Abstract

R&D activities were usually kept in-house. However, outsourcing practices of some stages of the R&D process to specialized providers have been gaining momentum during the last years even by firms operating in high-tech sectors. By outsourcing these activities, high-tech firms have found a way not only to cut costs but also to benefit from technological knowledge and/or to increase their flexibility. In order to analyze the distinctive features of these R&D outsourcing practices, in this work we present the main results of a survey carried out to 182 US and European high-tech firms. Specifically, we address the following questions: which high-tech firms do outsource R&D services; what types of R&D services are outsourced; where are firms outsourcing these services; and under what motivation.

Keywords
Outsourcing, R&D, offshoring, innovation, technology intensive firms.