Implementing Open Innovation: Technological, Organizational and Managerial tools

Special issue call for papers from Business Process Management Journal

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Background and Motivation

The concept of Open Innovation (OI) has generated a great interest in the last decade (Chesbrough, 2003). Over time, Open Innovation Strategy was drawn as a “must” for many firms in different sectors. Implementing an open firm means defining a set of variables: the ‘who’ issue, i.e. with whom the collaboration should take place (Laursen and Salter, 2006), the ‘when’ issue, i.e. which phase(s) of the innovation process should be opened (Lazzarotti and Manzini, 2009), and the ‘how’ issue, i.e. how openness should be implemented. As regards the ‘how’, little attention has still been committed on the set of tools firms can use to support the implementation of OI and, hence, on how firms can create a positive environment that encourages people at leveraging existing technological capabilities outside the boundaries of the organization (Hung and Chou, 2013) or at capturing and benefiting from external sources of knowledge in order to enhance current technological developments (Huizingh, 2011).

Building on literature on innovation and knowledge management, we define such set as the emergent or intentional system of technological (Information and Communication Technologies, ICT), managerial and organizational tools through which the firm influences the collaborative behavior of people inside the firm with the external partners, as well as the collaborative behavior of the partners along the innovation funnel, from the idea generation to the commercialization phase. Therefore the interpretive lens we propose in this special issue is three-fold: Technology, Organization and Management.

ICT has much to contribute because of the pivotal role of digital technologies in enabling OI initiatives. Preliminary studies were directed on the Free Open Source Software phenomenon (von Hippel and von Krogh, 2003), crowdsourcing platforms (Di Gangi and Wasko, 2009; Leimeister, 2009), web-enabled innovation brokers (Whelan et al., 2012), IT’s contribution to absorptive capacity (Chatterjee et al., 2002; Chircu and Kauffman, 2000), as well as new technologies for data mining, simulation, prototyping and visual representation supporting OI in new product development (Dogson et al., 2006).

Traditionally, Organizational Structure is considered having an important role in realizing OI (Beltz, 2011; Naqshbandi and Kaur, 2011; Huizingh, 2011). Researchers are now discussing the question of how organization structure theories can be coupled to the OI paradigm and which traditional concepts about organizational structure and organizing mechanism theories are in fact responsive to the needs of the open paradigm settings. Dimensions such as specialization, formalization and decentralization should be analyzed in order to investigate their influence on Open Innovation gains (Ihl et al., 2012).

Finally, Managerial issues, intended as the combination of routines, practices and incentives to support the OI implementation process, need to be further explored to ensure a greater chance of success (Giannopolu et al., 2011). Many organizations are still not entirely comfortable in these “open” collaborations and previous research on inter-organizational collaboration indicates a high risk of failure. Nevertheless, opening up an organization might compromise conventional steering and managerial tools might no longer apply as such as traditional management (Ollila and Elmqvist, 2011).

The importance of the role of technological, organizational and managerial tools relies on the possibility of research to enhance a real impact on managerial practices for OI implementation and thus on firms’ performance. Researches on this issue should provide suggestions for academicians and practitioners on how an adequate mix of technological tools and solutions, organizational choices and managerial practices, might support the OI processes and in its turn the innovation outcomes.

The aim of this special issue is to expand and advance the knowledge about state of Open Innovation research, highlighting work that makes significant theoretical and empirical advances to our understanding of Technological, Organizational and Managerial tools of effective OI implementation.
Example topics for the special issue

Papers are invited for this special issue on any topic related to the role of Technology, Organization and Management in enabling Open Innovation. Both theoretical and especially empirical papers are welcome. Example topics include but are not limited to:

• The enablement role of Information Systems (IS) on Open Innovation models and related performance: Relation between IS and Open Innovation models; ICT in inter-organizational innovation systems such as Open Innovation communities, digital enabled social networks, role of social media, knowledge management systems, technology-enabled distributed Open Innovation teams, open collaboration systems; Innovative open-minded Information systems;

• The role of Organizational Structure on OI models and related performance: how structural dimensions such as specialization, formalization and decentralization affect gains from Open Innovation; which Organizational structures are more effective for realizing OI; analysis of contingency affective Organizational choice; how organizational structure theories can be coupled to the Open Innovation paradigm and which organizing processes are important on the Open Innovation transformation requirements of the firms.

• The role of Managerial practices in OI implementation effectiveness: when and why traditional management can fail in OI implementation, which managerial practices are most effective for successful OI and in which scenario; how contingency may affect managerial choices.

• Relationships, interconnections and interactions between Technology, Organizational Structure, and Managerial practices in implementation of Open Innovation models and effects on the related performance: how technological, organizational and managerial dimensions interact, which are the effects on OI implementation process and on the final gains.

Notes for Intending Authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. All papers are refereed through a full peer review process (double blind). Submissions are done sending the paper to one of the guest editors.

Time Scale (tentative)

Deadline for submission: 31/10/2015
Review Deadline: 31/12/2015
Notification of Acceptance: 31/01/2016
Deadline for Revised Papers: 31/03/2016
Final Decision: 31/05/2016
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