

The Emerging Dimensions of Knowledge Management

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ABSTRACT

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Knowledge management aims to foster knowledge in the organisation by making its sharing and caring an easy task. The task is meant to not be too complex for general users and to be safe to specific users. In the present study, emerging dimensions of Knowledge Management is captured as a theoretical concept. It is important for both the empirical researchers and policymakers. The study is divided into five sections namely, Introduction, Conceptual Framework, Review of Literature, Emerging Dimensions and Conclusion. Section 1 introduces the reader to the theme of the paper while section 2 focuses on concepts of knowledge management. Section 3 considers the existing body of knowledge related to Knowledge Management. Section 4 is discussion on the emerging dimensions of knowledge management and eventually the study concludes in section 5.

KEYWORDS: - *Knowledge management, Emerging Dimensions, Knowledge Process etc.*

Introduction

In the present world of globalisation knowledge management is one of the widely disused and talked about area globally. Knowledge Management, (KM) is a concept and a term that arose approximately two decades ago, roughly in 1990. Quite simply one might say that it means organizing an organization's information and knowledge holistically, but that sounds a bit woolly, and surprisingly enough, even though it sounds overbroad, it is not the whole picture. Very early on in the KM movement, Davenport (1994) offered the still widely quoted definition:

"Knowledge management is the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge."

This definition has the virtue of being simple, stark, and to the point. A few years later, the

Gartner Group created another second definition of KM, which is perhaps the most frequently cited one (Duhon, 1998):

"Knowledge management is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing all of an enterprise's information assets. These assets may include databases, documents, policies, procedures, and previously un-captured expertise and experience in individual workers."

Both definitions share a very organizational, a very corporate orientation. KM, historically at least, is primarily about managing the knowledge of and in organizations.

The operational origin of KM, as the term is understood today, arose within the consulting community and from there the principles of KM were rather rapidly spread by the consulting

organizations to other disciplines. The consulting firms quickly realized the potential of the Intranet flavour of the Internet for linking together their own geographically dispersed and knowledge-based organizations. Once having gained expertise in how to take advantage of intranets to connect across their organizations and to share and manage information and knowledge, they then understood that the expertise they had gained was a product that could be sold to other organizations. A new product of course needed a name, and the name chosen, or at least arrived at, was Knowledge Management. The timing was propitious, as the enthusiasm for intellectual capital in the 1980s, had primed the pump for the recognition of information and knowledge as essential assets for any organization. Perhaps the most central thrust in KM is to capture and make available, so it can be used by others in the organization, the information and knowledge that is in people's heads as it were, and that has never been explicitly set down. In the present study, with this background the merging dimensions are identified and discussed.

Conceptual Framework

Knowledge management is the name of a concept in which an enterprise consciously and comprehensively gathers, organizes, shares, and analyzes its knowledge in terms of resources, documents, and people skills. In early 1998, it was believed that few enterprises actually had a comprehensive knowledge management practice (by any name) in operation. Advances in technology and the way we access and share information have changed that; many enterprises now have some kind of knowledge management framework in place.

Knowledge management involves data mining and some method of operation to push information to users. A knowledge management plan involves a survey of corporate goals and a close examination of the tools, both traditional and technical, that are

required for addressing the needs of the company. The challenge of selecting a knowledge management system is to purchase or build software that fits the context of the overall plan and encourages employees to use the system and share information. The goal of a knowledge management system is to provide managers with the ability to organize and locate relevant content and the expertise required to address specific business tasks and projects. Some knowledge management systems can analyze the relationships between content, people, topics and activity and produce a knowledge map report or knowledge management dashboard. In an *Information Week* article, Jeff Angus and Jeetu Patel describe a four-process view of knowledge management that we have put into a table:

Table 1: Knowledge Management Process

This major process...	Includes these activities...
Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data entry • OCR and scanning • Voice input • Pulling information from various sources • Searching for information to include
Organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cataloging • Indexing • Filtering • Linking
Refining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualizing • Collaborating • Compacting • Projecting • Mining
Disseminating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flow • Sharing • Alert • Push

Source: Retrieved from <http://searchdomino.techtarget.com/definition/knowledge-management>



Review of Literature

Lots of work has been conducted on the dimensions of knowledge management. The role of the researcher, considered the quintessential information worker, has been studied in depth with a focus on identifying environmental aspects that lead to successful research (Koenig, 1990, 1992), and the strongest relationship by far is with information and knowledge access and communication. The classic example in the KM literature of true "tacit" knowledge is Nonaka and Takeuchi's example of the kinesthetic knowledge that was necessary to design and engineer a home bread maker, knowledge that could only be gained or transferred by having engineers work alongside bread makers and learn the motions and the "feel" necessary to knead bread dough (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The Captain's Patrol Reports were very clearly designed to encourage analytical reporting, with reasoned analyses of the reasons for failure and success. It was emphasized that a key purpose of the report was to make recommendations about strategy for senior officers to mull over and about tactics for other skippers to take advantage of (McInerney and Koenig, 2011). Larry Prusak (2004) opines that in the corporate world the number one KM implementation failure is that so often the project team is disbanded and the team members reassigned before there is any debriefing or after-action report assembled. The emerging use of CoPs is also to be noted. CoPs are groups of individuals with shared interests that come together in person or virtually to tell stories, to share and discuss problems and opportunities, discuss best practices, and talk over lessons learned (Wenger, 1998; Wenger & Snyder, 1999). Ernst and Young organized the first conference on KM in 1992 in Boston to capture the changes occurring in knowledge management practices (Prusak, 1999). The salient point is that the first stage of KM was about how to deploy

that new technology to accomplish more effective use of information and knowledge.

Emerging Dimension of Knowledge Management

Here a discussion is build on the emerging dimensions of the knowledge management.

Personal Knowledge Management

A number of organizations have implemented a KM strategy for personal knowledge management. This is a 'bottom up' approach and comes from the belief that by improving the personal ability of employees to better identify, capture, store, share and apply their personal knowledge, this will inevitably result, as an automatic outcome, in better knowledge management at the team, organizational, and inter-organizational levels.

The other driver for personal knowledge management is the growing need, for many individuals and organizations, to better tackle 'information overload' and make more sense of our world, to develop more focus, to become more proactive in task prioritization and decision making, to better manage time and projects. This also comes from the realisation that this will reduce stress, increase personal creativity and productivity, and lead to greatly improved work-life balance.

The personal or individual level refers to the personal knowledge, capabilities, experiences, competencies and personal development issues for each individual knowledge worker. Therefore, the strategies, methods and tools used for this dimension are at the personal level, and include methods and tools to personally capture, learn, interpret, envision, analyse, synthesize, communicate, create, share and apply. Personal knowledge management has been greatly accelerated by mobile, wireless and web-based tools such as smart phones, iPads, cameras and camcorders, personal computers, search engines, tweeting, blogging, wiki's (wikipedia) websites etc

Team Knowledge Management

A number of organizations have implemented a KM strategy for team knowledge management. This is an approach that comes from the realisation that teams are 'the key knowledge work units' or knowledge engines of the organization. It has been recognized that a team that 'collaborates' well transfers knowledge between members much faster, and, as importantly, is a powerful creator of new knowledge. Project team leaders can now produce new knowledge as a key deliverable, as well as, and alongside the traditional project deliverables. Team knowledge management, therefore, is based on 'Share' or 'Pull' models of information and knowledge transfer, as opposed to the overused 'Send' or 'Push' models that create information overload. It is also based on team knowledge plans. With the introduction of powerful collaborative team technologies, in the late 1980's early 1990's, it became possible, for the first time, for more effective collaborative virtual and cross functional team working across organizations and across the globe. As with personal knowledge management, team knowledge management has been greatly accelerated by mobile, wireless and web-based tools communication and collaboration tools.

Organizational Knowledge Management

Most organizations have first embarked on an 'organizational knowledge management' approach. The intention being to introduce a KM strategy and a supporting infrastructure for better creating, storing, sharing and apply knowledge across the entire organization. This approach is primarily a 'top down approach'. It starts by identifying the key knowledge assets, or critical knowledge assets of the organization that are needed to achieve its objectives, and then sets out to develop and leverage those assets as fast as possible. To do this, the organization sets up an organization-wide infrastructure to enable the

identification, capturing, storing, sharing and applying of knowledge, retention and the re-use of knowledge assets. More continuous and collective processes, to capture new learning's and ideas before, during, and after work events, and then turn them into good practice and knowledge repositories are implemented. Organization-wide expert locators, and communities of practice, to accelerate knowledge flows, are developed. Powerful organizational knowledge systems and tools are used to support these organization-wide knowledge activities, including intranets, knowledge portals, taxonomies, collaborative work spaces, locators, network and community tools, powerful search, document management systems, wiki's, blogs, tweets, mobile and wireless tools etc

Inter-Organizational Knowledge Management

The level of inter-organizational management refers to inter-enterprise relationships and knowledge value networks and partnerships. Hence, knowledge networks with customers, suppliers, partners, competitors, sub-contractors, stakeholders etc. Some organizations have embarked on these relationships at a global level, for example, inter-governmental agencies, United Nations agencies, regional knowledge networks and knowledge clusters, and the development of common national knowledge platforms etc. Inter-Organizational knowledge management is based on the realisation that the most valuable knowledge sources and resources can be, and probably are, outside your own organization. Commercial organizations and educational establishments are increasingly co-partnering with customers, suppliers and even competitors, to collaborate, share and develop new knowledge and innovative products and services, together as one.

Conclusion

In the end it would be justified to say that the present world of globalisation is heavily dependent on knowledge management practices. The emerging dimensions include personal knowledge management, team knowledge management, organizational knowledge management and Inter-Organizational Knowledge Management. The coming ages will witness the discussion

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