

None of the case studies involved an industrial consortium or licensing from DOE or a national laboratory to industry. An informal inventory of OBCS technology transfer activities in 1986 and 1987 did not uncover a single instance of these strategies. The cost of establishing industry consortia is probably a major deterrent to the industrial consortium strategy. Another stumbling block is the tendency for consortia to disintegrate over time. Patent policies and procedures, in turn, have made it difficult for DOE laboratories to obtain patent waivers and, therefore, the ability to license technologies. As these procedures become more expeditious, licensing may become a valuable strategy for OBCS. Recent changes in patent policies could potentially expedite the move of products to the marketplace, but much depends on implementation.

6.2 WHEN IS EACH STRATEGY MOST APPROPRIATE?

There are many factors that affect the appropriateness of one technology transfer strategy over another. The nature of the R&D results being transferred, the potential applications, the producer and consumer markets, existing barriers to adoption and use, and DOE's goals and resources are among the factors that should be considered. These factors are discussed below. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the total context must be considered when designing a technology transfer strategy; the role of each factor cannot be thoroughly understood in isolation from the others. As will become clear, it is sometimes difficult to quantify and measure key factors, which inhibits the development and application of general rules.