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Greening the Innovation Process

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Abstract

The context in which innovation takes place has a strong influence on its nature; 'linking' the demand and supply side is crucial to making innovation successful. Research has demonstrated the key role that sales and marketing functions play in achieving this 'linkage'. More recent work suggests that successful innovation requires the successful capture and management of signals flowing around multi-faceted frameworks - or networks - rather than simply across two-sided ones.

This paper reports the results of an investigation into how green issues are influencing the process of R&D as a contributor to innovation. R&D and other managers in UK companies were interviewed about their work, the methods used to select and manage that work, and the way in which the green agenda is affecting the organisation and its activities. The investigation looked at changes the 'green agenda' may be making in the innovation framework of firms, and differences between the flows of signals about green issues and those about other product performance issues around these frameworks. The paper concludes that, if the process of developing greener products and services is to be speeded up, then supply companies with the capacity and will to innovate need to push green issues on to the agenda of their dialogue with users in order actively to seek opportunities for progress.