

THE LEAN AGILE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER MODEL: REVISITING UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY COLLABORATION THROUGH THE GATE OF INNOVATION PROCESS

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Abstract:

Technology Transfer (TT) is an important component of university's mission in order to enhance and enrich its value to society. Technology Transfer Office (TTO) is the traditional structure that operates for valorizing university's research results within the economic environment. The main TT channel consists of licensing patents and occasionally non-patentable technologies. Despite of many institutional efforts that have been run in the last decade to professionalize TTOs and to polish the Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) route such as more research results from the public funds to be turned into patents, the success rate of most universities to license inventions to economic players is relatively low. Comparing TT perspectives revealed by the academic and business worlds, the finding of this paper is that the patenting process neglects two very most important tasks: (1) pre-assessment of the market value of the potentially patentable invention, and (2) the consideration of the whole innovation process in the TT activity. Emerging from this conclusion, an extended TT model, called Lean Agile Technology Transfer (LATT), is proposed by this paper. The proposed approach is considered *lean* because of the value added activities dedicated to the increase of TT effectiveness. It is considered *agile* because of the specific activities for handling inconsistency and lack of information (that characterize uncertain markets). Collaborations between university and industry in the LATT context are also revealed in the paper. Paper ends with recommendations for universities to reengineer their TTOs towards better facing the challenges of the forthcoming business environment.

Keywords: technology transfer, innovation, university-industry collaboration, lean, agile