

From Complaints to Innovation Success: A Knowledge-Based View on Cross-Functional Collaboration and Error Management Culture

Alexander Rupertus
University of Mannheim
Sabine Kuester
University of Mannheim

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Abstract

Customer complaints contain valuable customer insights about product weaknesses and unmet needs, yet firms struggle to leverage this information effectively and systematically for innovation. Building on the knowledge-based view, we conceptualize complaint integration as a strategic capability enabled by cross-functional collaboration between customer service and R&D and strengthened by a strong error management culture. Using data from a dyadic manager survey, we show that cross-functional collaboration fosters complaint integration, thereby enhancing innovation success. Moreover, error management culture strengthens this effect. Our findings highlight the importance of a strategic interplay of structural and cultural mechanisms that help firms systematically transform negative customer feedback into innovation success.

Track: Innovation Management & New Product Development