Organizations face various challenges caused by social and economic change. Particular problems are the demographical change and thus the lack of skilled labour and changed employee needs. An approach to face these challenges is the idea to open up organizational boundaries and adjust them towards the organization’s environment.

This paper clarifies this Open Organization approach with background in the field of product development. The goal of this contribution is to introduce the concept of Open Organization into the product development domain by specifying our understanding of Open Organization. Therefore existing definitions and descriptions from literature are analysed. Within this topic our research focuses on two opening dimensions of an organization: Knowledge and persons. Both can be commonly used or shared over existing organizational boundaries.

Accordingly, a classification of opening types is presented. A main finding of our research is that ‘open’ is not merely a status to describe organizations – instead, the opening of an organization is a process that requires constant adjustments.
and negotiations. This paper contributes an approach to support the opening process of companies with focus on the development process. Open Organization extends the idea of Open Innovation by adding the exchange of individuals as knowledge carriers to the exchange of knowledge. This approach consists of a set of developed methods, strategies and tools.

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