

WORKSHOP 1

INQUIRY FROM THE INSIDE: A CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Evy Sakellariou
American College of Greece
evy.sakellariou@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the role of the researcher as a participant observer and reflective practitioner. The paper aims to address the benefits and limitations of participant observation offering guidance as to how to manage the challenges of this data collection method. The paper draws on the researcher's experience as a participant observer of a multinational corporation in order to provide insights into the stages, decision-making processes and information flow in the global early start (front end) of product innovation. This research followed a longitudinal case study methodology that incorporated a three-year participant observation experience; collection of company archival data; interviews with internal and external international front end experts. This approach provided a unique opportunity to gather and analyze data for the global front end which are normally difficult to obtain as the front end activities are not recorded formally in most organizations. The study represents the contribution of an industry practitioner and provides a unique contribution into a real-world setting.

Key-words: qualitative research, longitudinal case study, participant observation, expert interviews, ACTA interview technique

REFERENCES

- Bonoma, T. V. (1985). Case research in marketing: Opportunities, problems and a process. *Journal of Marketing Research*. 22: 199-208.
- Eisenhardt K. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*. 14(4): 532-550.
- Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage.
- McCall, G., Simmons, J. L. (Eds.) (1969). *Issues in participant observation*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Press.
- May, T. (1997). *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, 2nd ed. Open University Press.
- Miles, M., Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pettigrew, A. (1990). Longitudinal field research on change: theory and practice. *Organization Science*. 1(3): 267-92.