Three perspectives on managing front end innovation: process, knowledge and translation

This paper presents three complementary perspectives on the management of front end innovation: A process model perspective, a knowledge perspective and a translational perspective. While the first two perspectives are well established in literature, we offer the translation perspective as a complementary perspective. The paper combines a literature review with an empirical examination of the application of these multiple perspectives across three cases of front end of innovation (FEI) management in mature product developing companies. While the process models represent the dominant, albeit rather simplistic perspective, they primarily serve as a reference point and communication device.

Here, the knowledge perspective offers a supplementary perspective by filling the gaps left by the formal processes with informal cross boarder knowledge exchange. In comparison, the translation perspective is found to represent an emergent approach in managing FEI where process models, knowledge strategies and objects become integrated elements in more advanced navigational strategies for key players.

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