

INNOVATIVE FAMILY FIRMS**Track Chairs:**

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Abstract:

Besides the ubiquity of family businesses and the importance of innovation as a determinant of sustained competitive performance, innovation in family firms remains an overlooked topic in management research. This is surprising because many family firms innovate to attain a competitive advantage, as cases such as Alessi and Benetton show. What is more, there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that the antecedents and effects of innovation are different in family and non-family firms ([De Massis et al., forthcoming](#)).

For instance, in the recent debate on collaborative innovation, no efforts have been made to examine whether the propensity and ability to acquiring external knowledge vary between family and non-family companies. This although there exists a corroborated evidence on the importance put by family firms on the conservation of their socioemotional wealth ([Berrone et al., 2012](#)), that leads controlling families to be concerned about potential control losses and may erect barriers toward collaborative innovation.

To summarize, theory building in innovation research has by and large overlooked the importance of the 'family' variable (e.g., [Craig and Moores, 2006](#)), and the most influential theories of

innovation have been developed without taking into proper account, either conceptually or empirically, the differences in the way family and non-family firms manage innovation.

This “**Innovative Family Firms**” Track within the FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH SIG contributes to filling this gap in our understanding of innovation in family firms, by presenting the most recent research that examines, both theoretically and empirically, the differences in the way innovation takes place in family and non-family firms. We solicit authors to submit empirical, conceptual, and literature review contributions. We welcome the adoption of diverse theoretical and methodological approaches, and submissions by interdisciplinary, international, and mixed industry-academic co-author teams.

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