

The User Perspective – Acceptance and Barriers of Ethnography as a Research Tool for Product Innovations for SMEs in B2B Markets

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Abstract

The latest studies found out that most of the new launched B2B products fail in the market. This is surprising, because developing new or innovate existing products are the main drivers for being competitive and to survive in the B2B market. One core reason is the lack of customer-oriented research because of limited financial resources. But especially SMEs have close contacts with their customers. Gathering information of the requirements for product improvements could be less difficult. However, it seems that managers in SMEs are not aware of the potential of ethnographic research. This working paper - based on eight qualitative interviews with CEOs of SMEs - shows that the acceptance of ethnography is higher when the company produce standardized products and have frontline-employees with close contacts to their customer. The acceptance of end-users to implement ethnographic research at their working place will be higher when the method will be clarified previously and trustful.

Keywords: *Ethnography; Product Innovation; B2B-Business*

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