TECHNOLOGY CENTERS. A SECTOR UNDERGOING RESTRUCTURING. PART I

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Spanish technology centers are undergoing a major restructuring process and what seemed virtually impossible like the here or < a href="http://www.google.es/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&sqi=2&ved=0CFYQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lavanguardia.com%2Feconomia%2F20120514% 2F54292830274%2Fcentros-tecnologicos-fusiones-crecer.html&ei=znDsT53HHYWv8QPSmJTdBQ&usg=AFQjCNG9YUFv4Ee1gYFBSfdXvJFhvu5xkw&sig2=GhBdsCe27a-doajj0kb5uQ" target="_blank">>" rel="noopener>).

Someone could argue that these processes are a direct consequence of the cuts in R+D+I funds from the General State Administration and the Autonomous Communities and the economic crisis, but in my opinion, and without denying that these factors have an impact In the process, I believe that the restructuring of the technological system responds to the adaptation demands imposed by the real conditions of the technology and innovation market.

The majority presence of companies in sectors with low technological intensity and relatively little international competition was at the origin of a very unsophisticated demand for technology and innovation that in most cases was limited to adapting proven technology and improving production processes. In this context, the Spanish technology centers played a fundamentally "public" role, widely justified, on the one hand, by their great contribution in the hard task of raising awareness among companies about the importance of innovation and, on the other, by being able to cover business demands for R+D+I services (trials, technological check-ups, R+D projects, or specialized training, among others) that were not satisfied either by the market or by other agents such as universities and research centers traditionally far removed from the needs of the business fabric.

However, the growing opening, mainly in the industrial sector, to global competition has progressively changed this scenario. In the first place, many of our leading companies have production plants in different countries and develop complex innovation strategies that integrate a global conceptualization of the business and that are the main key to their competitiveness. Secondly, numerous suppliers hang from these leading companies who are forced to set global standards and sophisticate the concept of innovation and operational efficiency in terms of notable improvements in quality, speed of response, adaptability and flexibility and, of course, improvements in the economic conditions of its products and services. Thirdly, and as a consequence of the foregoing, in many sectors, competitiveness solutions do not involve only technological innovation, but also innovative business approaches that have to do with radical changes in companies' business models. Finally, it is necessary to take into account that in recent years the advanced services sector has developed remarkably in Spain and numerous companies have appeared that provide differential services in the field of innovation and technology and that occupy a good part of the gap previously covered. by technology centers in this field.

In this new context, Spanish technology centers are encountering notable difficulties in defining their strategic positioning and their contribution of value to the business fabric. On the one hand, it is difficult for it to be justified on the basis of its public function of supporting innovation in the productive fabric, and even more so in times of current crisis in which it is increasingly and widely demanded that companies be the ones to finance a high and growing percentage of their investment in R+D+I.

On the other hand, it must be taken into account that the centers no longer compete exclusively with other counterparts in the region or their immediate surroundings, but rather compete globally with other technology and research centers, universities and technology companies in a market that is increasingly globalization of technology and innovation. Companies choose those that offer comprehensive solutions with a global and first-rate vision of both technology and the company and the market, regardless of their location.

All of this requires a deep reflection in the technology centers to choose a differentiated strategic path that marks the personality of the center, either betting on gaining critical mass and international presence, or directing efforts towards scientific-technological specialization and niche work in which can gain excellence and differentiation.

And this will undoubtedly be, and is being, a tortuous, complicated path that will require a profound transformation of the technology center system as we know it today.

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