

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ORGANISATIONAL SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is the vehicle for any productive economy, knowledge resides in the individual as tacit knowledge and in machine and database of organization as explicit knowledge. Knowledge management starts with the collection of data, or information. Knowledge is tactically created, evaluated, transferred or stored. This paper highlights the concept of knowledge management strategies: essential tools on organizational success. Various component of knowledge management were discussed. This includes the people, process, technology and with an effective organizational culture. The paper also pinpoint on the key question in implementing knowledge management strategy which are; where are we now? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? This is why most of the authors define knowledge management strategy according to the organizational structure. Knowledge management as an essential tool for organizational success gives a clear roadmap on how data or information can be retrieved from the individual, evaluated and transferred or stored in the database. Knowledge is an asset to organization, and it is a competitive edge over the competitors because of this people or organization are not ready to give out necessary because of its value. Many authors have erroneously indicated that knowledge identification, creation, evaluation and transfer as knowledge management strategy. Knowledge management strategy is the tactical use of technology. People, technology and the process equal to knowledge management. The development of knowledge management strategy is based on the organizational strategy.

Keywords: Knowledge, Management, Strategy, Tools, Organizational success

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management is the process of delivering the right knowledge to/from the right people at the right time with the right composition and the right degree of abstractness, it is the collective activity in achieving the key elements of the organization processes, which involves the integration of data, information and experience at the different levels of the organization. Knowledge management is the process of identifying, developing, distributing and the keeping of up-to-date strategically significant knowledge of the organization (Géraud, 2005). The collection of activities is not restricted to the information needed at a particular time, but has to ensure the knowledge base for the stable functioning of the organization. The knowledge is acquired from both internal and external repository or database of the organization. Knowledge exists either in the implicit (human) or explicit (stored in machines, database or computers). For an organization to be successful, external knowledge acquisition and transfer is of overriding importance (Dezso, 2002). This means that the organization must develop strategies that will aid the easy acquisition and transfer of the knowledge based on knowledge need of the organization. Strategy is a unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the actions and decisions of an individual or organization. Strategy is formulated and aligned with business strategies (Lee and Chin, 2012).

Strategy refers to a general plan of action for achieving one's goals and objectives (Dezso, 2002). A strategy or general plan of action might be formulated for broad, long-term, corporate goals and objectives, for more specific business unit and objectives, or for a functional unit, even one as small as a cost center. Such goals might or might not address the nature of the organization, its culture, the kind of company its leadership wants it to be, the markets it will or won't enter, the basis on which it will compete, or any other attribute, quality or characteristic of the organization.

Organizational culture is the glue of the organization, (Bathazard and Cooke, 2004). Looking at this concept, strategy is viewed as tactics, it relates to how a given end is to be attained. Strategy and tactics bridge the gap between ends and means. Resources are allocated or deployed and then employed in the course of executing a given strategy so as to realize the end in view. The establishment of the end to be attained does indeed call for strategic thinking, but it is separate from settling on the strategy that will realize them, the process of achieving the mean like knowledge identification, creation, evaluation and sharing will be achieved through ensuring proper strategy based on the organizational culture. The application of knowledge can consist of using knowledge to solve new problems, applying stored knowledge to improve efficiency, linking sources of knowledge to problems, using knowledge to adjust strategic direction, using knowledge from past mistakes. Knowledge application can be seen in terms of the type or amount of learning in the difference between knowledge exploration and exploitation. The process involves strategically, acquisition, knowledge diffusion, application and storage .

Knowledge management is based on the idea that an organisation's most valuable resource is the knowledge of its people. Therefore, the extent to which an organisation performs well, will depend, among other things, on how effectively its people can strategically create new knowledge, share knowledge around the organisation, and use that knowledge to increase productivity or achieve greater success. A good knowledge management helps to;

- increase awareness and understanding of knowledge management in the organization
- articulate the business case and identify potential benefits of using the right knowledge
- be able to gain senior management commitment or contribution
- attract resources for implementation
- communicate good knowledge management practice
- give you a clear, communicable plan about where you are now, where you want to go, and how to plan to get there
- give you a basis against which to measure your progress

Development knowledge management strategy is a management activity, different organizations have successfully developed their knowledge management strategy, as well as ways of presenting the strategy document itself. Although, there is no one way of developing knowledge management strategy, depending on the organization. Some organizations will probably need a detailed, formal strategy document whereas for a smaller organisation something brief and less formal in nature might be more appropriate. For a large organization, it is necessary to develop strategic document because it contains a general guideline of implementation. Strategy of any kind will include answers to three key questions (2WH): Where are we now, Where do we want to be, and How do we get there? A relatively brief and informal knowledge management strategy might be structured around these three questions.

Where are we now?

The question of where are we now is an assessment of the current situation. How does current knowledge management practice (or lack of it) affect the organisation's ability to meet its goals? How does it affect the effectiveness of individuals and teams? To what extent does the organisation's culture, processes and systems currently act as enablers of, or barriers to, good knowledge management practice?

Where do we want to be?

Where do we want to be is a decision to outline what knowledge management will do for the organisation. How will it help the organisation and the people in it to meet their objectives? What might "good knowledge management practice" look like for this organisation specifically? How will you know when you are there i.e. how will you measure the progress and value of your efforts?

How do we get there?

Describing the specific actions that will be taken to get to where you want to be. An action plan covering the three key elements of people, processes and technology: what specific knowledge management tools and processes will you use; how will you motivate people and realign your organisational culture to a "knowledge friendly" one, and how will you develop the supporting technological infrastructure? It also needs to include details of resources required, deliverables, timescales and responsibilities.

In developing a knowledge management strategy, various practitioners offer a range of tips, some of which are outlined here:

1. Start with your organisation's strategy and objectives: The most important factor in guiding a knowledge management strategy is the organisation's overall strategy and goals. Given that the whole purpose of knowledge management is to help the organisation to achieve its goals, the knowledge management strategy should describe precisely that. In order to do that, you need to understand what your organisational goals are, and how you are currently performing against them. Talk to key people throughout your organisation about strategy and goals. Look at what various departments or functions are doing. Discuss plans for the future, and look at factors that influence reaching goals. Get a feel for how sub-optimal knowledge management might be currently limiting the organisation in achieving its goals, and how better knowledge management might help it to achieve them. Look for gaps that could prevent the organisation from achieving its goals. As you talk to people, be on the look out for the issues that are really causing them problems their "pains". As well as problems, look for opportunities, not only the chance to fix things, but also the chance to do something new or better. Needs, problems, pains and opportunities gives you an opening to use knowledge to make a difference, As well as being an integral part of the wider organisational strategy, a knowledge management strategy should also be coherent with human resources and information technology strategies.
2. Conduct a knowledge audit. A knowledge audit is an investigation into an organisation's knowledge management "health". A typical audit will look at: What are the organisation's knowledge needs?, What knowledge assets or resources does it have and where are they?, What gaps exist in its knowledge?, How does knowledge flow around the organisation?, What blockages are there to that flow?, To what extent do its people, processes and technology currently support or hamper the effective knowledge management? The knowledge audit can reveal the organisation's knowledge management needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and risks. It provides an evidence-based assessment of where the organisation needs to focus its knowledge management efforts.
3. Think about people, processes and technology. When planning your approach to knowledge management, be sure to address each of the three key aspects of people, processes and technology. It is often said that any knowledge management strategy that does not incorporate all three is destined to fail.
4. Think about capturing versus connecting. A key decision in developing your strategy and in selecting knowledge management tools and techniques involves looking at the relative focus on explicit and tacit knowledge – in other words, do you want to focus on connecting people with information, or on connecting people with people? Of course this is not an "either/or" decision and most knowledge management strategies tend to involve a combination of the two; the optimal balance between them will depend on your organisational context.
5. Balance a long-term vision with quick wins A good strategy will reflect a balance between "quick-wins" and building a sustainable knowledge management capability into the long-term. The advantage of quick wins is that they allow people to see immediate benefits, and therefore they are more likely to give their support. As well as seeking a number of quick wins, try not to be over-ambitious in the short to medium term. Avoid long lists of things to do. You cannot change an organisation culture and ingrained work habits overnight. Pick a few core activities where

you can make a difference, and prioritise and focus on those. At the same time, do keep your long-term vision in view.

6. What's in it for me? Gaining support and acceptance for your strategy and ultimately embedding knowledge management into the organisation is about winning "hearts and minds". Think constantly about addressing the "what's in it for me?" question that those whose contribution is needed will invariably ask (and even if they don't ask it in so many words, you can be fairly sure they are thinking it). Always anticipate that question from all of those involved – senior managers, budget-holders, middle managers, staff, patients, those departments and functions whose support you will need such as human resources and information technology. In answering the "what's in it for me?" question, consider the three key levels of "me": myself, my team/department/function, and my organisation as a whole.
7. Build the evidence with pilots The vast majority of knowledge management practitioners who have learned from direct experience strongly recommend using a pilot project as a "test bed" before launching any new knowledge management initiatives. Pilots have a number of advantages: they allow you to test an approach with a small group of users to find what works and what doesn't, and to refine your approach and "get it right" before rolling out across the wider organisation. This means that when rolling out, you already have evidence to demonstrate that what you are advocating actually works in practice. Similarly, your learning and "mistakes" have taken place in a contained environment, so they will not have a negative impact on the organisation as a whole view of knowledge management. You are therefore strongly advised to build pilot projects into your knowledge management strategy before seeking to launch any major new initiatives.

Knowledge Management strategies is summarized into three basic approaches, based on people oriented, technology and process.

Different approach to knowledge management

Different approaches to knowledge management reflect distinct perspectives, conceptualizations, and methodologies that emerge from particular disciplinary backgrounds, specific interpretations of what knowledge is and how it can be managed, and the varied backgrounds and agendas of those involved in knowledge management. Since the field is relatively new, existing approaches are varied and diverse. It is possible, however, to group them in some relevant types. The most ordinary type of approaches to knowledge management seem to be technology-oriented ones, which emphasize the explicit nature of knowledge, and tend to interpret it as an object that can be stored in bases and transferred using information and communication technologies. People-oriented approaches, on the other hand, highlight the tacit nature of knowledge, and tend to understand it as a social, context-dependent process of understanding that requires human communication and cognition in order to emerge. These approaches accept the relational perspective on knowledge management, the development or flow perspectives on knowledge, personalization or human strategies for KM and behavioral schools of KM . These two prominent types of approach reflect a major division in the KM literature and practice between technology and people orientation. Some authors favor one over the other, either technology-oriented approaches or people-oriented ones. They both are effective tools on organizational success. The major issue is that, a balance is preferred, and an organization can benefit from using both types of approaches in different circumstances, for different purposes. Other relevant types of approaches include asset-oriented, which focus on measuring the economic value of knowledge, thus referred to as intellectual capital or intangible asset, and process-oriented ones, which focus on increasing business processes effectiveness by providing employees with context-specific knowledge at the task level (Shaw, Hall, Edward, and Baker, 2007).

Knowledge intentions are the substance of a knowledge strategy, and are derived from the comparison between existing and required knowledge resources. Knowledge resources can exist

internally or be available externally; thus, generic knowledge intents are to: leverage existing internal knowledge, acquire existing external knowledge and Create new knowledge.

Linking KM technologies to KM strategy:

It is possible to understand the relation between KM technologies and business strategy by analyzing the three meanings associated with KM strategy. A given KM program is strategic if:

- There is a knowledge strategy in place, which defines knowledge intents that support a particular knowledge-based competitive strategy.
- The program includes a set of KM initiatives that directly or indirectly support those knowledge intents.
- Since KM technologies are always used in the context of KM initiatives, if those initiatives do support a knowledge strategy, then the technologies have strategic value. It is also possible to identify four ways by which KM initiatives can be used strategically.

KM initiatives naturally follow a particular approach to KM, the prominent ones being personalization and codification. If those initiatives support knowledge intent, then we have also a balance between creating and transferring knowledge. By combining knowledge intents with approaches to KM, we have the following possibilities:

- Creating knowledge according to a personalization approach.
- Creating knowledge according to a codification approach.
- Transferring knowledge according to a personalization approach.

Reiter, Scripada, and Robertso (2003) stated that organizations are facing ever-increasing challenges, brought on by marketplace pressures or the nature of the workplace. He remarked that there could be many approaches for developing a knowledge management strategy. Each of these approaches is meant to be supported by a holistic model of KM processes. Robertson (2003) proposed an approach for developing KM strategy which are;

1. Top-down: Using the overall strategic direction of the organization for identifying the focus of the knowledge management initiative. Ultimately, this broad goal would be met using a specially designed activities.
2. Bottom-up: This requires that some research is conducted into the activities of staff involved in key business processes. The key staff needs and issues would follow from the outcome of the research. A range of knowledge management initiatives would be needed to tackle the needs and issues.

Knowledge management strategy incorporates a lot of interactive and collaborative advanced communication technology.

The communication technologies available can be used internally and externally and bring to speed the desired interactivity and interconnectivity in knowledge storage and sharing. However, most staff are not aware of the availability of these technologies due some of the challenges as a result of component. Knowledge management strategy now makes use of the new tools that make use of convergence media which can be accessed from multiple gadgets. The use of new media has not been fully exploited in the knowledge management strategy.

Implementation of knowledge management strategy is the time for organizational change. For many organizations, the time of rapid technological change is also the time of incessant struggle for maintaining a competitive advantage. It is obvious that knowledge is slowly becoming the most important factor of production, next to labour, land and capital. The people oriented knowledge management strategy mean, the people should think of the organization as the first and not personal objective so that the knowledge can be transfer. This is because even though some forms of intellectual capital are transferable, internal knowledge is not easily copied. This means that the knowledge anchored in employees'

minds can get lost if they decide to leave the organisation. Therefore, the key objective of management is to strategically improve the processes of acquisition, integration and usage of knowledge, which is exactly what knowledge management(KM)is all about.

Knowledge Management Success Factors

Digman (1999) asserts that the critical success factors (tools) is useful for structuring organizational analysis because there is an important link between organizational analysis and critical success factors leading to organizational success. The analyses of these factors provide an important meaning to knowledge management through the identification of core processes that are critical to successful knowledge management implementation. Thus, a knowledge management strategy needs to identify critical performance indicators of success factors to gauge its performance (Choi, 2000).

In achieving this, various knowledge management models have been reviewed so that a unified framework of knowledge management strategy can be developed. From the analyses of the models, it was found that several studies have proposed several key variables for successful implementation of knowledge management strategy. For example, Davenport et al. (1998) have identified eight knowledge management tools;

- (1) technology infrastructure;
- (2) organizational infrastructure;
- (3) balance of flexibility, evolution and ease-of-accessibility to knowledge;
- (4) shared knowledge;
- (5) knowledge-friendly culture;
- (6) motivated workers who develop, share and use knowledge;
- (7) means of knowledge transfer using various information technology infrastructure; and
- (8) senior management support and commitment.

Ryan propose five success factors such as

- (1) an open organizational culture;
- (2) senior management leadership and commitment;
- (3) employee involvement;
- (4) teamwork and
- (5) information systems infrastructure.

Moffett, McAdam, and Parkinson, (2003),Identified ten key components to successful adopting knowledgemanagement strategy as (1) a friendly organizational culture; (2) senior management leadership and commitment; (3) employee involvement; (4) employee training; (5) trustworthy teamwork; (6) employee empowerment; (7) information systems infrastructure; (8) performance measurement; (9) benchmarking and (10) knowledge structure.

However, except for Moffett, McAdam, and Parkinson, (2003), none of the frameworks can provide a complete and generalized frame for knowledge management strategy by defining fundamental attributes of knowledge management and organizational interrelationships.

Knowledge management and organizational success

Knowledge management is identified as a framework for designing an organisation's strategy, structures, and processes so that the organisation can use what it knows to learn and to create economic and social value for its customers and community. Organisations need a good capacity to retain, develop, organise, and utilise their employees' capabilities in order to remain at the forefront and have an edge over competitors. Knowledge and the management of knowledge is regarded as an important features for organisational survival; while the key to understanding the successes and failures of knowledge management within organisations is the identification of resources that allow organisations to recognize, create, transform and distribute knowledge. Organisations that effectively manage and transfer their knowledge are more innovative and perform better (Riege, 2007). Successful organisations now understand why they must manage knowledge, develop plans as to how to accomplish this objective and devote time and energy to these efforts. This is because

knowledge management has been described as a key driver of organisational success. (Bousa and Venkitachalam, 2013), and one of the most important resources for the survival and prosperity of organisations (Kamhawi, 2012). Therefore managing and utilizing knowledge effectively is vital for organisations to take full advantage of the value of knowledge. More attention is given to the practice and acquisition of knowledge as a result of changes in the environment such as increasing globalization of competition, speed of information and knowledge aging, dynamics of both product and process innovations, and competition through buyer markets (Greiner, Bohmann and Krcmar, 2007).

In a knowledge based economy, Knowledge Management strategy is increasingly viewed as critical to organisational effectiveness and success (Bosua and Venkitachalem, 2013). Martensson (2000) considers KM as an important and necessary component for organisations to survive and maintain competitive keenness and so it is necessary for managers and executives to consider knowledge management as a prerequisite for higher productivity and flexibility in both the private and the public sectors. There was an initial notion that knowledge management is just another management fad and fashion that executives are eager to add to their assortment of boardroom lexicon to impress contemporaries and that with time, this will fade away (Oluikpe, 2012).

Knowledge management represents a potentially very important subject area which not only opens up new ways of theorizing about the nature of organisations, but also has the potential to be highly relevant to the interests of the business world in improving business success. It has been said that knowledge has always been a valuable asset in management.

Contribution of knowledge management to the organization success

Many organisations have realized that technology-based competitive advantages are transient and that the only sustainable competitive advantages they have are their employees and so to remain at the forefront and maintain a competitive edge organisations must have a good capacity to retain, develop, organise, and utilise their employee competencies. The realization came that processes and technology alone are not enough to drive an organisation but its human force (staff) are very integral pivot in organisation's success.

Wang and Noe (2010) define knowledge as "information processed by individuals including ideas, facts, expertise, and judgment relevant for individual, team, and organisational performance." Davenport and Prusak (1998) define knowledge as "A fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers" Knowledge is the insights, understandings, and practical know-how that people possess. It is the fundamental resource that allows people function intelligently. It can then be stated that knowledge is an invisible or intangible asset, in which its acquisition involves complex cognitive processes of perception, learning, communication, association and reasoning (Epetimehin and Ekundayo, 2011).

The ability of humans to think creatively and uniquely, coupled with experiences and talents, make humans valuable sources of knowledge. People are the creators and consumers of knowledge because individuals consume knowledge from various sources on a daily basis, in addition to creating knowledge. In essence, KM begins, revolves around, and ends, with people. It is therefore pertinent to consider people in knowledge management strategy and implementation. People face emergent knowledge needs as part of daily assignment or routine. And these needs should be met through tools, processes, systems and protocols to seek integrate and apply relevant knowledge. Baloh, Desouza, and Paquette (2011) define processes, which is another knowledge management component, as mechanical and logical artifacts that guide how work is conducted in organisations. Processes govern work in organisation and so are critical to the functioning of organisation. It is therefore pertinent for a KM program to recognize their importance. Processes might be made of, and executed by, humans, machines, or a combination of the two. A critical requirement for KM is

to be able to understand work processes and how to map them. By so doing, inputs, outputs, personnel, resources and work being conducted in a given process can be easily described. Mapping of processes helps to depict what is really going on in the organisation and how tasks are being accomplished. Knowledge needed to accomplish tasks can then be articulated and requisite technology or human intervention can be deployed to meet these needs with the goal of increasing effectiveness and efficiency in the organisation.

Technology is a critical enabler and foundational element of a KM plan. With the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), KM can be attained through technological solutions. ICTs facilitate collaboration between people and teams which are geographically dispersed. ICTs also facilitate KM activities through the codification of knowledge as well as rich and interactive forms of communication through the Internet. While technology is important and can significantly enable KM, it is pertinent to state that it is not a solution in and of itself. Technology does not make organisation share knowledge, but if people want to share it, technology can increase the reach and scope of such exchanges. Putting an ICT-based KM system in place is not in and of itself going to make people utilise it, but the success of KM initiatives involves taking account of the socio-cultural factors which inhibit people's willingness to share knowledge, such as conflict, trust, time or concerns about loss of power/status (Sun and Scott, 2005).

Therefore in organisation, it can be said that organisational knowledge is embodied and embrained in the staff, embedded in routines/common tasks, encultured among the staff, and encoded in manuals, guidelines and procedures. Davenport and Prusak (2000) says that in organisations, knowledge becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories, but also in organisational routines, processes, practices, norms and cultures. Organisational knowledge is therefore the sum of the critical intellectual capital residing within an organisation. It is embedded knowledge which is found primarily in specialized relationships among individuals and groups and in particular norms, attitudes, information flows, and ways of making decisions that shape their dealings with each other. Management is therefore concerned with the four critical activities: planning, organizing, controlling and leading. Planning is a decision making process whereby a course of action is created to move from a current state to a desired state. It includes gathering information, creating a vision and mission statement, defining goals and objectives, developing strategies, choosing the best course of action, designing and developing the plan to implement the course of action. This all encapsulate knowledge management strategy. Organising involves securing resources, including human resources, financial resources, and physical resources, which are required to implement the plan. Organising requires good communication in order to justify needs and allocate scarce resources within an organisation. Controlling is the process of measuring and evaluating progress and outcomes, and taking corrective action as needed, collecting feedback in order to better control operations and outcomes they will produce. Leading is the ability to inspire shared vision and action among individuals or groups in order to achieve a common goal. According to Peter Drucker, "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things" (Drucker, 2006). Invariably, the management in the phrase Knowledge management deals with planning, organizing and controlling knowledge as well as leading as knowledge champion.

The Management of Knowledge Hislop (2013) define KM as "an umbrella term which refers to any deliberate efforts to manage the knowledge of an organisation's workforce, which can be achieved via a wide range of methods including directly, through the use of particular types of ICT, or more indirectly through the management of social processes, the structuring of organisation in particular ways or via the use of particular culture and people management practices". Defining KM could be really tasking because KM is a highly interdisciplinary field that attracts scholars and practitioners from various fields (philosophy, information science, library science, economics, management, sociology, engineering, among others). Searching through so many definitions from various authors,

the definition from Petrash (1996) is adopted, which state that KM is getting the right information in front of the right people at the right time.

Summary

In summary, knowledge management strategy aligned with the business vision and management to ensure that staff is clearly on board. As an essential tool on organizational productivity, it helps them to understand why knowledge is important; chief information officers must practice what they preach. They must have channels for discussion and allow a flow of ideas. Feedback must be given and above all trust must be developed between the executive and the staff. To be successful, Knowledge management strategy does more than just outline high-level goals such as 'become a knowledge-enabled organization'. The strategy identified the key needs and issues within the organization, and provide a framework for addressing these. As a tool, this approach ensures that any activities and initiatives are firmly grounded in the real needs and challenges confronting the organization. Knowledge management strategy firmly connects organizational vision to creation economic value and competitive gain. Knowledge management strategy is attained within the framework of business strategy. Firms are unparalleled in their business and hence ought to do extensive of soul checking and screening to obtain some answers to questions that need to be methodically tackled to transform today's knowledge management direction into one connected to the strategy and into a continuing method to perform business. Firms started to build technologically advanced knowledge management infrastructures that are competitive and they are capable to concentrate and give preferences to their investments in knowledge management and surpass competitors who have not established their attempts in knowledge management strategy by developing the suitable strategic base.

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