

Knowledge, innovation, and learning

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Our reason for choosing project was simply that knowledge management is becomes more and more integral to the marketplace everyday. According to the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991), competitive advantage is achieved when firms “ accumulate resources and capabilities that are rare, valuable, non-substitutable and difficult to imitate” (Dyer and Singh, 1998, p. 660). This is supported by the principals of firms having core competences that distinguish them from their competitors (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). In today’s knowledge based society, it is generally believed that such unique resources rest in a firm’s people in the form of knowledge, referred to broadly as human capital (Grant, 1996; Teece et al., 1997). The aim of our project was to highlight how 3M is capable of sharing knowledge across social networks, as well as sharing it within social networks to create new innovations. As a participant in this process, I gained experiences researching and understanding complex business resource issues as well as investigating and rating how one company implements these ideas.

Our process was mainly twofold. First, we conducted a literature review. We investigated knowledge management, innovation as a competitive advantage, types of data, information and knowledge as well as how the cycle of knowledge works. Next, we analyzed how 3M applies these principals to the business world and made certain recommendations. As well as our project went, there is still room for improvement.

There were pros and cons to the process, however. They are expressed as strong and weak points of the process, positive and negative experiences as well as positive and negative feelings. The process was strong in that we all had great ideas to proffer to our project, but weak in that we had a difficult

time discerning which ideas to implement. Furthermore, the positive experience was that we were able to bring it all together in the end. The negative experience was that often times some of the group was hearing the other members but not really listening to them. His elicited some negative feelings along the way. When waves off the opinions of others as unimportant, it creates feelings of opposition instead of cooperation. In the end however, the completion of our project made everyone feel accomplished. These are some of the dualistic challenges one meets while working with others.

We achieved our aims, but if I had another chance, I would like to change how we approached the recommendations. Nevertheless, I have obtained useful expertise from the project such as understanding how a major global enterprise has implemented innovation not only to survive but also to prevail in business. I will apply this knowledge in my future career exploiting the flexibility, fluidity, application and communication of knowledge as a business resource above its certainty. Still, the project could be improved by ironing out a method by which workload and impetus are divided more evenly among members as well as well as setting a more rigid schedule of goal completion. Nevertheless, we were able to achieve our collective aim. I have reviewed the process, pros and cons, and the general outcome of completing this project. My role in the completion of our task has heightened my awareness of the necessary management of knowledge in the workplace in such a way as to encourage innovation and capitalize more fully on a collective knowledge base.

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