Knowledge Management Strategies within a Corporate Environment of Papers

Daniel J. Glauber

Abstract—Knowledge transfer between personnel could benefit an organization's improved competitive advantage in the marketplace from a strategic approach to knowledge management. The lack of information sharing between personnel could create knowledge transfer gaps while restricting the decision-making processes. Knowledge transfer between personnel can potentially improve information sharing based on an implemented knowledge management strategy. An organization's capacity to gain more knowledge is aligned with the organization's prior or existing captured knowledge. This case study attempted to understand the overall influence of a KMS within the corporate environment and knowledge exchange between personnel. The significance of this study was to help understand how organizations can improve the Return on Investment (ROI) of a knowledge management strategy within a knowledge-centric organization. A qualitative descriptive case study was the research design selected for this study. The lack of information sharing between personnel may create knowledge transfer gaps while restricting the decision-making processes. Developing a knowledge management strategy acceptable at all levels of the organization requires cooperation in support of a common organizational goal. Working with management and executive members to develop a protocol where knowledge transfer becomes a standard practice in multiple tiers of the organization. The knowledge transfer process could be measurable when focusing on specific elements of the organizational process, including personnel transition to help reduce time required understanding the job. The organization studied in this research acknowledged the need for improved knowledge management activities within the organization to help organize, retain, and distribute information throughout the workforce. Data produced from the study indicate three main themes including information management, organizational culture, and knowledge sharing within the workforce by the participants. These themes indicate a possible connection between an organizations KMS, the organizations culture, knowledge sharing, and knowledge transfer.

Keywords—Knowledge management strategies, knowledge transfer, knowledge management, knowledge capacity.

I. INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATIONS downsizing the workforce may also produce substantial knowledge loss. The amount of knowledge loss based on workforce reduction is substantial and impacts workforce performance. An applied Knowledge Management Strategy (KMS) could have a significant impact on knowledge retention by reducing knowledge loss and increasing knowledge transfer between personnel. Organizations embracing the principles and practices of a KMS may provide opportunities to capture and retain explicit and tacit knowledge by using a codified or personalization

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strategy. Managing knowledge within an organization should be a focal point of a knowledge-based organization. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study is to explore how a KMS can influence knowledge transfer within an organization specifically utilizing knowledge as a product or service within an organizations respective industry. Data produced from the study indicate three main themes including information management, organizational culture, and knowledge sharing within the workforce. These themes indicate a possible connection between an organizations KMS, the organizations culture, knowledge sharing, and knowledge transfer.

II. KMS IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing a Knowledge Management Strategy (KMS) could provide a pathway toward information sharing by establishing processes and procedures to obtain, assimilate, and distribute critical knowledge to key leadership [29]. Knowledge resources unique to the organization provide value in an organization's ability to obtain a competitive advantage [35]. An applied KMS has a significant impact on knowledge collection, retention, and dissemination within a consultancy-based organization—improving processes, reducing cost, and creating higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness by utilizing technical solutions built for information sharing capabilities. Knowledge transfer rates between newly hired personnel and outgoing personnel within an organization could be reduced by the implementation of a KMS supporting the positive impact of knowledge management principles.

A doctrinal publication by the United States Army Combined Arms Center states that knowledge management principles assist with the identifying, collecting, assimilating, evaluation, and sharing of the organization's tacit and explicit knowledge supporting critical needs [8]. Explicit knowledge can be written down or codified, making it easy to collaborate with others, whereas tacit knowledge is comprehended without clear articulation [41]. The intent of knowledge management (KM) is to help promote information sharing throughout the enterprise and increase collaboration among the workforce, turning tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge [18]. Knowledge loss reduces the organizational capacity for action or proper decision-making procedures [21], which is an essential organizational capability helping retain codified knowledge.

KMS has two different approaches that define the implementation, namely codification and personalization. The codification approach focuses on an organization's ability to collect, retain, and disseminate explicit knowledge within the

organization [35] and includes a higher-level technical approach. Codification also focuses on documenting existing knowledge provided to other workforce members who need it [19]. The personalization strategy focuses on human interaction in an attempt to codify tacit knowledge by increasing knowledge flow throughout the organization [35]. In addition, the personalization strategy focuses on the interaction between individuals and exploring the tacit knowledge living within the individual [19]. Transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge is only necessary when a problem exists and the information requires codification [40].

Knowledge transfer between individual members of the organization develops through personal relationships and trust [39]. Research pertaining to relationship building consists of existing personnel within the organization for whom the opportunity to grow and learn internally is established. Incoming personnel, either new or internally transferred, could face different challenges. The internal transfer of personnel could become a simple process based on the existence of available resources developed by members of the organization. These resources could provide information about the particular role the individual fills or about lessons learned from experiences of previous personnel.

Two distinct approaches to knowledge management include a codified strategy and a personalization strategy [10]. These two strategies have typically been implemented in a parent-child relationship where one strategy is the focus of the organization while the other strategy is implemented in a supportive role [27]. The personalization strategy focuses on the transfer of tacit knowledge between people [27] and was the focal point of this research. The complexity of documenting tacit knowledge can cause an organization to lose knowledge when personnel transfer or are no longer part of the organization [41]. The development of KMSs provides an organization with objectives to meeting specific goals for knowledge capture, retention, and dissemination throughout the workforce [35]. Implementation of a KMS makes it difficult to measure performance, achievement, and meeting key milestones objectives [35]. Applying a KMS within an organization requires a process to disseminate higher-level objectives toward all areas of the organization [35].

III. Strategic Approach to KM

Organizations continually attempt to encapsulate the KM principles within the culture because of the success of other companies embracing KM as a method for managing knowledge assets [24]. Several KM models have been used to manage organizational knowledge such as the Knowledge Process Quality Model [36], the Knowledge Management Capability Assessment Model [26], and KPMG's Knowledge Journey [25], to name a few. The KM model used should follow the KM strategy to include information sharing initiatives and be part of the overall function of the business strategy [43]. The knowledge transfer process within an organization that operates in a knowledge market is essential for the continuous growth of knowledge within an organization [22]. Multi-dimensional knowledge transfer within an organization can be processed from external organizational elements including parent companies [31]. Knowledge market development and a multi-dimensional organization need a knowledge transfer process implemented to ensure proper knowledge growth obtaining a competitive advantage. Creating a sustainable competitive advantage within the knowledge market requires a knowledge transfer process that helps enhance an organization's knowledge growth [5]. Utilizing internal knowledge of the workforce requires active knowledge transfer throughout the organization [23]. Knowledge transfer is considered a useful organizational strategy toward value enhancement and development [11].

IV. Knowledge Management Strategies

A knowledge management strategy is the applied principles of KM within an organization that fit the business model and method for doing business, which include the process of collecting, retaining, and disseminating knowledge [1]. The organizational use of knowledge management and an applied strategic approach was an important asset for the war on terrorism and the increasing global threat on democratic governments. Although the approach used by Schulte and Sample is based on categorical perceptions of knowledge management, an applied KM strategy can be an important part of the creation of knowledge management planning for the enterprise. Planning of the KMS requires high levels of knowledge resource management and as well as methods for processing knowledge assets, helping create a proactive approach to problem solving opposed to a reactionary method. The organization's ability to enable personalization strategies within the workforce, although difficult, would increase knowledge retention based on the formation of the organizations knowledge-centric culture [37]. Extracting tacit knowledge using personal interaction is where knowledge flows more freely and becomes less restricted [27]. The organizational culture may adopt this method of knowledge extraction as a standard business practice, increasing organizational knowledge. Organizational culture is connected to organizational leadership, knowledge management, and external and internal characteristics [32]. Personalization strategies are at the core of the organization's internal culture, which supports knowledge management efforts and knowledge sharing throughout the workforce.

V. Information Sharing

Information sharing was found to be the heart of the U.S.'s ability to prevent national crises and terrorist attacks, such as the attacks on September 11, 2001 and September 13, 2011. The 9/11 Commission report identified information sharing between agencies as problematic and the root of security concerns [42]. The intent of information sharing within a consultancy-based environment supports interoperability among legacy systems and current technological advancements [30]. The 9/11 Commission Report acknowledged that information sharing was not happening

within the Intelligence Community (IC) and that information-sharing procedures were completely ignored. The sharing of information is based on the availability of resources within the organization to help improve knowledge gained for both the individual member of the organization and the organization itself. The principles of KM, along with the implementation of a KMS, based on the literature on knowledge management, may help future organizations share information throughout the enterprise. KMS literature described the organization's ability to apply principles and methods for managing organizational knowledge, increasing the ability to share information, specifically within a consultancy-based context. Information sharing within a consultancy-based context has many challenges that include an abundance of technical issues, but, as those issues are slowly resolved, technology may not be standing in the way anymore [17]. In the consultancy-based environment that is supported by information sharing with other levels, the roles of the workforce are becoming stronger because units are seeing the benefits of information sharing between nations [17]. The ability to share pertinent information with other organizational elements has improved the reactionary state of the workforce itself and helps save lives [17]. Information sharing is also considered a key asset to building relationships where trust between personnel and other organizational elements require cooperation to achieve innovative achievements [7].

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Organizational learning is considered an organization's method for internal development or healing [13]. Applying an organization's internal learning methods with KM initiatives creates a documented approach for the organization's competitive advantage and knowledge to be cultivated [2]. Organizational learning is based on the individual's learning abilities and how that translates to the overarching organizational method for collecting knowledge assets [28]. Organizational learning is a way for the organizations to build, supplement, and organize knowledge [28]. Organizing knowledge within the organization may help increase the discoverability and transfer of information to other members of the workforce. The tie between knowledge management and organizational learning stems from a single-loop learning method where the individual of the organization monitors changing conditions and adapts to circumstances, thereby gaining knowledge from experiences [12]. Double-loop learning mechanism where the individual may adapt by integrating new learning opportunities based on the lack of the required knowledge to adapt to the situation [12]. Applying this method to the consultancy-based environment becomes a useful way of understanding knowledge growth and the process by which members of the armed forces attempt to learn and adapt to new and undiscovered situations. This indicates a direct correlation between organizational learning and knowledge management practices, along with the opportunity for the organization, specifically within the consultancy-based environment, to adapt and gain crucial knowledge stemming from the development of an organizational KMS.

The process of knowledge transfer is irrelevant if the ability to retain the information being exchanged is not adequate [20]. This indicates a requirement for knowledge management principles to be applied to the organization's ability to retain existing knowledge. Knowledge transfer is a dependency of KM and the KMS implemented by an organization. The basis for knowledge transfer is the process of one individual's knowledge being absorbed by another [20]. The process of transferring knowledge from one person to another also depends on the individual's ability to absorb additional knowledge and on what existing knowledge can support newly acquired knowledge. Cohen and Levinthal [6] described how an organization's ability to absorb newly acquired knowledge is dependent on the individual's ability to absorb new knowledge [6]. An organization's ability to absorb information and knowledge is also dependent on existing knowledge that has been documented and retained based on the same theory [15]. Knowledge transfer within an organization utilizes communities of practice (CoPs), enabling information sharing and knowledge transfer by social learning and interaction between team members based on a common interest [38]. In addition, CoPs provide an opportunity to add a new dimension to the organization's learning culture [38]. These communities of interest establish sections of work defined by the organization for the individuals to work. These sections of corporate knowledge provide group members with the necessary resources helping understand their role within the group and the performance factors expected by the organization. These CoPs are used as best practice for enabling organizational agility.

VII. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information management is a broad term based on different scenarios [9]. Information management is the overall business management of processes and systems for the retention, acquisition, and creation of information [9]. Information management also contains management processes and procedures for maintaining existing information while also providing information acquisition methods for an organization [16]. The organizational KMS implementation would include methods for improving information management and information sharing along with information dissemination based on the organizations business objectives and the supporting KMS derived from key leadership decision makers. Information management and the sharing of information involves moving across organizational lines that include managerial, executive, and worker level employees [3]. The ability to share information across these organizational lines could benefit and encourage organizational goals and overall performance based on the availability of information to make key decisions by all levels of the organization [3]. Allowing the organization to share information more efficiently and transparently could potentially create knowledge sharing culture where personnel gain the required knowledge to make more informed decisions. The organization of information could help the organization streamline existing information

overload [34]. Creating structure for the organization's information management and information sharing practices could help increase productivity and overall effectiveness by allowing for information to be found and accessible when required [33].

VIII. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Managing an organization's knowledge asset effectively and across organizational lines is a major challenge [4]. Knowledge transfer between individual members of the organization develops through personal relationships and trust [39]. The organizational strategy should align with the organization's KM objectives described within the KMS and flow down toward the workforce, increasing knowledge transfer between personnel and reducing transition time [14]. Organizational learning and knowledge transfer are describing as a dynamic process working toward organizational goals, business objectives, and accomplishments while improving knowledge transfer within the workforce `. Organizational lines that describe the various levels within the organization could also be considered knowledge sharing boundaries based on the secluded nature of the position and overall responsibilities. Executive level participants stated the existence of a knowledge tool where the organization inputs information for distribution throughout the organization at all levels. The remaining participants did not mention the existence of knowledge based tool, but did state the need for something that provides information and knowledge to the workforce. This indicated an information-sharing gap between organizational boundaries that are the executive level, managerial level, and remaining workforce members.

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