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OPEN INNOVATION IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF AN ITALIAN FOOD COMPANY

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Abstract

The food industry, classified as a creative industry in Italy, presents unique opportunities for exploring open innovation. This paper investigates a prominent Italian food company (IFC), known for its early adoption of innovation and commitment to sustainability. This company approach to open innovation aligns with its dedication to environmental stewardship and pro-active engagement with stakeholders. To assess the impact of open innovation on IFC's performance, the case study employs a research strategy centered on co-creation processes. The study delves into IFC's efforts to promote sustainable sourcing, packaging innovation, energy efficiency, water stewardship, waste reduction, and environmental partnerships. Through open innovation strategies, IFC collaborates with startups, research institutions, and customers to generate new ideas and solutions. Co-creation competitions are held to involve stakeholders actively, providing them with a voice and fostering creative input.

The research highlights IFC's interest in continuous innovation, emphasizing product, technological, and supply chain advancements. The company employs online platforms to digitize the innovation process, facilitating dialogue and interaction with users. Co-creation competitions are structured in stages, where stakeholders contribute ideas, and the best concepts are evaluated for further development. The case study assesses the innovative performance of IFC, encompassing its image, references to external stakeholders, co-created product portfolio, and enhanced competitiveness. The study reveals that two of the Five Co-s (co-ideation and co-valuation) were employed in IFC's co-creation initiatives, indicating a focus on diversifying product offerings and evaluating attractive ideas. As a result of the study, the conceptual model is applied to IFC, providing insights into its open innovation approach. The company's continued commitment to open innovation has led to the creation of the BluFuture platform, fostering sustainable solutions in the food sector. Additionally, Blu1877, serving as a tool for open innovation, connects the international ecosystem of food innovation. The case study on IFC Group offers valuable insights into how open innovation practices positively impact the creative firm's performance. Through the study, a deeper understanding of the role of open innovation in creative industries is achieved, paving the way for further exploration of innovative strategies and collaborations within the food industry and other creative sectors.

Key words: creative industries, co-creation, food production group, IFC, open innovation, sustainability

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