

KM Strategies (Part 1): Key To Change And Development In Business

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ABSTRACT:

Sharing of knowledge is considered as the most important in Knowledge management (KM) process in every organization. KM relates organizational functions which create, share, disseminate and uses the available knowledge for the organization development. Knowledge sharing within the organization enables the employers to share insight which help them to adopt appropriate ideas and allows faster and cost effective move towards the achievement of organizational goals. Successful models of knowledge management also reduce the need for managerial intervention in the innovation process. The paper will highlight the various KM factors which affect the KM and organizational process of development. The paper will also discuss about organizational culture and KM initiative in an organization involving people, function, collaboration, process, program, performance and contribution elaborating various P's and C's of KM developing strategies for change and sustainable competitive advantages. The framework will put forward basic objective to achieve the efficiency and effectiveness, helps the organization to maintain and strengthen the competitive position.

Keywords: Knowledge management, collaboration, cross functional integration

Introduction

The new generation presents substantial new organizational and managerial challenges on daily basis. Changes has been considered as permanent having a characteristics of unpredictable and continuous in nature which are largely driven by the forces of the environment and emergence of new technology and system. Steven Goldman et al. (1995) describe four strategic dimensions/ drivers of organizational change as: Customer focus; Commitment to intra- and inter-organizational collaboration; Organizing to master change and uncertainty; Leveraging the impact of people (entrepreneurial culture) and knowledge (intellectual capital). Knowledge has been increasingly used as crucial factor in development of the competitive advantage since the dynamic change in organization taking place. These key factors are responding to the change in the organization and improve the process of development through learning. The major aim of the paper is to bring forward the core aspect related to the organizational culture and KM initiative in an organization involving people, function, collaboration, process, program, performance and contribution elaborating P's and C's of KM developing strategies for change and sustainable competitive advantages. The major part of this paper will highlight the concept which relate the business organization and it strategies and practices for KM and change applicable to all situation and can achieve it objectives through collaborative web for sharing and transfer. The framework will put forward basic objective to achieve the efficiency and effectiveness which helps the organization to use it collaborative web to maintain and strengthen the competitive position.

Knowledge management (KM) creates sharing of knowledge, improves the organizational factor for productivity. Investment in learning and knowledge of workers and management of knowledge enhances learning capacities of the organization giving longer term opportunities. Investments reduce the need for continuous retraining and help the organization to combat the change and improve in the production system. Successful models of knowledge management also reduce the need for managerial intervention in the innovation process. Stonehouse and Pemberton (1999) suggest, “It is the role of knowledge management to ensure that individual learning becomes organizational learning” (pp. 132). It is necessary that the efforts and controlled application of knowledge management tools and techniques enhance the overall performance by reducing the cost every time. The KM techniques will develop the organizational efficiency to create positive societal benefits including the reuse of the knowledge. Such knowledge management leads to sustainable growth of companies.

Knowledge management comprises: Involvement of all components of the organisation that are essential in organisational process; Allow all other individuals and interested to take part into the process as an open process; Should be based on learning and sharing; Characterize tangible understanding; Building common platform from learning and sustainable development process; Improve productivity with the improve efficiency and effectiveness of process with the save in time and cost. The most important factor for implementing knowledge management is to ensure: Secure and adequate implementation process; Flexibility at all level for understanding, sharing and knowledge transfer; Giving new view to the organisation to develop sustainable learning; Adopt understanding for decision making; Improve competitive position of organisation; Strongly focus on potential for improvements

Various studies with regards to knowledge and KM have been put forward providing detail understanding of KM process and its implementation in organization providing and supporting formulation of strategies and achieve organizational objectives. For the integration of the KM it seems to be challenging and requires further investigated change. The paper will highlight the various KM factors which affect the KM and organizational process of development. The major outline for the KM takes in categorized factor which affect directly in the organization. The author has categorized these into 4 P’s and 4 C’s of knowledge management which will support the KM strategies using collaborative web. Mix if these elements in KM application will represent the higher level of improvement and can be easy applied for creating network among the functional units and other collaborative methods. The extended elaboration has been given in additional paper later. These elements are tabulated below:

4 P’s of KM	4 C’s of KM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>P</u>eople • <u>P</u>rocess • <u>P</u>rogram • <u>P</u>erformance/ productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>C</u>ulture and change • <u>C</u>ollaboration (technology) • <u>C</u>ross functional integration • <u>C</u>ontribution

Basics Of Knowledge Management

The knowledge initiatives in an organization require the transfer of knowledge from one to another. Knowledge and KM has been researched on various aspects by several researchers defining: Knowledge is a collection of insights, understanding, experience and practical

know-how. Knowledge is not just an object or artifact but also the outcome of people working together, sharing experiences, and constructing meaning out of what they do (Choo, 2000). The organization ability to identify critical knowledge resources and use them objectively in problem solving, enhancing competence, develops self-confidence and leads to productivity (Mathew, 2008) Knowledge is gained and enhanced through sharing, education, training, work experience, dialogue, participation and group interactions both internally and externally.

KM can be defined as the explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge and its associated processes of creating, gathering, organizing, diffusion, use and exploitation. It requires turning personal knowledge into corporate knowledge that can be widely shared throughout an organization and appropriately applied (Skyrme & Amidon, 1997). KM is considered as an integrated, systematic approach to identifying, manage and share an organization's knowledge and enabling people to create new knowledge collectively and thereby help to achieve the objectives of organization (Mathew, 2008). Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) believe KM is the result of interaction between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Knowledge Management is the process of receiving, saving, putting use to and creating new knowledge. It also adds to the value of knowledge, which evaluates the development of individuals and organizations. L. Velker, (1999) explains KM is a process that helps organizations identify, select, organize, disseminate, and transfer important information and expertise that are part of the organization's memory and that typically reside within the organization in an unstructured manner. The structuring of knowledge enables effective and efficient problem-solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning, and decision making. Knowledge management initiatives focus on identifying knowledge, explicating it in such a way that it can be shared in a formal manner, and leveraging its value through reuse. According to Collison and Parcell (2002), KM comprises of organizational learning, human resources and technology with common reliable technology infrastructure to facilitate sharing; connecting the people who know, and the behaviors to ask, listen and share; processes to simplify sharing, validation and distillation. Rowley, (2000) defines KM as concerned with the exploitation and development of the knowledge assets of an organization with a view to furthering the organization's objectives. The knowledge to be managed includes both explicit, documented knowledge, and tacit, subjective knowledge. Management entails all of those processes associated with the identification, sharing, and creation of knowledge. However, the above given justification and view points are directly linking the organization with the KM process various components and players aiming to achieve better result and specifying the application of KM process in an organizational. The difference among various authors and practitioners is based on the intensity and level of KM application in the organization for which substantial evidences has been provided from time to time.

As a matter of fact, the main components of the KM are the people and collaborative components acting as a key for the success. The KM initiatives starts from the people where the knowledge of the employees, stakeholders are created, captured, shared and used for the organization efficiency, effectiveness and improvement. Removing the components the system fails to achieve its objectives. Knowledge components exist only if the employees contribute to the pool and shared among the groups and functions to be utilized. Collaborative web and its technology will help the organization to enhance the overall initiative and KM implementation as major components

Factors Of Km In An Organization

Practices pursue the total contribution to the overall success of the organization and implementation of KM (Mathew, 2008). Organization should encourage and make regular effort for:

- Shared development: Encourage to develop broad shared understanding on various issues in an organization. The individual efforts should be transferred and encourage in a group/ team efforts which develop shared knowledge. The shared development with the employee in relation to mission, target performance, productivity, organizational development and success should be encouraged. Knowledge sharing is the process where individuals mutually exchange their implicit and explicit knowledge and jointly create new knowledge (Van den Hooff & de Ridder 2004). KM recognizes the importance and integration of tacit learning into any system is a necessity and, yet, an overwhelming task that can never be totally successful (Barnett, 2008).
- Focus on KM cycle: The managers should be better enough to practice the KM cycle in regular working. Identifies information and use that information to get knowledge giving a better understanding and problem solving approach. KM cycle will act as a transformation tool.
- Knowledge supportive environment: Encouraging knowledge supportive environment within the organization will improve the success. The information generated in any functional area should be arranged and recorded to be transmitted in KM cycles which provide support for the problem solving. Collaboration through web should be base as supportive environment which will improve the overall process of KM.
- Knowledge flow: the organization should practice the frequent flow of knowledge at different level in proper quality and quantity leaving competitive advantages. The flow & transfer of knowledge should be certain and should be organized, used and widely leveraged. Knowledge transfer and sharing among different level supported by web will reduce the knowledge loss and create platform for easy transfer and delivery.

The benefits from the KM initiatives are: enhanced decisions, flexibility, increases in profits, reduced duplication and workloads in the regular process, improved productivity, new opportunities, cost reduction, use of best practice, transfer and network, sharing and exchange, collaboration, market development, higher and better performance, learning environment, improved motivation and retention of employees. KM can be applied to a wide range of tasks: routine, logical, complex, unexpected, and unusual.

KM And Business Organization - Future Patterns

In future, KM and KM based application will be in used for creating advantage and adopting change using collaborative web will be seen very commonly. Collaborative web based application and extended way of knowledge sharing and transfer will be the area on which organization pay attention. The KM will address the future and act as a Complex Adaptive Systems for social network framework emphasizing self-organization and emergence in knowledge processing. Secondly, Basis of knowledge claims alternative knowledge and theory, unified theory for adopting change, adopting innovation and creating self attained advantage. Thirdly, Decision making framework emphasizing knowledge

usage, knowledge sharing and learning that give support for problem solving. Fourthly, Knowledge acquisition, individual and group learning, knowledge claim formulation, knowledge claim evaluation, knowledge integration and outcome

KM Culture Practices And Change

Corporate culture is a set of specific beliefs, methodologies, and characteristics unique to an organization, where the organization becomes stand alone by the way of life for its constituents. Researchers have already put forward the importance of organizational culture in initiating KM in the organization (Davenport & Prusak, 2000; Nanoka & Takeucki 1995). Knowledge issues are said to be closely interlinked with organizational culture (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Knowledge management in an organization seems to be challenging especially when the organization is at changing phase. The KM will support and provide path for the organizational change. KM relates organizational functions which create shares, disseminates and uses the available knowledge for the organization development through collaboration using web as the source. Knowledge in an organization and its management will develop its own organizational sharing culture. In other words, abilities of organization to manage knowledge affecting culture (Davenport & Klahr, 1998). Organizational culture and KM initiative in an organization prove the facets involving people, function, collaboration, process, program, performance and contribution. In a culture where the knowledge value is recognised, sharing of information, information flows, IT infrastructure, personal networking, system thinking, leadership, communication climate, problem solving, training and many other factors can be supportive factors for successful learning (Warne et al, 2003). The researches provides evidence that KM processes contribute to firm performance by facilitating individual employee efficiency, leveraging core business competencies, shortening product development times, reducing production cycle time, improved quality, and other critical processes (Sabherwal and Sabherwal (2005)

KM has been popular in many organizations since the information revolution has been carried out in large. According to Nishimoto and Matsuda (2007), most large enterprises have invested heavily in KM systems so that the structure and systems exist but that a computer can manage 'data' but not 'knowledge'. Technological change and effect has been emphasized in such a way that created the use of knowledge management in almost all areas of business and industry. Management in most of the area and business has been playing a vital role especially managing change with the change in the environment. The changing organization has become one of the hottest issues in the management and business.

Organisational culture where the knowledge value is recognised, shared, flows, technological infrastructure and support, collaboration, arrangement measurement, managerial support, communication, problem solving, learning and many other factors can be supportive factors for successful learning (Warne et al, 2003). Organisational culture recognizing the value of knowledge allows personal contact that leads to capture tacit knowledge and thus it can be transferred (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Sharing knowledge is crucial since its value and synergy are increased by sharing with others (Yeniceri & Ince, 2005). Such sharing promotes common identity, and organizational learning (Schein, 1993). Organization culture and change indeed have a great wide area. As per the evidence representing that attempts to change organizational culture must be preceded by changes to systems and people otherwise the basis for the cultural change will not exist and the initiative will fail (Nold III, 2009). The effective change in the organizational culture should be based and depends on the various elements which can further enhance the core objective and achieve desirable change in the outcome of the organization. The subject in large

organization is much complex and need great attention because of multidisciplinary function, diverse dimension, various characteristics and possibility of measuring in a definite scale. Organizational culture is affected by individual group and departments grouping with behavior (Williams & O Reiley 1998), values, attitude, interpersonal relationship, functional collaboration and so on. Culture plays a vital role in any organization and act as a bridge for creating effective work environment within the organization. The pattern and the technique of the organization should be changed from a recessive nature to enhanced sharing of knowledge among the employees which can be supported by technological and collaborative support. The organization should maintain and put emphasis on knowledge haring culture (Mathew, 2009) which will act as a medium for knowledge enrichment and can be utilized for problem solving. Culture was suggested as a critical success factor by many authors like culture by (Wong, 2005); (Hasanali, 2002) supportive culture (Liebowitz, 1999), knowledge friendly culture and knowledge creating and sharing culture (Skryme & Amidon, 1997).

Characteristics Of KM Based Culture

KM in an organization is regarded as the core for achieving organizational objective which includes:

- Clear organizational vision and goals (Leonard, 1995;Kanter et al,1992)
- Depends on information system
- Flexibility in the system
- Knowledge capturing, sharing and creation (Seeley & Dietrick, 2000)
- Support Learning (Martin, 2000; Davenport & Prusak, 2000)
- Collaboration, transfer & knowledge exchange (Martin, 2000)
- Cross functional interaction (Ahmed et al, 2002)
- Multidimensional, trust, commitment (Garvey & Williamson 2002)
- Effective Communication, interaction and support (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998; O'Dell & Grayson,1998)
- Social network (Paton & Mc Calman, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1994)

The KM based culture change approach involves people (Margulie & Raid 1978) adopting win- win approach. Cultural change emphasizes on the ‘collaboration approach’ and move forward in an interactive way to identify most appropriate path for learning for change. KM system must connect people enabling them to think together, articulate, share information and insights they know which are useful to the company (Bollinger and Smith, 2001). Various components (refer fig. 1) include individual, organizational, group and environment factor affecting the organizational culture has been given in the figure 1 above. The various sub-components affecting the organizational cultural change are learning and knowledge sharing highlight the influential factor in the organization. The model in Figure 1 explains the development of organizational culture.

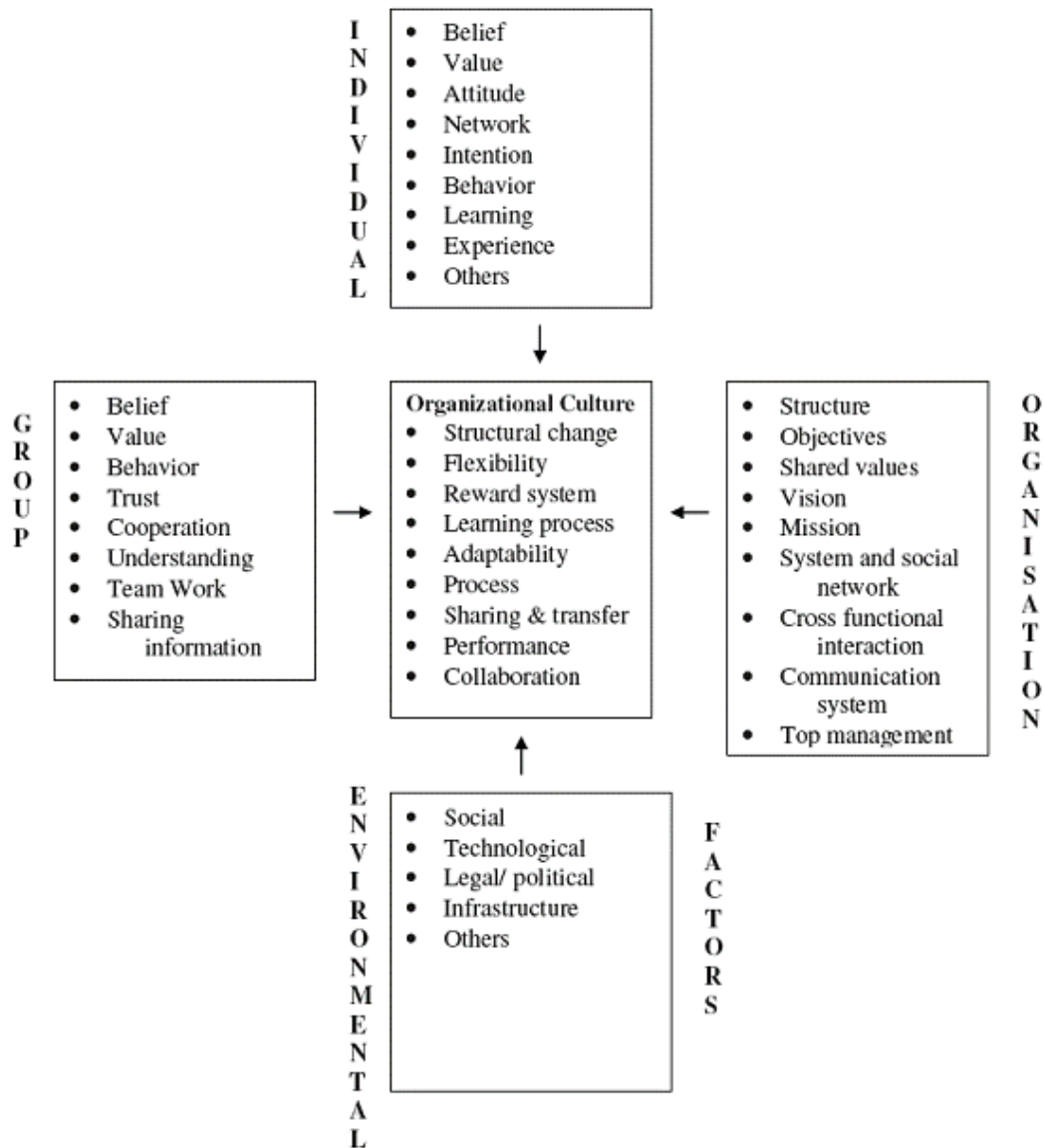


Fig 1: Mathew's Factors model developing organizational culture
 (Source: self developed)

New culture embedded to create knowledge flow grows outward from expanding and growth of businesses. In most cases considering the fledgling/ new developed companies with few employees and lack of technological transfer and added value. Initially, the top management may share the same interests and socialize together but as the time passes the support to the culture formation changes and shorten. Knowledge flow sharing characteristics are mostly achieved between the like-minded individuals. Their initial foray into business will develop into a culture that will ultimately drive the venture to success or failure excluding external influences. The new K-culture will also depend on web function which supports the people, process and program for knowledge transfer, sharing and development.

In most cases, during the introduction stage of the organization, the top management or the chairman will look for a person who resembles to create the environment like them, and subsequently the people they hire will continue to propagate and proliferate the culture followed by the others. Once the firm is established, it becomes years later after there has been sufficient turnover, that the firm will experience differences in management and culturally related issues. The model shows the affect of the organizational culture including the individual, group, organizational and environmental factor which needs to be considered at each level while establishing the organization. The hunt for the new people should be based on the organizational culture and based on various stages. The required needs like training, seminars, skill development program for creating the knowledge culture should consequently be covered for innovation. The change factor which also effects the organization is also an important for the knowledge flow. This knowledge flow and transfer should be applied within the organization which will add value to the overall development of the organization. Ramaraj Palanisamy (2008) added that the process of KM does not lead to enhanced performance of an organization but application of these stored effective knowledge can improve the performance tremendously. The performance depends on applying the stored knowledge of the individuals as well as organizational memory and turning into effective actions (p. 105).

Collaboration And Technology

Collaborative web environment can be explained as the platform when the organization is able to capture, share, transfer and reuse knowledge in a collaborative way among people and function categorized under specific environment. Collaborative technology can be explained as the technological approach which supports the flow of knowledge collaboration with various components of the system. "The knowledge management process is not so much about control as it is about sharing, collaboration, and making the best possible use of a strategic resource" (Bollinger and Smith, 2001. pp. 14). The knowledge environment is created by the significant support of technology to flow knowledge within the knowledge community. Using the technology the system will be flexible, less time consuming, adaptive to the change and speedy process. The major drawback of some organization is lack of technology availability supporting collaboration for capturing, transfer and storage of knowledge.

Cross Functional Interaction And Contribution (3 C'S)

The inter linkage between the people and the functional units at different level leads to effective implementation of the KM process within the organization. The interdependency of various functional and organizational relational supports knowledge sharing and transfer. Collaboration among various individual and group for exchange of knowledge is essential. Knowledge workers in an organization will develop a guideline which has been initiated by the knowledge change strategies. The role of the knowledge officer or chief knowledge officer (CKO) plays a vital role for collaboration; inter linkage of cross function and contribution of knowledge among people in the organization. This cross-functional development in the organization learning leads to the formation of organization knowledge culture essential for effective change. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) suggest that knowledge, unlike information, is about beliefs and commitment. Bhirud et al (2005) also point out that while many organizations have come to rely on electronic communications as a major form of internal communication, this is not necessarily the optimal mechanism for sharing knowledge. While electronic communications may tend to improve the efficiency of

communications, the knowledge transfer required for knowledge management success requires both efficient and effective communications.

Many organizations are using various methods for knowledge sharing and transfer such as use of collaborative web - internet, intranet, and package transfer which connect, share, transfer the desired knowledge to collaboration and develop common understanding. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) believe that unless shared knowledge (Tacit) becomes explicit it cannot be easily leveraged by an organization. Only when tacit and explicit knowledge start interacting are the opportunities for innovation created, thereby enabling a continuous and dynamic interaction which is often referred as the knowledge spiral. Some of the organization recently established knowledge hub which combines various groups, functions and the units irrespective of geographical location, society, culture, production and area of business. The knowledge has been captured, shared and reused among collaborative organization through technology. The knowledge generated by various units in the organization is accumulated in the knowledge hub. The organization uses knowledge to expand the business to various location, growth and profit. This will help the organization to create and leverage competitive advantage over other by the collaborative KM.

Conclusion

The KM initiatives starts from the people where the knowledge of the employees, stakeholders are created, captured, shared and used for the organization efficiency, effectiveness and improvement. Removing the components the system fails to achieve its objectives. The KM strategies in the paper address the future and act as a Complex Adaptive Systems for social network framework; Basis of knowledge claims adopting change and innovation; Decision making framework emphasizing on knowledge usage, knowledge sharing and lastly on Knowledge acquisition incorporating learning, knowledge formulation, evaluation, knowledge integration and outcome. Organizational culture and KM initiative in an organization prove the facets involving people, function, collaboration, process, program, performance and contribution and move in an interactive way for knowledge transfer and change. This knowledge flow and transfer should be applied within the organization which will add value to the overall development of the organization. The factor model will support the organization for change and adopting new culture for development.

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