree of innovation and economic growth ((Mitive, 2009; Guan and Zaho, 2013; Iqbal et al, 2015a, 2015b).

This paper proposes a business model for collaboration between universities and companies in open innovation in order to underline the way in which significant results are achieved. It presents an architecture for implementing open innovation in companies.

2. The theoretical framework of the proposal

Analysis of the research was conducted by three Romanian universities to identify collaboration practices with industry and partners from the economic environment in open innovation. The universities included in the research are: Politehnica University of Timisoara, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, and University of Oradea. Following the research, it was concluded that for the development of a model framework (Draghici et al., 2015) for effective collaboration between university-industry in open innovation, six key areas are followed:

1. Existence in the university of a well-defined *structure* that supports in an efficient manner research projects;
2. The presence of an effective *project management* and especially the communication and monitoring are well implemented;
3. Involvement of young researchers in identifying the *characteristics of the economic environment*;
4. Developing *new partnerships* and supporting existing projects to launch new opportunities.
5. *Organizational culture* is an important pillar in the openness that universities have toward collaboration with industry;
6. *Dissemination strategy* to be strengthened to share research and to use elements of marketing in order to attract new partners.

These directions reinforce the framework to be created between business, indicating that a standardized framework model of good practice for effective management of collaborations between academia and industry would provide concrete guidelines that could be applied to future research projects developed in collaboration.

Comparing organizational cultures in academia and industry has led to the systematization of the common guidelines presented in Table 1. Following the analysis carried out it was found that interactive behavior of institutions is largely guided by their organization principles. Analyzing classic academia and industry / industrial partners it is found that they operate in distinct organizational cultures which differ greatly in their underlying values, beliefs and processes (Ehrismann et al., 2015). The organizational culture of universities is based on tracking research directions based on discovery, with the objective to create knowledge, and to educate the workforce. It can be said that public universities have a mission that contributes to society. In contrast, industry / industrial partners are at the opposite pole from the perspective of knowledge because knowledge is used to develop products and services. Knowledge transfer is not made, instead the intellectual property is on focus (Banal-Estanol, 2010; Moraru et al., 2010).

Table 1. Comparing organizational culture between universities and industry

University	Common	Industry
Public mission	Creating value for society	Shareholder value
Publications	Reputation	Revenue
Project research	Research	Practical research
Theoretical drivers	Science driven	Results driven

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