

Knowledge management innovation report

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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Introduction

Arguably, world economy in the recent post-industrial times can be said to be an information-intensive atmosphere. A good number of scholars assert that, competition both in global and local market, distinction of the market place, as well as profitability is influenced by efficient knowledge. There are numerous definitions that have been put forward to explain the term ‘ knowledge’, depending on the area in which it is applied. In this particular context or rather in the business context, the term ‘ knowledge’ is used to refer to the state of being aware and able to understand specifics, truth, or information that is achieved through learning or experience, (William 2009).

Admittedly, to an organization or rather an enterprise, knowledge is considered as being an asset. However, unlike material assets this type of asset appreciates with time rather than depreciating, (Amrit 2002). It is evident that thoughts lead to new thoughts, and when knowledge is shared

the receiver is augmented while the giver stays with it. Notably, creation of knowledge by organizations is considered to be promoting competitive advantage for firms that operate in the modern world marketplace. This is the reason why most firms concentrate most in sharpening their expertise of creating knowledge in different fields. According to the modern organizational theory, organizations are seen as systems that “ process” information as well as, “ solve” predicaments, (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). It is assumed that the elementary task for an organization is the way it handles information and decisions in a tentative shifting atmosphere.

It is argued that enthusiastically handles a shifting environment usually creates information and knowledge besides proficiently processing information, (Nonaka 2005). In order to understand certain features of activities of an organization, it is important to first scrutinize such organization from its design and the capability of processing information perspective, (Alavi & Leidner 2001). Arguably, contact of the organization with its environment and the way in which information is created and information distributed, plays a very crucial role in constructing an active and vibrant understanding of the organization, (Holsapple and Jones 2005).

Nature and process of creating knowledge

A number of scholars assert that not much is known as far as the creation of knowledge as well as management of knowledge creation process, even though there is much awareness on the significance of knowledge in management. According to Polanyi (1966), basically, there are four blueprints for creating knowledge in an organization. The first blueprint is

from tacit to tacit. Generally, common sense acts as a base of tacit knowledge. In this case knowledge is learnt through observation, imitation and practicing, or by becoming assimilated into a definite way of doing, (Suzane 2004). The second blueprint is from explicit to explicit. This involves the combination of separate piece of explicit knowledge. To be more specific, this is the kind of information that has been put into record. A good example is financial reports that have been prepared from various.

The third blueprint is creating knowledge from explicit to tacit. This involves understanding explicit knowledge by employing a person's structure of orientation to make it easy for others to understand and internalize knowledge. In most cases, personal tacit knowledge can be applied in an inventive manner to widen, expand or reframe a definite idea. Lastly, is the creation of knowledge from tacit to explicit, (Polanyi 1966). In this case, a record of descriptions, discussions as well as innovations is kept which is to be used in making new products. The conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge is a means of defining the indefinable.

Organizational learning and Theory of Innovation

It is evident that use their ability to learn to acclimatize to the shifting and developing environment, (Johnson 1996). It is through the process of learning that new insights and concepts are acquired. In the case of an organizational learning, learning is said to have happened when individuals within the organization employ learning as a tool to solve problems that they are facing, (Robert 2010). Notably, learning methods in an organization are developed by considering the characteristics and needs of the particular

organization. Arguably, there are two categories of organizational learning; exploitative learning and explorative learning, (Demarest 1997). Behavioral competence structured as per the existing insights is attained in the former type of learning. This kind of learning can also be said to be evolutionally. On the other hand, the latter type of learning occurs when behavioral competence is attained essentially different from the present insights. It is concerned with innovation, discovery, effectiveness, and variation.

Innovation in an organization can be categorized into product innovation and process innovation. In an organizational context term 'innovation' indicates the creation or acceptance of original ideas or behavior, (Alavi & Leidner 2001). As such, innovation in an organization may be a creation of new products or services, technologies, as well as new operations. It is argued that innovation is very vital for organizations that desire to remain or rather acquire a competitive advantage. Hence, failure or success of an organization is determined by the state of innovation in the organization, (John & Dominique 2001). Studies have shown that there is a connection between innovation and organizational learning. It has been proved that innovative competence of an organization is enhanced by organizational learning. To be more precise, innovation is the product of organizational and individual learning. In fact, it has been found that innovation and organizational learning are positively related.

Knowledge Management and Innovation in RIM

Research In Motion (RIM) is the company that is known by the production of BlackBerry. At first, BlackBerry was intended to be used as an e-mail device

only, but with time it has been used as not only an e-mail terminal but as a phone and a PDA as well. RIM applied high levels of technology in the production of this device. For example, even though people can access e-mails from other phones, there is no single phone that has been known to handle e-mails better than the BlackBerry mainly because of the technology that was employed in its production. In fact, other cell phones are said to be produced using yesteryear's technology, (Johnson 1993).

Knowledge management and innovation at RIM can be explained on how tacit and explicit knowledge has been applied within this organization. It was early mentioned that tacit knowledge is practical and action-oriented type of knowledge that is majorly based on practice that is attained through personal experience, (John & Dominique 2001). At RIM, the application of this kind of knowledge has been one of the key factors that contributed to the production of the BlackBerry, (Davenport & Prusak 1997). This kind of knowledge has been very beneficial to this organization in a number of ways. For instance, it has led to or rather it enhances better customer satisfaction. Besides, it has led to the increase in productivity of this organization. This is the case because employees are in a position to do a lot of work within a short period of time and with a lot of ease. Application of tacit knowledge is also attributed to the extended reach that has been made by RIM.

Lastly, this type of knowledge is also behind the improved velocity as well as the greater efficiency that is found at RIM

As an illustration on how tacit knowledge is applied at RIM is as follows. To begin with, RIM encourages and rewards cooperation and sharing of

information as well as influencing knowledge by promoting teams with common attributes to share interests and values. In this organization, a system has been put into place that enables employees to confidentially evaluate each and every person they have closely worked with. Additionally, compensation is connected to the system of peer relationship and it is bound or attached directly to distribution of knowledge and cooperation, (Rod, Jim & Mike 2009). Furthermore, evaluation of employees is based on how they involve themselves in different projects, how they meet priorities by working with different groups and how they meet the needs of the customers. It is easier to portray a versatile picture of individual performance if a team works closely. Notably, each and every RIM spider web of attaching networks is unique in its principle, prototype and organizational clout affiliations, (Carl 2006).

Explicit knowledge is acquired based on recorded information. In any organization this kind of knowledge is signified in the sense that; the work process is routinely done, it takes a conventional environment and also it involves a reuse of codified knowledge. Moreover, learning takes place on the job through trial and error which leads to perfection with time. It is also important to note that training is usually done by using selected layouts by the organization according to its goals and needs, (Adam & Design 2007).

Explicit knowledge requires logical thinking on the basis of facts and proven techniques.

A good example on how explicit knowledge has been applied at RIM is in the production of pagers. It is argued that RIM was the world market leader in

the production of pagers in the 1990s. As a strategy of maintaining this leadership, RIM established new generations of designs of pager every 12-15 months. The new pager generations were designed in such a way that, incorporation of more advanced features and customization options could be easy than in the preceding generations. Additionally, to facilitate the production of the new pager generation, a new factory with flexible assembly lines as well as higher-speed was built. The need to sustain the high production rate and development process called for the establishment of product and factory designers team to design each new generation of pager and factory, (DeLong 2004).

The new designers were issued with a manual of design methods as well as techniques that was used by their predecessors at the beginning of the project to act as a blueprint in designing a new generation of pagers, (Jenny 2009). At the end of the project, the designers were expected to: produce a pager design of the next-generation that was more improved and easy to configure, a design of an assembly line that was flexible and efficient for the factory for producing the new pager, and lastly, a manual that has been improved from the previous manual incorporating the design knowledge. This is the manual that will be handled over to those who will be given the task of designing a new generation pager and the factory that is going to produce that pager, (Anna & Bettina 2009). By so doing, RIM sought to make explicit and the knowledge that was developed by its designers in each project was captured to methodically control the work of the next project team.

The use of Innovation Theory at RIM

It was mentioned previous that organizational learning goes hand-in-hand with innovations. Innovation theory at RIM can clearly be explained by the production of the BlackBerry by this organization. The designing and production of BlackBerry was as a result of a wide research and application of an advanced technological know-how. It took a combination of creativity, unique innovative approach, as well as new techniques in producing the BlackBerry, (DeLong 2004). A good example of the innovations that BlackBerry has brought to our lifes is how it is used in the business world. Managers, government officers, as well as legal and financial communities use the BlackBerry in their daily business activities. In the past, people used to walk around with their laptops, but with the introduction of the BlackBerry this is never the case, (Rod, Jim & Mike 2009). It is now easy for business people to carry out their business through the internet as well as remain connected while they are away from their offices using the BlackBerry. Therefore, it is pointless to carry a laptop by whoever owns a BlackBerry.

Conclusion

Knowledge is considered as being an asset to an organization. However, unlike material assets it does not depreciate but rather it appreciates with time. Therefore, knowledge management is a key determinant on whether the particular organization will succeed or fail in achieving its outlined goals and objectives. Knowledge can be broadly classified into two categories; tacit and explicit, (Awad 2004). The application of this kind of knowledge differs from one organization to another. Generally, knowledge determines the competitiveness of firms in the marketplace. Another key factor to the

performance of an organization is the state of innovation in the particular organization. It has been noted that innovation and knowledge goes hand-in-hand within an organization, (William & Curtis 2006). When these two are effectively handled, production of efficient products is likely to result. A good illustration of this argument can be derived from the manufacture of the BlackBerry by RIM in the recent past. Arguably, the BlackBerry has brought a significant difference in the world of business to-date.

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