Business and Technical Support for the Design of Agile Production Plants

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Abstract
Many manufacturing companies in the pharmaceutical, agrochemical and specialty chemical industries are pursuing business strategies based on the innovation of high-value products. Such a focus renders agility a key organisational attribute, although past evidence indicates that technical and business aspects need to be more adequately combined to deliver high performance when innovating. This paper describes the results of an action research initiative, involving business school academics, chemical engineers and practitioners, that was undertaken to develop a framework and tools for designing and developing agile processes and plant for these industries. A key aspect of this work has been the integration of business and technical agendas within the framework and tools that were developed and trialed in three major industry case studies.

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