Chapter 9

The Learning Process as a Maturing Process for TSUs

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the topic of the on-going learning, especially in SUs and specifically in TSUs, is discussed. The move from a TSU to the next stage discussed in length earlier from the practical aspects is discussed here as part of the learning process of the TSUs. The learning process in TSUs is presented. The early stages of learning to manage projects and the project results are presented as part of the TSU core activity in its role as TSU. The next logical step is to discuss the move to a complete mature firm as another stage in the learning process of the TSU, as a step characterized by learning and enhancing the managerial capabilities of the firm. Some of the research relevant for learning in TSUs is presented as well as the specific case of TSUs inside a technology incubator.

INTRODUCTION

The discussion for far focused on the practical aspects, the barriers and assistive tools, the required changes and mainly the difference between the firm as focused on R&D and innovation versus the developed entity dealing with all aspects of the active firm.

However, the move from the one to the latter is not necessarily a novel action. It can be viewed as part of the learning process the TSU undergoes from the ideation stage to the readiness for the move into a complete firm. The learning process described below is a well-researched topic in management as the realization that entrepreneurs and the entity they are forming has to learn to cope with new challenges all the time (Calantone, Cavusgil, and Zhao, 2002; Delmar, and Shane, 2006; Hughes, and Morgan, 2007; Tsegay, Shi, and Wu, 2016; Entrialgo, and Iglesias, 2017; Yin, and Lou, 2018; Gabai, Ehrlich, Abdel Razek, and Krieger, 2020). There are differences between the stages where the learning has to be done by the individual and when the learning is done by the "firm[1]". There is of course an important aspect of learning not only to perform the tasks but also in learning how to manage them, creating managerial capabilities in the firm. In fact, when dealing with out-sourcing, the aspect of managerial capabilities is paramount.

It is therefore important, once the move discussed in earlier chapter and its challenges are understood, to see it also from a different perspective, that of a learning move. In this chapter this will be the main discussion point.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING

Facing the Challenges

Recent research into the most effective learning methodologies, indicates that the best alternative is to develop a culture of learning in STUs by acquiring as soon as possible Organizational learning practices (Baltrunaite and Sekliuckiene, 2020). The importance of having learning processes should be self-evident, however, just to make sure it is clearly understood let us review it.

The early stages of a new enterprise are shadowed by performing activities for the first time. Even when the teams are well experience, unless the entire team has already performed these activities in another venture, there is some

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