

Sony and features of japanese randd management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Communication between R&D and other departments is essential to encourage information flows, understanding of particular positions, provide feedback and evaluate R&D projects. Unreasonable projects to be cut in early stage is crucial and wide feedback is of help. Support for development around other departments is essential for projects that are pursued further. The most important links of R&D stretch to marketing and manufacturing. Japanese firms tend to employ (inter-department) job rotation as information exchange tool. In electronics industry rotation between R&D and manufacturing is common (Florida, Kenny, 1993).

Rotation of R&D employees to manufacturing helps to cut the time to market of new technologies. This is underlined by frequent meetings of managers of these departments (Kenney, Florida, 1993). Clash of marketing and technicians/engineers/scientists/ is not rare. However, understanding here is very essential for R&D to recognize how their activity responds to market behavior and trends. R&D objective setting and inclusion of employees in this process can encourage challenging spirit and creative competitiveness between teams.

Similar effect and as a motivation tool serve conditions as the time that R&D employees are allowed to devote to their individual projects, tolerance of risky behavior (as a prerequisite to encouraging creativity). Generally, companies tend to encourage employees' individual motives onto company activities. It is ' typical for Japanese companies that objectives are set in collaboration between the managers and their subjected employees' (Birnbaum-more, Rossini, Baldwin, 1990). The inclusion of employees also depends on the stage of development.

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Autonomy is lower in development stage when high capital investment and great coordination with other departments is required (Birnbaum-more, Rossini, Baldwin, 1990). Organization of R&D at Sony Sony operates a number of R&D sites in and outside Japan – in the UK, USA, Germany, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, China, South America, ... The localization of R&D activities is based on multiple factors – development of products close to the selling market – local expertise in certain technological area of company's interest (article at sony. net: Globalization of R&D activities)

– avoid fluctuations in exchange rates (article at sony. net: Globalization of R&D activities) Sony also takes advantage of collaboration with universities. Examples can be found in Japan where development and collaboration clusters join university laboratories and private companies (clusters typical in Tokyo area). Other examples of collaboration with universities are from US (' development of HD broadcast technologies in cooperation with Indiana university') (Gellar, 2007) or Singapore (' development of mobile technologies') (National university of Singapore, 2006).

R&D at Sony is organized upon specific technology areas. Some activities are conducted under control of company headquarters and others in are controlled by particular business units. Strategic decisions on sharing R&D activities with other companies (competitors, suppliers, customers) or keeping them in-house are of rather complex nature and involve range of factors of internal and external preconditions (as stage of technological development, nature of market, market position, financial conditions, human or facility capacities, or others).

Companies collaborate to reduce risk involved and share costs. On the other hand, they choose to keep activities in-house if they have a lead-time in comparison to competitors or the development concerns their distinctive competencies. Typical forms of R&D collaboration are alliances and joint ventures (mid to long term), licensed and contracted cooperation tend to be undertaken in short term perspective.