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“TEN YEARS WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE”

The influence of competitive intelligence in environmentally sustainable innovation management

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Abstract

Current social, economic and, mainly, environmental changes affect companies in several forms. Consequently, managers need to implement environmentally sustainable innovations that mitigate the impact exerted by companies' operations on the society. These environmentally sustainable innovations can arise from both companies' internal or external sources. In this sense, the general objective of this paper was to understand the role played by companies' competitive intelligence on the environmentally sustainable innovation management. Specifically, it aimed (i) to identify motivations, practices and the benefits perceived by companies in their green actions, (ii) to map the competitive intelligence mechanisms used by companies to collect information on environmentally sustainable innovations and (iii) to analyze how competitive intelligence aids and affects the decision for green innovation management practices. In order to reach the objective proposed, a qualitative exploratory research was performed through the analysis of three cases of companies based in Brazil. In sum, the results indicate that the organizations use the information arising from the external environment to acquire and gather knowledge on sustainability and, thus, develop organizational, marketing, product and process innovations. To that end, they apply market researches, participate in sustainability-oriented events and associations, monitor current environmental legislations and follow specialized publications and/or reports. The results also indicate that companies hire specialized human resources and specialized consulting companies, adhere to environmental certifications, such as ISO 14001, cooperate with stakeholders and analyze product and process chains to guarantee an environmentally sustainable innovation management. Theoretically, it can be stated that this study contributes to the spread of the use of competitive intelligence as a competitive advantage driver and as an important tool to stimulate environmentally sustainable innovation practices.

Keywords: *Environmentally Sustainable Innovation Management; Competitive Intelligence; Sustainability; Sustainable Innovation.*