

The externalisation of R&D activities and the growing market of product development services

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Several authors in recent years have discussed the observed trend towards the externalisation of (part of) a firm's R&D activities. As a consequence, several companies have been created that provide innovators with technical and scientific services such as R&D contracts, laboratory testing services, technology consulting, industrial design, engineering.

The paper is based upon an empirical study which consists of (i) an extensive analysis, in which information has been collected (for about two hundred companies) on size, location and type of services offered; (ii) an intensive analysis, in which one case is studied in depth of a company providing product development services. Some conclusions have been drawn regarding the characteristics of the market of product development services and the management and organisation of companies operating in that market.

1. Introduction

2. Services supporting Product Development: the conceptual context

3. Research objectives and methodology

4. The empirical study

4.1. The extensive analysis

4.2. The case of the MR&D-Institute

4.3 The validity of the empirical study

5. Conclusions and future research

5.1. Market of services for product development

5.2. Management and organisation of services for product development

6. Notes and references

This paper is the result of a joint effort by the authors. However Vittorio Chiesa wrote section 1, Raffaella Manzini wrote sections 3 and 5 and Emanuele Pizzurno wrote sections 2 and 4.

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