



Industry and Innovation

Special Issue Call for Papers

The influence of internal barriers on external knowledge utilization

Guest editors

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Background and Objective

The ability of firms to benefit from external knowledge sources can be influenced by a variety of internal, firm-specific factors. While accessing external knowledge sources can enable firms to improve firm performance (Sampson, 2007; Lahiri and Narayanan, 2013, Laursen and Salter, 2006) such benefits are not self-speaking. In fact, various studies document substantial heterogeneity in the abilities of firms to reap the benefits from external knowledge sources (e.g. Cassiman and Veugelers, 2006; Kale and Singh, 2007; Rothaermel and Deeds, 2006). Existing literature has mainly explained this heterogeneity by focusing on how firms differ in the capabilities they possess to benefit from external knowledge sources, for example by means of dedicated alliances departments or interdependencies with internal technology investments (Heimeriks, Duysters and Vanhaverbeke, 2007; Noseleit and de Faria, 2013; Wassmer, 2010; Wuyts and Dutta, 2014; Antonelli and Colombelli, 2015). However, this stream of literature focusing strongly on enabling factors tends to be less concerned with internal barriers that may hamper enabling factors to function effectively and allow efficient knowledge transfer. While literature relating to the not-invented-here syndrome (Clagett, 1967; Katz and Allen, 1982; Agarwal at al., 2010) predominantly focuses on internal attitudes towards external knowledge, a broader conceptualization of internal barriers is missing. We believe that internal barriers associated to the internal structure of firms (like the existence of different functional or geographical units) or created by the strategic decisions of firms (like selective knowledge

access), influence the ability of firms to incorporate and benefit from external knowledge. In this line, the aim of this special issue call is to stimulate studies that contribute to a better understanding of how internal barriers affect the access to external knowledge.

Research Topics

The following are examples of potential research questions that we are interested in, but this list is not at all exhaustive:

- What role do the knowledge protection strategies of firms play as potential internal barriers to the use of external knowledge?
- How can existing cooperation routines limit a firm's ability to benefit from other sources of external knowledge?
- How do the challenges of embeddedness across different contexts influence the relationship between external knowledge sourcing and firm performance?
- Does internal competitiveness / rivalry act as a barrier to effectively use external knowledge?
- To which degree do limitations in managers' attention act as barrier to utilizing external knowledge?
- How do structural characteristics of firms' external sourcing activities (e.g. geographical dispersion of an alliance portfolio) and the (organizational) structure of internal R&D activities interact?
- How do different team cultures within organizations affect the exchange of external knowledge?
- To what extent do the answers to these questions depend on the "proximity" of the external knowledge to the internal knowledge base of the firms?
- To what extent do the answers to these questions depend on the existence of long-term relationships with the source of external knowledge, in a personal, professional or other sense?
- How can (regional or sectoral) public policy help overcome hurdles in fully exploiting external knowledge caused by internal barriers?

Important deadlines

- Submissions to the Special Issue due by **31 January 2018**
- Publication of the Special Issue in **Summer 2019**

Related events

To help authors develop their manuscripts, a Special Issue Workshop may be held in at the University of Groningen. If the workshop takes place, authors whose manuscripts received an R&R decision will be invited to present and discuss their work during the workshop. Presentation at the workshop will not guarantee acceptance of a paper for publication in I&I. Moreover, attendance to the workshop will not be a precondition for acceptance of a paper for the Special Issue.

Submission Process

We welcome contributions that reflect on the role of firms internal barriers to utilize external knowledge. We encourage submissions employing different theoretical angles from various disciplines and fields and using a wide range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Paper submissions will undergo rigorous editorial screening and double-blind peer review by a minimum of two recognized scholars. The standard requirements of *Industry and Innovation* for submissions apply. Please consult the journal submission guidelines available at <http://www.industryandinnovation.net>.

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