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PRESS RELEASE

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**ABI, banks the leading sector for investing in innovation**

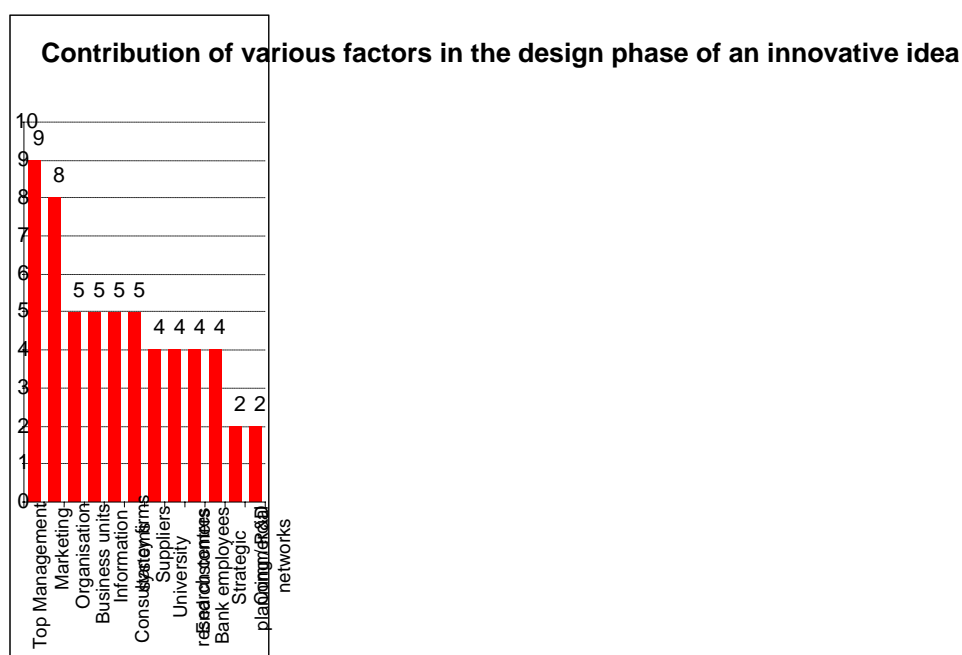
*The sixth edition of the ABI Lab Forum held Tuesday, 23 March and Wednesday, 24 March at Palazzo  
Mezzanotte in Milan  
2010 Report on "Technology in Banking" presented*

Suggestions and desires of customers, ideas from employees, new trends in the market and changes imposed by legislation: these are the primary "sources" of innovation in Italian banks that, with a quarter of total investment dedicated to IT, has proven to be the business sector that spends the most on technology in the country. According to the report prepared by ABI Lab – ABI's Consortium for Research and Innovation in Banking - the "calling" to innovate processes, products and services has driven 65% of the sector to establish departments dedicated to coordinating innovation projects. In addition, in order to stimulate innovation, one banking group out of every three relies on top management capable of supporting change and a creative and receptive business environment that facilitates the exchange of information and promotes the generation of new ideas (36%). Other decisive factors in promoting a culture of innovation include internal communication and collaboration between the various bank functions, which is made increasingly more effective through latest generation tools such as chat, instant messaging, forums and business communities. The innovation projects with the greatest impact are chiefly related to organisational structure and productive processes, but also involve introducing new technologies and multi-channel product and service development. In addition, if banks primarily look within the organisation for innovation, stimuli from the outside - the market, customers, competition, and legislative changes - play a pivotal role and are often transformed into innovative technology solutions.

According to the study, which will be presented Tuesday on the first day of the ABI Lab Forum, customers' needs are considered by the sector to be the most important factor in instigating creative processes and change. In fact, one third of banks involve their customer directly in the development phase for innovative new services, through interactive communication tools such as online communities and social networks (6%). The launch of new products or services cannot disregard attention to planning: this area also shows positive results, with 79% of institutions stating that they respect the forecasted time and costs. Finally, 93% of the sector continuously monitors the effectiveness of implemented innovations.

The sixth edition of the ABI Lab Forum will be held on Tuesday, 23 March and Wednesday, 24 March at Palazzo Mezzanotte in Milan. During the two days dedicated to studying innovation and technologies in branches, banks, businesses and public entities, the Forum will review the latest trends in technology, the most innovative products and the most evolved tools in the banking sector to offer increasingly better solutions to customers. The first day of the convention will open with an institutional session on the interaction between banks and public entities and, specifically, on the 2012 eGovernment Plan and on the innovative services developed to manage

information more quickly, securely and efficiently. This will be followed by four parallel sessions dedicated to banking processes, dematerialisation, innovation and IT and TLC architectures, and an analysis of the international security scenario. The second and final day of the Forum will address new opportunities in developing services for the general public resulting from the closer collaboration among banks, businesses and public entities.



Rome, Palazzo Altieri, 19 March 2010