
Building innovation networks in science-based young firms: the selection of knowledge sources

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Abstract: The paper investigates the strategic choices made by young science-based firms regarding the selection of knowledge sources. Data collected on Portuguese biotechnology firms are analysed with a view to answer to two research questions: whether, to what extent and in which conditions science-based entrepreneurs activate their social capital and/or build new knowledge relationships at start-up; whether and to what extent the knowledge relationships established at start-up persist and/or the firm builds relationships with new organisations. The results confirm the importance attributed to tie persistence but they also show that science-based firms need to search for new knowledge sources from the very early stages. Thus, their start-up behaviour departs from the one often depicted by the entrepreneurship literature, that emphasises the mobilisation of the entrepreneurs' social capital. Results also show that persistence of ties established at start-up is lower than would be expected.

Keywords: knowledge network; entrepreneurship; network building strategy; science-based firm.

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