Research and Development (R&D) professionals in high-technology industries are required to make decisions in a complex and uncertain environment. This complexity grows, since firms increasingly open up their processes of innovation to develop innovative ideas in association with external actors such as suppliers, competitors and customers. Such an environment calls for professionals who are able to face up to and manage technical challenges, and to deal with the high cognitive load. It also requires individuals who are able to deal with interpersonal challenges and drive the development of new ways to innovate.

Based on quantitative and qualitative studies, this dissertation investigates the role of the R&D professional in driving innovative and collaborative behavior in R&D departments. It draws upon theories from the field of psychology, and from behavioral decision-making literature. Thus, it elucidates how the decision-making process of innovation unfolds, investigates how the decisional orientation of a manager can influence partnering in innovative projects, and identifies belief systems that may drive or inhibit collaborative innovation. The findings indicate that it is not sufficient for managers to be able to accurately analyze information. More importantly, they should know how to include intuition into the decision-making process, facilitate negotiations about diverse interests, and take into account positive and negative beliefs regarding different innovative practices.

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