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THE IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON BUSINESS ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is the process of systematically and actively managing and leveraging the knowledge in an organization which encompasses identifying and mapping intellectual assets within the organization. Today importance of knowledge management is increasing since marketplaces are increasingly competitive and the rate of innovation is rising. Efforts of knowledge management focus on organizational objectives, such as improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation and continuous improvement of the organization. It involves the design, review and implementation of both social and technological processes to improve the application of knowledge in the collective interest of stakeholders. Nonaka's model of knowledge creation and transformation is concerned with tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Knowledge management architecture provides the ways to developing, distributing, consolidating and combining available knowledge. This paper discusses the need of knowledge management, organizational knowledge and its components, Nonaka's Model of knowledge creation and transformation and architecture of knowledge management.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge, knowledge management architecture, Knowledge Management, Nonaka's model of knowledge creation.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the human understanding of a specialized field of interest that has been acquired through study and experience. Knowledge management is the process of gathering a firm's collective expertise in database, on papers or in people's head and distributes it where it is required. Knowledge management comprises a range of practices used by organizations to identify, create, represent and distribute knowledge for reuse, awareness and learning. The basic aim of creating knowledge in management system in any organization is to collect, store and disseminate knowledge among its employees to improve bottom line performance. The goal of knowledge management is to provide the right knowledge at the right time to the right person. Knowledge management is the set of processes that seeks to change the organization's present pattern of knowledge processing to enhance its outcomes. The paper stresses the importance of individuals in knowledge creation.

ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND ITS COMPONENTS

In today's global organization, because of increasingly competitive marketplaces, reduction in staff, increase in competitive pressures and early retirement schemes, knowledge management is necessary to collect, disseminate and application of knowledge towards organizational sustenance and survival. Organizational knowledge is the knowledge captured by the organizations system's processes, products, rules and culture. The focus of knowledge management is on 'doing the right thing' instead of 'doing things right'. It provides a framework within which the organization views all its processes as knowledge processes. Knowledge management can transform the organization to new levels of effectiveness, efficiency, and scope of operation. Knowledge management caters to the critical issues of organizational adoption, survival and competence in face of increasingly discontinuous change. Essentially, it embodies organizational processes that seek synergistic combination of data and information processing capacity of information technologies, and the creative and innovative capacity of human beings. Knowledge management is bringing people together and collecting ideas from the group that can provide success for the company and personally for the employees. If the employees and the organization as a whole come together, and grasp a new idea, it ultimately can lead to new inventions of products and services. Organizational knowledge consists of five different type's knowledge :

- Know-what : Knowing which information is needed.
- Know-how : Knowing how information must be processed.
- Know-why : Knowing why information is needed.
- Know-where : Knowing where information can be found to achieve a specific result.
- Know-when: Knowing when which information is needed.

Fundamental research on knowledge creation revolves around the interplay of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge.

i) Tacit Knowledge : Tacit knowledge is the knowledge embedded in the human mind through experience and jobs. It includes intuitions, values and beliefs that stem from years of experience. Tacit knowledge is heuristic, perceived, personal, experience based, hard to formalize and difficult to articulate. It is communicated personally through dialogue and scenarios in direct and effective way. Hence codification of the knowledge into explicit knowledge is the only way for preserving a tacit knowledge.

ii) Explicit knowledge: Explicit knowledge is the knowledge codified and digitized in books, reports, articles and patents. It can be retrieved and transmitted more easily than tacit knowledge and easy for documentation. It is formally articulated, elucidated, fixed, codified, and shared with others. Explicit knowledge is stored as a written procedure which is reusable for decision making purpose.

Knowledge management is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to the creation, capture, organization, access, and use of an enterprise's information assets. These assets include structured databases, textual information such as policy and procedure documents, and most importantly, the tacit knowledge and expertise resident in the heads of individual employees.

NONAKA'S AND TAKEUCHI MODEL OF KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Knowledge creation and transformation is possible by using Nonaka's model. Nonaka coined the terms tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge as the two main types of human knowledge. The conversion of knowledge between tacit and explicit knowledge is shown in Fig. 1.

FIG. 1: NONAKA'S & TAKEUCHI MODEL FOR KNOWLEDGE CONVERSION

Tacit to Tacit (Socialization)	Tacit to Explicit (Externalization)
Explicit to Tacit (Internalization)	Explicit to Explicit (Communication)

I) Tacit to Tacit Communication (Socialization) : It takes place between people in meeting or in team discussion. Experience among people in face to face business situation is mostly shared.

II) Tacit to Explicit Communication (Externalization) : Here knowledge transfer takes place through dialogue. With the help of brainstorming, a team carries out discussions around a specific topic and comments and suggestions are entered into the computer. After the knowledge has been made explicit, and has been stored in a repository, persons facing the similar problem can consult the database at their convenience. i.e. knowledge sharing.

III) Explicit to Explicit Communication (Communication): In communication phase, explicit knowledge can be easily captured and transmitted to the worldwide audience. For ex. sending a document via e-mail expedites knowledge sharing in an efficient and effective way. Here technology helps to capture and share the knowledge among the people.

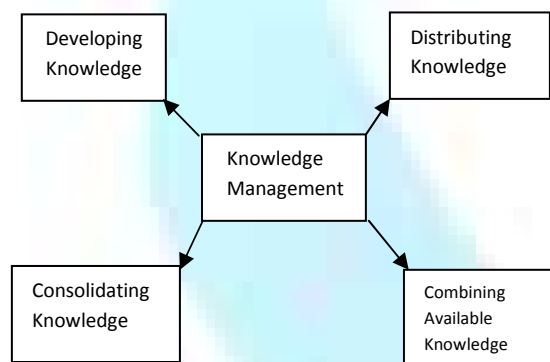
IV) Explicit to Tacit Communication (Internalization) : With the help of technology, explicit knowledge is converted to tacit knowledge. By searching and finding associations, technology makes information more useful to derive new tacit knowledge from it. For ex. By using data mining technology, the store can derive the number of new ideas regarding the kind of a product that is often purchased by customers by age, location or price. Such tacit knowledge is critical for competitive advantage.

In short, Nonaka's model divides knowledge creation processes into four categories. It focuses on tacit knowledge and by using the technology, it is possible to generate or transmit such knowledge to others. Human knowledge continues to be a valuable resource and technology is expected to trickle slowly into a human domain where knowledge creation and knowledge transfer can be expedited for human decision making regardless of time or location. Nonaka and Takeuchi put forward the proposition, embodied in the diagram, that 'tacit knowledge' is somehow derived from explicit knowledge and, by other means, is made explicit.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ARCHITECTURE

The four basic knowledge processes are development, distribution of knowledge, knowledge consolidation and combination of knowledge. The analysis, plan and action are usually formulated in terms of the four basic operations on knowledge that can be found in the organization. The organization structure can significantly affect the pace of knowledge sharing.

FIG. 2: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ARCHITECTURE



I. Developing Knowledge: In today's global competition, it is necessary to develop new knowledge based on creative ideas, analysis of failure, daily experience and work in R& D department. Corporate memories can support these processes by recording failures and successes. It is necessary to give more explicit recognition to tacit knowledge and related human aspects, such as ideas, values, or emotions, for developing a richer conceptualization of knowledge management

II. Consolidating Knowledge: Knowledge must be safeguarded against loss due to different causes such as retirement, transfer, death etc. Consolidation of knowledge is supported by corporate memories and knowledge transfer programs. The knowledge thus stored must be available at the right time and at right place.

III. Distributing Knowledge: Knowledge must be actively distributed to those who can make use of it. The turnaround speed of knowledge is crucial for the competitiveness of companies. To distribute the knowledge implement new, flexible technologies and systems that support and enable communities of practice, informal and semi-informal networks of internal employees and external individuals based on shared concerns and interests.

IV. Combining available knowledge: An organization can only perform at its best, if all available knowledge areas are combined in its new products.

A good knowledge management system should involve the continuous streamlining of the above four basic knowledge processes to improve the organizational learning capability. The value of knowledge management relates directly to the effectiveness with which the managed knowledge enables the members of the organization to deal with today's situations and effectively envision and create their future.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to survive in today's knowledge based economy, firms need to manage knowledge efficiently and effectively. Organizations continually organizing and disseminating tacit and explicit knowledge for use throughout the organization. Through knowledge management efforts, the enterprise wishes to manage knowledge effectively to make people and the whole enterprise act intelligently to sustain its long term viability by developing, building and deploying highly competitive knowledge assets. Nonaka argues that organizations play a crucial role in promoting this knowledge. Knowledge management is rooted in many disciplines including business, economics, education, information management, psychology, and sociology among others. These areas have developed perspectives on the workings of individual and systemic knowledge. Though knowledge management has already been embraced as a source of solutions to the problems of today's business, but it is still a new concept and company employees have difficulty for sharing the knowledge. Since data and information can be managed but it is difficult to manage knowledge which is heuristic and stored in subconscious mind.

In the future, only those organizations that are able to create a culture of knowledge management will survive and grow. For the success of knowledge management, it is necessary that organization should implement new, flexible technologies and systems that support and enable communities of practice, informal and semi-informal networks of internal employees and external individuals based on shared concerns and interests. To tap intellectual asset, an organization must implement a successful knowledge management program in a culture that supports innovation, learning and knowledge sharing. The modern business manager is able to discover and learn new measures, new technologies, and new opportunities, but this requires the ability to gather information in usable formats and disseminate knowledge to achieve the organization's objectives.. We can conclude that knowledge management is all about making those interventions more frequent, more natural, more instinctive, more expected and role-modeled by leaders of organizations.

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Sd/-

Co-ordinator

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