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From research & development
to foresight & research.
The announcement of a new wedding:
the Eurotech case

Battistella C. (University of Udine)

De Toni A. F. (University of Udine)

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**From Research & Development to Foresight & Research:
the announcement of a new wedding
– The Eurotech case –**

Cinzia Battistella ^{1,*}, Alberto F. De Toni ²

¹ University of Udine, Electrical, Managerial and Mechanical Engineering Department, via delle Scienze, 208, 33100 Udine, cinzia.battistella@uniud.it

² University of Udine, Electrical, Managerial and Mechanical Engineering Department, via delle Scienze, 208, 33100 Udine, detoni@uniud.it

* Corresponding author

Abstract

In the stream of works showing the evolution of the Research & Development organizational system, this paper presents a case study that reinforces the thesis of the R&D separation. After a detailed overview of how the separation can be implemented and the pinpointing of the activation of a Foresight unit, the authors surpass the failed wedding between Research & Development and originally propose a new couple: Foresight & Research.

Keywords: Research and Development, Corporate Foresight, Research Outsourcing, Case Study

INTRODUCTION

Due to the growing complexity and dynamicity of the market competition and the discontinuous conditions of the political-economical, socio-cultural and technological environment, recently new approaches to innovation (as for example: Open Innovation, Technology Brokering, Collective Innovation, etc.) are emerging as an anchor for companies. Company structure and dynamics are therefore changing in relation to this new landscape. Evidently, this evolution encompasses mainly the R&D organizational structure, which is the engine of innovation.

A rich stream of scholars (e.g. Leifer and Triscari, 1987; Chiesa, 1996) underlined how the play for speed and the R&D integration drove the company to concentrate on the D side, in other words on the market orientation and on traditional performances (costs, time, ...) and on the mission of developing the products, and did not press it to look also to the R side, in other words to the technology orientation, to new solutions and innovations and to the investigation of future possibilities of business. Hence they conclude proposing the separation of R&D. Moreover, an other stream of scholars (e.g. Reger, 2004; Rohrbeck and Gemunden, 2008) highlighted the importance of future studies and foresight activities in the company. In fact, the continuous innovation runs not only through the comprehension of and the research on the “market of today”, but also through the identification of the possible scenarios of the “markets of tomorrow”. In this line, it is important to manage and to organize the company to favour the anticipation and the comprehension of trends and consequently to be aware of the own future path of growth.

Taking off from these considerations, the present paper aims to contribute in enriching the research fields on R&D organization and on future studies. The R&D function has gained an even more pivotal role, but in our opinion it needs to be managed and organized in a special manner and to be supported by building a structure to sustain and to drive tomorrow innovations. Therefore, this paper would like to deeply investigate the structure and the organization of R&D through the “market of tomorrow” lenses. More specifically, the present work aims to:

- Propose a case study that reinforces the view of the failed wedding between R&D;
- Explain how a company can organize its R&D function with the aim to look deeper to future, pinpointing some suggestions on how to implement the R&D separation and on