

Chapter 8

A New Tool for Supporting Innovation in Biotech Co-Innovation and the Role of Economic Developers

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ABSTRACT

Biotech companies have been perceived as the Saint-Graal for economic development since a few years. But the economic downturn and a misunderstanding of the shift in innovation process, from a stage gate process to a user driven process placed, impairs biotech companies. Economic developer, which aims to foster innovation to induce economic development asked themselves how to help innovation in the biotech sector to reach the market more rapidly and more efficiently. This book chapter presents an overview in the innovation shift from the supply side to the demand side and proposes a new model of intervention for economic developers in this new context of co-innovation.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the last 50 years, innovation has been perceived as a stage gate process involving university and manufacturers. A lot of effort has been made to support technology transfer from research centers to companies to market. In the meantime, Porter (1998) has developed his now renowned concept of clusters. Cities all around the world have put in place innovation strategies consistent with the geographic concentration of firms in selected industrial sectors. Montreal was no exception and the biotech cluster was one of the first, which has been brought to life back in the 00. InVivo (the cluster's Administration) is now at the crossroads and tries to help manufacturers and entrepreneurs to build a new pipeline of products and energize a new round of development. In history then, most of public policies and support was designed to help manufacturer in capturing innovation coming from research lab. But, many sociologists have stressed the importance of the network and the social fabric and users for the diffusion and the acceptance of innovation through society.

Despite this researches at the academic level, few works has been done to integrated, in one hand this new source of innovation (users) in the toolbox of economic developers and, in the other hand to understand and structure the demand side to foster innovation.

BACKGROUND

Main Focus of the Chapter

The aim of this paper is to see how the rules have changed for economic developers and how a new model can be proposed to help them to enrich their action towards entrepreneurs and business community. Moreover, this paper will study in the biotech sector how this proposed model could be implement.

Innovation Evolution: A Quick Overview

Innovation is recognized as the engine of economic and society development. In the early work of economists, it was identified mostly as technological progress. The seminal work of Schumpeter, demonstrated the importance of economic actor such as innovator (manufacturer and entrepreneur) in the technological progress and its way to transform society (destructive creation). Bust mostly of these works are based on a linear view of innovation.

In recent years, new perspectives on innovation are emerging. This is called «the demand side of innovation». It is based on the idea that users and communities

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