

GLOBAL FRONT END OF PRODUCT INNOVATION: A GUIDING FRAMEWORK FOR MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The efficient management of the early start (front end) in multinational corporations with global operations is believed to have the highest leverage for the success of product innovation. Managing the global front end, however, is extremely challenging and complex. Surprisingly, there have been no studies to date looking into this area. This study addresses this research gap by investigating the stages and processes of the front end within a global fast moving consumer (FMCG) context. We employed the globalization and product innovation streams of literature to provide insights into the empirical referent of the global front end of product innovation. The research followed a longitudinal case study methodology that incorporated a three-year participant observation experience of a leading FMCG multinational organization's "centers of excellence" in the UK, Netherlands and Italy; collection of company archival data, and interviews with internal and external global front end experts. The investigation led to the development of an integrative conceptual framework, detailing guidelines for the implementation of the global front end and framing the differences between the local and the global front end.

Keywords: Global Product Innovation, Front End, Process Management, Longitudinal Case Research.

INDICATIVE LIST OF REFERENCES

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