

ESTABLISHING INDUSTRY-UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY RELATIONSHIPS:
EXPLORING THE FIRM'S KEY DETERMINANTS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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The authors would like to thank the Center for Innovation Management Studies at Lehigh University and their corporate sponsors for providing financial support for this research. Thanks also goes to George Farris, Saul Fenster, and David Hawk for their insightful comments and suggestions throughout this project.

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ABSTRACT

The study reported here examined the key determinants and strategic objectives of industrial firms in establishing industry-university technology relationships. Results from this multi-method, exploratory field study show that several determinants are particularly important to industry. Specifically, the consequential determinants are: acquiring skills, knowledge, and gaining access to university facilities; organizational cultures that are more involved, consistent, adaptable, and mission-oriented; flexible university policies for intellectual property rights, patents, and licenses; and the presence of champions. Regarding industry's strategic objectives, three clusters of firms surfaced: collegial players, aggressive players, and targeted players. Collegial players are often large firms working with universities and university-sponsored consortia on topics of interest which have long-term value rather than because they promise immediate commercial opportunities. Aggressive players are both large and small firms who employ university relationships to develop and commercialize a wide range of marketable products and services. Targeted players are often smaller firms, largely interested in using university relationships to address specific issues central to their business. The implications of these findings for industry and universities are discussed.

