

The challenge of integrating applied research and product development process: Cases study

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Abstract: New products development has a growing strategic role within companies, and the technological development should be articulated with the product development process, which will have to incorporate the new technologies. An important question, from the theoretical and practical points of view, is integrating the research activities with new products development projects. The objective of this paper is discussing how to conciliate those activities, analyzing their nature differences and integration problems. Due to the exploratory character of this research, this paper discusses a question barely explored in the bibliography. Besides the theoretical discussion, this paper also presents the results of a field research in two large Brazilian companies, which are market leaders (petrochemical and home appliances). The field research results show that the use of already validated off-the shelf technologies and successive generations of new products are ways to facilitate such integration, furthermore, it is necessary to better explore that question within the context of more radical innovations and less frequent product changes. Deeper studies are necessary on the integrated planning of product development projects portfolio and applied research activities, as a mean to better integrate these processes, mainly in the case of more dynamic products or markets.

Keywords: integration, product development, research and development, home appliances, petrochemical industry.

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