

INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN NETWORKS OF SMALL FIRMS

Challenges in a Globalized World

Renata Lèbre La Rovere

Instituto de Economia/Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, (Institute of Economics, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Abstract: This paper assumes that globalization poses competitive challenges to small and medium - sized enterprises (SMEs) that can be surpassed if these firms insert themselves in networks. The first section discusses how SMEs can define a competitive strategy. The second section shows how the insertion of SMEs in a network, especially SMEs that belong to a local productive system, can enhance their competitiveness. The third section discusses how information systems can structure a network of SMEs. In the concluding section issues for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Information Systems, Competitiveness, Networks.

About the Author

Renata Lèbre La Rovere is an associate professor at the Instituto de Economia, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Institute of Economics of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), Brazil, since 1993. She was born at Rio de Janeiro, got her degree in Economics at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and did her Ph.D. in Industrial Economics at the Université Paris 7, France. Prof. La Rovere was a visiting scholar at the Management and Information Systems Department of the University of Arizona, U.S.A., between 1991 and 1992. She also did a post-doctoral research at the Information Systems Department of Rostock University, Germany, between 1995 and 1996. Her main lines of research explore the impacts of information and communication technologies on the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises and the importance of SMEs for local development. She can be contacted by e-mail at renata@ie.ufrj.br