Ten cases of successful innovative ICT SMEs in France

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Topic of the study

- An exploratory study
- 10 ICT companies
  - SMEs, innovative, successful
- A detailed investigation
  - Relationship to innovation
- Towards a model of innovation
  - A triangle of uncertainties
  - Use and impact of the innovation system
  - Related questions
Methodology

• Case studies
  • Covering a diverse range of ICT subsectors.
  • Including interviews with the CEOs, and usually founders, of the companies.

• Identification and analysis of main topics
  • Access to technological knowledge, finances and market knowledge

• A tentative set of answers
# Company selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Technological domain</th>
<th>Creation date</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
<th>Turnover CAGR 2009-2013</th>
<th>Sector (NACE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aquafadas</td>
<td>Software for digital publishing</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3,6 M€</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Software publishing 58.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astellia</td>
<td>Monitoring mobile networks</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>36 M€</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Manufacture of communication equipment 26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ateme</td>
<td>Video equipment</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>20,6 M€</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Manufacture of communication equipment 26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awox</td>
<td>Domestic network</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6,9 M€</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Consumer electronics 26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esker</td>
<td>Document management and delivery</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>41,1 M€</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Software publishing 58.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrasense</td>
<td>Medical imaging software</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4,1 M€</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Software publishing 58.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itesoft</td>
<td>Document management and delivery</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>21,6 M€</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Software publishing 58.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kreactive</td>
<td>Education services</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,3 M€</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>Information Service Activities 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitec</td>
<td>Video equipment</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>25,9 M€</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Manufacture of communication equipment 26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiztivi</td>
<td>Interactive digital TV</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4,7 M€</td>
<td>117%</td>
<td>Software publishing 58.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main results (1)

• Triangular model of innovation
  • Access to technological knowledge
  • Access to finances
  • Access to market knowledge
  • A transversal dimension : timing issues
  • A common model, very different trajectories

• Access to knowledge : key points
  • Founder’s initial technology expertise
  • A large variety of methods for acquiring technological expertise
  • Lack of contacts with universities
  • EU collaborative programmes avoided
Main results (2)

• Access to finance
  • Own revenues mostly used
  • Difficulty of raising enough funding for continuous growth a major reason for failure
  • public funding of R&D seen as satisfying.
  • Research tax credit and zero rate lending for R&D are widely used and much appreciated.
  • IPOs used successfully, but only after a significant level of development

• Access to market
  • Collaborating with the customer is key for market understanding
  • Standardization bodies : another way of exploring the needs of the customers
  • Global market knowledge is essential very early on
Policy implications

- A high level of R&D activities
- Knowledge of support programmes and cost effective access are key issues
- Access to finance still a major issue for growth
- Commercialization (market knowledge) is central to growth
- (Almost) all companies think global
Future research

• Failed companies (the majority) has not been taken into account

• International comparison is needed:
  – Which weight for national policy?

• How to take into account (sometimes frequent) changes in national policies
Thank you...