

This article was downloaded by:

On: 25 January 2011

Access details: *Access Details: Free Access*

Publisher *Taylor & Francis*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journal of Macromolecular Science, Part A

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713597274>

Industrial Research Management in the Seventies

George E. Ham

To cite this Article Ham, George E.(1973) 'Industrial Research Management in the Seventies', Journal of Macromolecular Science, Part A, 7: 4, i

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/00222337308061172

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00222337308061172>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Industrial Research Management in the Seventies

I saw the function of research management change drastically throughout the Western World, particularly in the United States.

In the early fifties the typical research director could initiate a research project with a minimum of red tape, give modest support to it for one or two years, and then kill it with little fanfare, if unpromising, or seek endorsement for increased support if the project proved sufficiently encouraging.

By the mid-sixties a plethora of business project managers, market research managers, planners, coordinators, and other assorted representatives of business, marketing, and accounting had descended on the research operation. One-year, five-year, and ten-year plans had to be produced. Research projects, the nature of which had hardly been determined, had to be costed in advance for several years, development costs estimated, and *plant* and *market introduction* costs anticipated even where a product was yet to be discovered!

By the early seventies research projects were no longer approved or were phased out unless a specific market need of known size and profitability could be defined in advance of any research. The idea of synthetic research on new compounds or materials with specific uses to be defined later was dismissed as ludicrous and naive.

The result is now history. Industrial research is now confined to activities which are carefully and cautiously circumscribed. Dramatic discoveries, in the event that they survive this stultifying atmosphere, are sometimes discouraged on the basis that they will require a high level decision, are beyond the scope of the company's established operations, or would be too large to handle!

It is hardly surprising that the profitability of industrial research is now seriously questioned. Staffs have been greatly reduced, budgets cut, promised new projects phased out and forgotten for the sake of a tax write-off. And, of course, research management is to blame for this sorry state. Businessmen, marketing managers, accountants, lawyers, personnel: all are above the fray and somehow not responsible. Research and research management alone are responsible and expendable.

George E. Ham, Editor