

P28 - Fail it till you make it: learning by failure and innovative activities

11. TECHNOLOGY, R&D and INNOVATION STRATEGIES

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Track summary: The relationship between failure and innovation is complex, with innovation endeavors often plagued by uncertainty and the potential for failure at various stages of development. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on successful innovation projects, preventing a comprehensive understanding of the determinants and consequences of innovation failures. This conference track seeks to shed light on this understudied innovation management area by examining various forms of innovation failures, including discontinued patents, project abandonments, new product recalls, and the broader concept of the “dark side of innovation”.

The objectives of the track include investigating the determinants and consequences of innovation failures across the entire innovation development process. This track aims to present papers deepening the relationship between innovation failures and the characteristics of the inventions (e.g. novelty and scope), of the innovation process (e.g., the composition of the inventive team, the innovation management approaches), and of the innovator (e.g., the firm’s strategy). Furthermore, this track aims to shed light on how innovation failures may dynamically affect these factors by enacting different feedback mechanisms. In particular, the track will show different aspects of “learning by failure”, such as drivers, obstacles, and possible implementation, at both the team and the firm levels. In any case, the analysis of the feedback generated by innovation failures will also be extended to the possible strategic reorientation adopted by the firm, which may imply a change in the search strategies, and in the establishment of R&D collaborations.