

A Critical Analysis of Knowledge Management in Amazon

Module: BMSW5106

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Executive Summary

This report is requested by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. To demonstrate knowledge management in Amazon's context, this report aims to provide a critical analysis. With this report, Amazon's knowledge system and knowledge information management procedure will be expanded in order to support the company's organisational growth.

A brief introduction to knowledge management is provided in the first part of the report, along with a clarification of the difference between data and knowledge. This is followed by a brief organisational profile of Amazon that includes their history and activities, as well as their location and demographic profile.

This is followed by a SWOT analysis of knowledge management. This includes an assessment of the organization's strengths, as well as knowledge and key factors of business-driver services.

The report begins with a brief overview of knowledge management.

A critical analysis of RBV (Resource-Based-View) and VRIO attributes, used to determine the progression of the organisation, are presented in the report's strengths section, demonstrating Amazon's strengths. Amazon's SWOT analysis also identifies the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as areas for improvement.

Second half of the report critically analysed Amazon's Knowledge Management System. The Knowledge Management Value Chain (KMVC) is linked to Nevis (1995) Knowledge Typology, and the stages will be associated with relevant knowledge typologies: Nonaka and Seci Model, Amidom and Skyreme, are discussed in this section.

The report's conclusion focuses on Amazon's Knowledge Management, critically analysing and highlighting the system's main purpose. Specifically, Amazon's Knowledge Management System will be improved.

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Introduction

Knowledge Management -This report is intended to explain and evaluate the importance of knowledge management. This involves an understanding of the process of knowledge management that Amazon development needs and the knowledge management culture framework.

Knowledge management is the conscious process of defining, structuring, retaining and sharing the knowledge and experience of employees within an organization. Often it is referring to training and learning in an organization or of its customers.

The classic one-line definition of Knowledge Management was offered by Tom Davenport early on (Davenport, 1994): "Knowledge Management is the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge."

A number of theorists were responsible for introducing and popularising knowledge management, including

- It was introduced in Nevis Typology (1995) that the learning system consists of three processes. Learning, Sharing, and Utilization of Information (Nevis et. al., 1995)
- Quinn's Four Levels of Knowledge Typology (1996) describes cognitive knowledge (knowing what), advanced skills (knowing how), system understanding (knowing why), and self-motivated (care why) creativity as four levels of knowledge. (Almeida, Sewqeira 2018)
- The Six Knows Knowledge Typology by Amidon and Skyrme (1997) Know-How, Know-Whom, Know-Why, Know-When, Know-Where and Know-That are the six types of knowledge that the theorist developed. For more information, see Knight and Howes (2012).
- There are two different types of knowledge, tacit and explicit, that Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) identified along with the SECI Model. (Ramirez et. al, 2011)
- Four types of knowledge are defined by Wiig (1993), including factual and conceptual as well as exceptions and methodological knowledge. (Dalkir 2017)

Differences and the procedure that transform data to knowledge information by effective steps can be identified. By assigning a meaning or context to a data, the data transforms into information. In addition, information can also be represented by the accumulation of a data package or the linking of different data. When data is processed, linked and stored, whether it be by a machine or by a human being, knowledge becomes. If you follow the route back, the data is a formal representation of knowledge and information.(Zins, 2007)

KM as a term was first used by Peter Drucker, the knowledge "expert" in the 1980's, but was recognised by the late 1990's. Some people would argue that the search for understanding knowledge has been central to human behaviour. It was for centuries. New technologies have started to be developed, driven by the need to capture, store and distribute more efficient knowledge. Any further development in communication and learning technology has expanded the capture and distribution of knowledge. In the mid- to late 1980's, KM only really got up (as we know it today), and the economic, social and technological developments were far reaching

worldwide. Many companies started to experience new opportunities through 'globalisation.' This resulted in increasing competition and many organisations reacted with "downsizing" (or later "rightsizing"). Workforce reduction has become the norm in order to increase productivity through computerisation and networking technology. (Wiig, 1997)

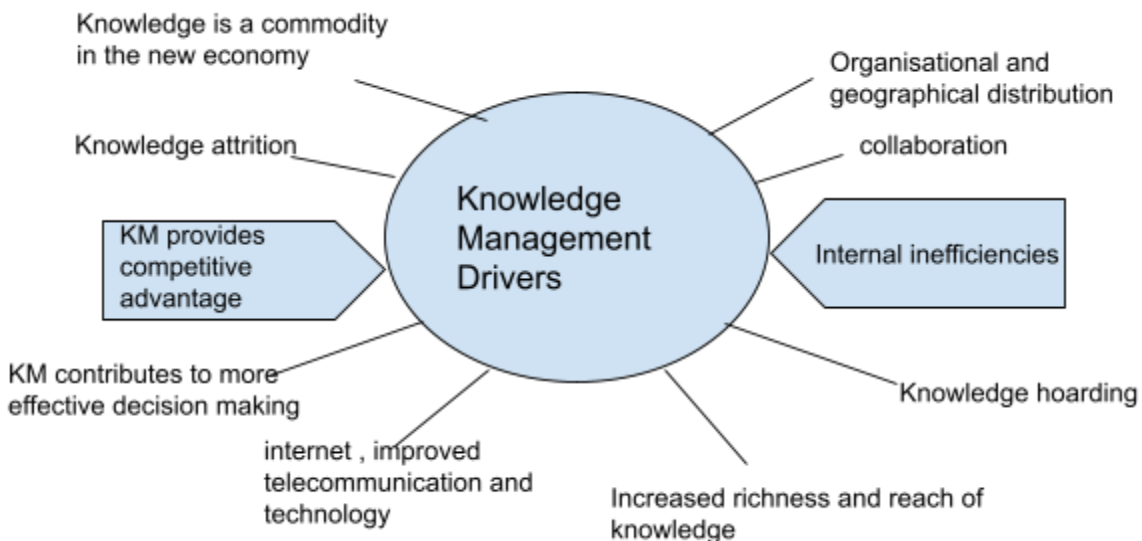
Management of knowledge is important because it improves the efficiency of decision-making capacity of an organisation. In order to ensure that every employee has access to the general expertise of the company, smarter employees are created who can make faster, smarter decisions which benefit the company. (Jelenic, 2011)

KM's main drivers include culture, organisation, people and IS as key drivers for KM that are important for further stimulating knowledge creation, transmission and sharing within an organisation. The creation and sharing of organisational knowledge is central to people. (Du Plessis, 2005)

Knowledge Management Drivers

It can be defined as a component of the implementation of knowledge management. As a result of information technology, knowledge management has become a necessity for organisations to improve their competitiveness. (Hargadon, 2000)

In order to achieve and share knowledge efficiency, Amazon uses its information technology to create a knowledge management platform based on information technology. The implicit knowledge was transformed into explicit knowledge through the use of an appropriate information system for knowledge management, which enabled knowledge creation, learning, sharing, and cooperating to take place. (du Plessis, 2005)



Knowledge Managemnet Drivers (du Plessis, 2005)

Organisational Profile of Amazon and History

In terms of market capitalization, Amazon is the world's `` There are more than 2 million people employed by it, making it the second largest private employer in America and one of the most valuable. (Podean - Global Amazon and Marketplace Marketing Agency, 2020)

When Jeff Bezos first bought Amazon.com in July 2005, he was then a Wall Street hedge fund manager. His lawyer told him that Cadabra (from Abracadabra) was a little too ominous. As a result, the name was eventually sorted into Amazon and registered on July 16, 1995 as an e-commerce website that sold only books.

Jeff Bezos knew from the beginning that he wanted Amazon to be "everything's store." People in all 50 countries and 45 countries had purchased books from Amazon in the first month of its launch. (Stone, 2013)

In 1998, Amazon experienced its first intense Christmas. The company's workforce has been drastically underutilised. As a result, each staff member had a long shift to work in order to. It was common for workers to bring their friends and family Before going to work the next day, so they often slept in their cars. Afterwards, Amazon vowed that it would never again run out of workers during the holiday season, which is why it now hires so many workers. (Bezos, 1998)

In fact, Amazon's customer base grew rapidly after its first full year of operation and less than a year later, in October 1997, reaching 180 000 accounts by December 1996 and 1,000,000 accounts by the end The company's revenues increased from 15.7 million dollars in 1996 to 148 million dollars in 1997, and then to 610 million dollars.

Organisational Structure

Amazon.com Inc.'s international e-commerce activities can be analysed in depth, thanks to the company's data sources. In addition, keep in mind a company's organisational design and interaction system. As a result of its organisational structure, Amazon's business activities in various fields are managed in a different way. If Amazon.com wants to be successful, it needs to create a supportive institutional framework for its growing market. (Organimi, 2017)

Business functions are the foundation of Amazon's functional organisational structure, which enables communication between functional units. According to Amazon's corporate structure: (Rivet, 2017)

1. Global function-based groups
2. Global hierarchy
3. Geographic divisions

Groups based on global functions

In Amazon's case, the company's organisational structure allows it to exert a high degree of control over global e-commerce. As a result of the company's organisational or corporate structure, the company's design and system of interactions between its Amazon's corporate structure, for instance, determines how managers direct and influence operational activities in various business areas of the firm. A strong organisational structure is essential for Amazon.com as a leading online retailer. In particular, this is true for Amazon, which is constantly adding new products and diversifying its operations. A key factor in the company's resilience against competitors such as Google, Apple, Wal-Mart, and many others with online or non-online operations is Amazon's corporate structure. For e-commerce to continue to be successful, the company's structure must be strengthened in light of the fierce competition. (Pokorny, Cayres and Nunes, 2005)

As a result of Amazon's organisational structure, it is possible to implement strategic management initiatives in a comprehensive manner by using this type of control. Because of this structure, Amazon.com Inc.'s new product launches in the e-commerce market benefit as the company diversifies its business. Commerce. (Rivet, 2017)

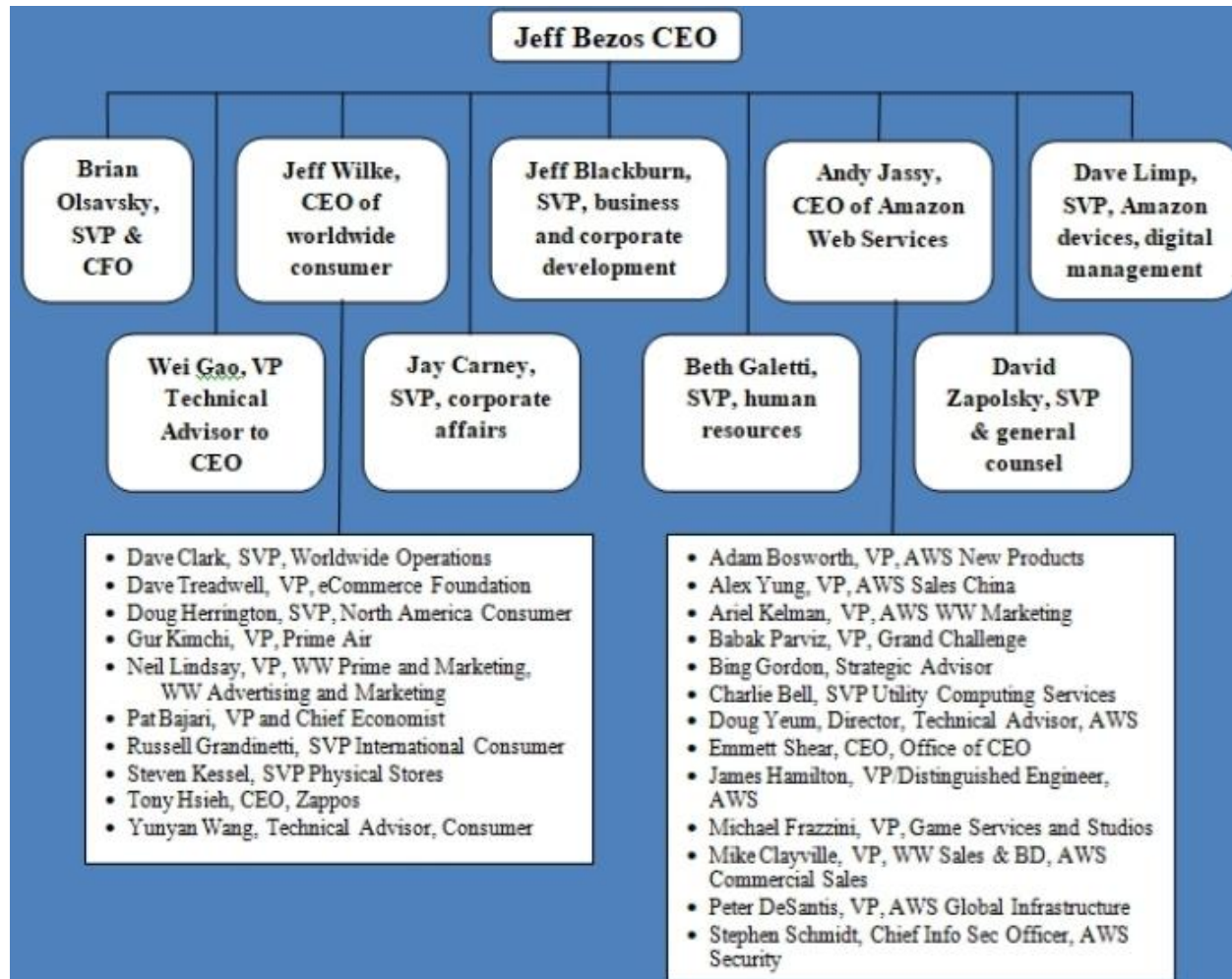
Features of Amazon.com's Organizational Structure

1. Global function-based groups (most significant feature)
2. Global hierarchy
3. Geographic divisions

Global Function-Based Groups.

Function-based groups dominate Amazon's organisational structure. Each major business function has its own dedicated group or team with the help of a senior manager. Since Amazon.com has such a unique organisational structure, the company is better equipped to manage its e-commerce operations across the globe. This corporate structure makes it much easier to establish operations in new markets, which allows the company to grow. (Amazon.com | History & Facts | Britannica, 2021)

Amazon's organisational structure is divided into the following major functional groups:



Amazon 's Organisational Structure: A brief - overview. (researchgate.net)

Global Hierarchy

As a common organisational structure, hierarchies can be found Amazon.com Inc.'s global system of vertical control and authority, as an example, has an impact on the retail company. So, when senior managers issue orders that affect all relevant offices in different countries, those orders are carried out across the entire organisation, for example. This feature of the company structure has a strategic goal: to facilitate the management control of the entire organisation. (Stephansen, 2013)

Geographic Division

As part of its organisational structure, Amazon is divided into geographical areas. Geographical areas and related business objectives form the basis of this structural characteristic. Amazon.com Inc. uses geographic divisions based on economic conditions to facilitate e-commerce management in certain regions. Since the company has such a unique organisational structure, it can deal with issues or concerns that are important to every geographic region, while also taking into account regional market differences.

(Cheung et al., 2016)

When it comes to this structural feature, Amazon has a simple approach that involves in its operations the following geographic areas

1. North America
2. International

SWOT Analysis of the Knowledge Management System at Amazon

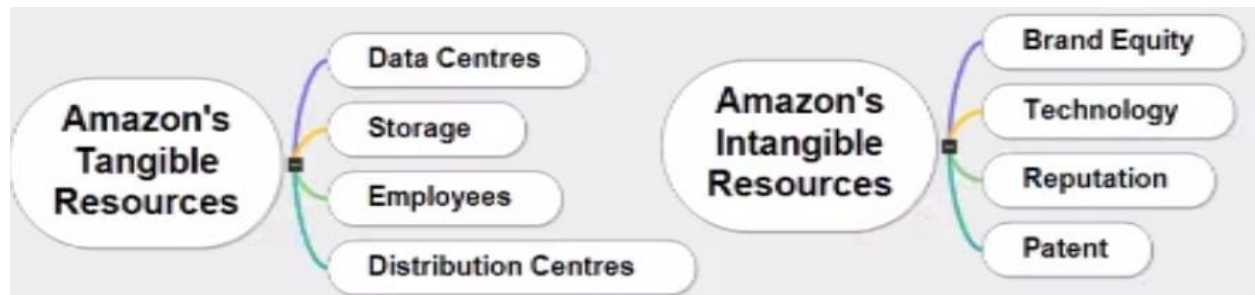
In a SWOT analysis, the organization's goals are examined and a road map for achieving those goals is provided. Strengths and weaknesses can be identified using Amazon's knowledge management SWOT analysis in order to develop strategies and make decisions. Because of this, IT and Amazon's general operating systems are gaining in popularity.. (Phadermrod, Crowder and Wills, 2019)

Strengths

- Amazon's strengths are derived primarily from the three-fold strategy for cost governance, differentiation and focus as the world's leading online retailer. The company took the gains from this course of action with this strategy and contributed to the company's shareholders' value.
- The competitive advantage of Amazon is mainly derived from the use of IT and electronic commerce as a scalable and easy platform to upgrade to ensure that Amazon's competitors are well in front of it.
- As part of their Knowledge Management System, Amazon uses a resource-based view (RBV) to gain a competitive advantage by analysing internal resources. (Jurevicius, 2013)
- VIRO attributes are linked to Amazon's RBV in order to identify the company's sustainable competitive advantage. (Rancord Society, 2019)

Resource Based Review

Resource- Based - View is a knowledge management tool for displaying strategic resources. Using RBV as a pivot in long-term performance, (Barney,1991), a company can achieve sustainable competitive advantages. A firm's internal resources are critical when it is competing in the same industry. (Wernerfelt, 1984). Because of their importance and value, resources are essential to a company's success.



Amazon's Tangible and Intangible resources (Jurevicius, 2013)

Tangible resources:

Among them are the buildings themselves as well as the equipment, While all of these assets have advantages for the company, a competitor in the marketplace could easily acquire them. (Macroaxis, 2021)

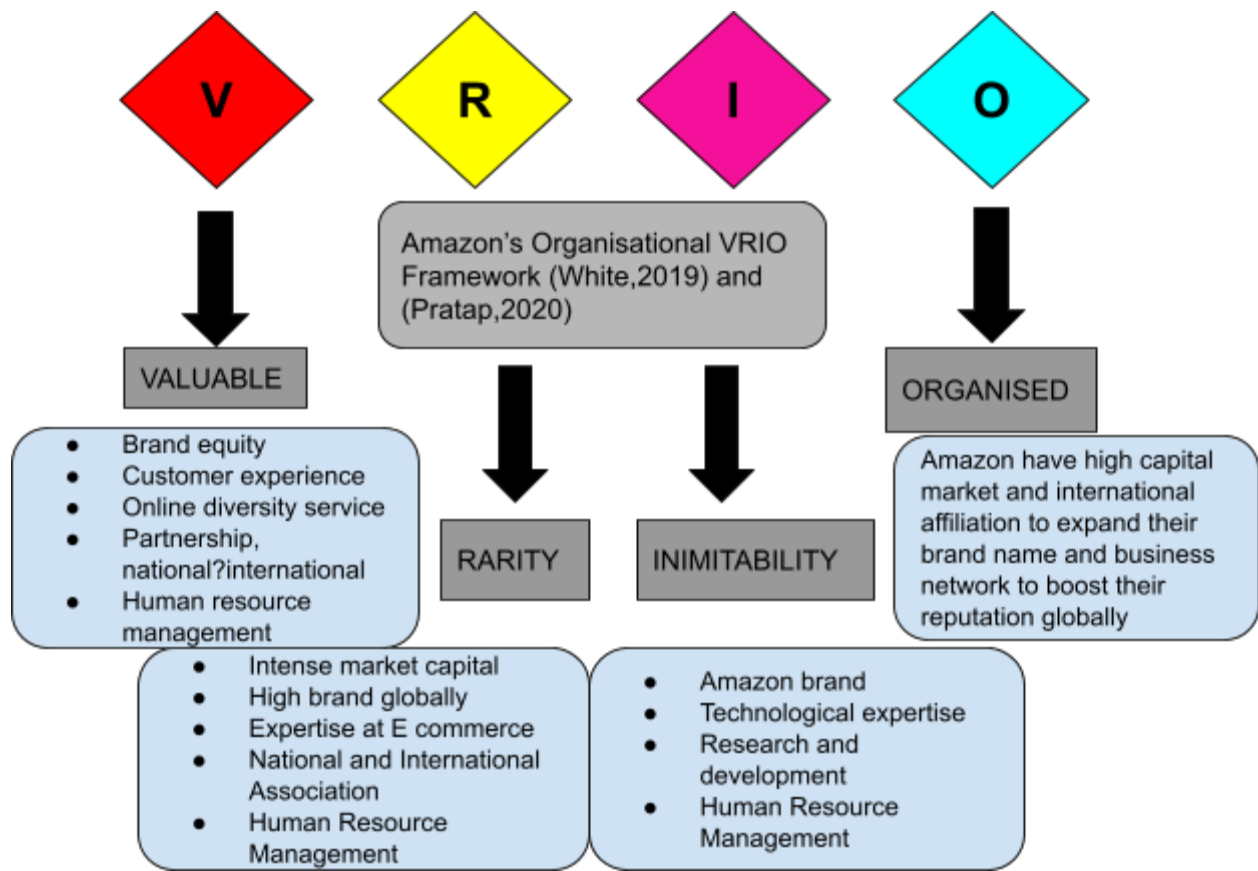
Intangible Resources:

Its reputation, characteristics, and exclusive rights have been built up over time and can't be bought by other retailers, which are among Amazon's intangible assets. Amazon has been able to maintain a competitive advantage over its competitors as a result of its innovative business. (Knowledge Leaders Capital, 2014)

Amazon's VRIO Framework

The immobility assets are Amazon's competencies and barriers that prevent rivals from replicating certain assets such as brand equity, knowledge, and reputation. (Partap, 2020)
In addition, Jay B. Barney (1991) developed the VRIO framework, which examines organisational resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, unique and have long-term competitive advantages. (Pratap, 2020)

The following diagram demonstrate Amazon's VRIO framework (white, 2019)



Amazon's Organisation VRIO Framework (white, 2019)

Weaknesses

- Due to its e-commerce business model and its highly imitable knowledge management (KM) business model. Anyone can now easily replicate Amazon's online business and make it a customer favourite. Customers are already benefiting from the knowledge of a few e-commerce companies such as eBay, Netflix, and Walmart. Amazon has fewer physical stores, which makes it harder for customers to buy products that aren't available on Amazon.com or other online retailers.(bstrategyhub, 2018)
- As part of its diversification strategy, Amazon "scattered too slim" in recent years, allowing it to shift its focus from its core competence in online books and to focus on new areas of activity. While this may be a good strategy from the perspective of risk diversification, Amazon must know it loses its strategic advantage by distancing itself from its core skills.
- Given that the company is an online retailer only, the single focus on online retailing could "remove" its expansion plans in emerging markets in particular.

Opportunities.

- As a result of its knowledge management strategy, Amazon can diversify its products and adopt new technology to achieve faster growth than its competitors. As a way to engage with customers, Amazon can organise community events that are related to the brand. (Information Strategy: The Executive's Journal, 2013)
- In terms of expanding the global footprint and providing additional sites in the emerging markets, Amazon's fourth opportunity is to certainly advance the overcoming online distribution market. (Drew, 1999)

Threats

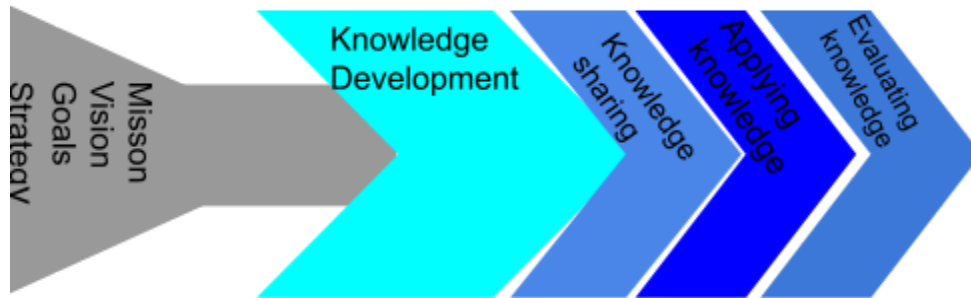
- Its biggest challenge as an e-commerce company is competing with a wide range of companies in retail and cloud computing. Some of the world's biggest brands, such as IBM, Microsoft, and Alibaba, are financially strong and have a highly skilled workforce. In addition, other retail outlets are moving their business online to attract more customers, which increases the threat of cybercrime. The company must, however, re-strategise its resources and capabilities to strengthen the key areas, minimise the weaknesses, and take advantage of the opportunities for the future progress, despite its excellent Knowledge Management System. (Hatem and Alshmrani, n.d.)
- The increasing concern over Online Shopping due to theft and hacking of identity, which reveals its consumer data, is one of the major threats to Amazon's success. Consequently, Amazon must promptly alleviate consumer concerns on its website and ensure confidentiality and security online. (Ratnasingham, 2006)

Critical Evaluation of the KMVC and Support Systems

One way that knowledge workers contribute to their employer's competitive advantage, as well as social and environmental benefits, is by participating in a knowledge value chain, which is In a knowledge value chain, for example, research and development project components are linked together. (Duffy, 2000)

The knowledge value chain comprises the KM infrastructure, as well as the activities and knowledge performance of the KM process. It is on the basis of these infrastructure components and operations that a company creates a product or delivers a value service to its customers. Acquisition, Storage, Dissemination, and Application are the four areas of the knowledge management process. (Ermine, Jean-Louis, 2014)

Nevis (1995) Knowledge management typology is the three stages of knowledge: (knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilisation) is the most relevant type of knowledge management, which can be connected to the knowledge Management Value Chain (KMVC).



Weggeman's Model of Knowledge Management Value Chain (KMVC)

Knowledge Acquisition

Some companies may seek information from outside sources.... Indeed, the subject of knowledge acquisition is so vast that it could fill entire books and extend far beyond the scope of knowledge management. (McGraw and Harbison-Briggs, 1989)

Customers, suppliers, competitors, and partners are Amazon Knowledge Acquisition's primary data sources. Amazon's data collection varies in terms of its type depending on the source of acquisition and the intended use of the data. Amazon's customer knowledge acquisition includes supplier, market, and product data. (Kuhn et al., 1995)

According to Ritala et. al (2014), Companies must learn about their customers and their motivations. There are a number of examples such as purchasing, expectations, and needs As a result, Amazon's products and services are. Amazon's KM is best linked with Amidon and Skyrme (1997). The six Knows-Knowledge Typology, demonstrated through four Knows:

Know-Who : Internal and external networking are used by Amazon to increase the company's ability to commercialise tacit knowledge. (Rosenberg, 2014)

Knowledge - Why: Feedback from customers is used as part of Amazon's crowd-sourcing strategy. This includes customer ratings, reviews and images. Many online shopping sites have copied Amazon in order to increase user awareness. (Hayrrayson, 2002)

Know- How: Customers who order, purchase, and demonstrate growth through personalisation for both the customer and business have their services customised and adapted by Amazon based on knowledge management (KM).

Knowledge Storage

Employees and stakeholders can search for information that can be used further to analyse synthesising, Amazon uses knowledge acquisition to make the appropriate decisions. Amazon Knowledge storage uses hardware and software in an organisation for later retrieval. (Porter, 1985)

Instagram and Pinterest's data is stored on Amazon's servers and data centres (basically massive warehouses with hundreds, if not thousands, of servers filled with hard drives), which are rented out by the hour to companies like Instagram and Pinterest Approximately

1,000,000,000 gigabytes of data are hosted by Amazon, which has more than 1,400,000 servers. (Amazon Web Services, Inc., 2021)

Amidon and Skyrme can be applied to Amazon's knowledge storage to demonstrate the six Knows Knowledge Typology: (Know-Why, Know-Who, Know-How, Know-That, KnowWhere, Know-When).

- **Know-Why:** In order to meet consumer demand, Amazon makes use of large amounts of data. As a result of product and service analysis, Amazon is able to accomplish this. Customer interest can be predicted using data obtained from a recommended platform such as Amazon's. Amazon's reputation in the E-commerce business has been boosted by the use of big data. (Barnerd, 2020)
- **Know-Who:** As a result of knowledge management, Amazon has been able to increase its value in the marketplace. Provide a single portal for customers and employees to access information more quickly, efficiently, and accurately. Amazon collects customer reviews, feedback, and recommendations from previous purchases to entice customers to sign up for offers and promotions.
- **Know - Where:** Amazon's Web Service (AWS) is a cloud computing platform that is widely used. These services are popular amongst a wide range of customers. The following are some of the features of AWS:
 - Provides a broader range of database options.
 - This platform is used by customers from all over the world.
 - among the most secure and adaptable environments for cloud computing
 - In the last 15 years, AWS has been providing this service and has the most reliable operational experience in the industry.
- Over 175 services are offered by Amazon Web Services (AWS), a cloud computing giant.

Apple and Google are AWS's main competitors. (Rear, 2018)

Knowledge Dissemination

When it comes to knowledge dissemination, it's the process of sharing research results with stakeholders and The ability of a company to disseminate information to the public is critical to its success and long-term viability.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) The SECI model can be applied to the knowledge dissemination process to show how Amazon's knowledge is shared and produced: According to this model, which is based on two different models:

Amazon's Tacit Knowledge:

- Workforce qualifications and experience
- Expertise to deal with difficult scenarios Customer feedback and review
- Incorporating ratings into product design

Amazon's Explicit Knowledge:

- Procedural guidelines

- Customers' contact information is stored in the database
- Other e-commerce businesses' products and services are compared
- Reminders
- Customer's Review and Rating of the Seller's Credit
- Suggestions for products and services

A database business analysis of Amazon's tacit and explicit knowledge using SECI Model provided a comprehensive illustration. Despite its importance, it warrants further investigation in order to overcome any obstacles and facilitate its full incorporation in order to achieve a more robust business-oriented structure. (Allen, 2019)

Knowledge Application

Developing a successful new product or service depends on it. An organisation's response to knowledge generated in various situations and contexts, where the information processing methodology meets organisation theory to recognise and structure potential knowledge application contexts. A knowledge-centred approach and logical tools are employed by Amazon in order to articulate and simplify concepts in order to solve a wide range of problems and situations within the company. (Song, van der Bij and Weggeman, 2005)

As far as the availability and the payment terms and credit limits of the goods, Amazon does not, in general, have long-term contracts or agreements with its suppliers. Amazon's Fulfilment (FBA) is the cornerstone of Amazon's retail inbound logistics. Scale economies are also a significant source of value for the inbound logistics industry of Amazon. (Botha, 2008)

- Ideologies and theories are discussed in the context of Amazon's specific circumstances. The company uses technical and professional knowledge to solve practical issues.
- According to the Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Amazon ranks their products in order of importance, from High-to-Low-to-High.
- It has 28 locations in the United States and one recently opened in London, UK. A self-checkout station eliminates the need for a customer to wait in line and pay.
- Amazon collects customer feedback and evaluates solutions strategically.

These evidence proves that Amazon has an impressive knowledge application, as evidenced by their customers' loyalty to the company, but also by amazon's dedication and understanding of the consumer.

Conclusion

This report established that as part of Amazon's competitive advantage strategy, the IT department is increasing data flow and information transfer between the company and its customers and other stakeholders. In the year that KM was introduced to Amazon by KM theorists, KM provided the company with the most up-to-date information on KM at the time of its introduction. As well as offering a variety of products to other retailers such as books, music,

movies, home goods and electronics, their success is based on their understanding of how knowledge management can provide insight into successful business strategies.

Due to its online competitors who have the same knowledge as Amazon in the online business, the SWOT analysis demonstrates Amazon's strengths and their relationship with RBV and VRIO attributes, giving the company a competitive advantage. However, Amazon needs to make improvements and improve its inimitability attributes.

With the Nevis Knowledge Typology, Amidon and Skyrme's Six Knows Typology, Nonaka and Takeuchi's explicit knowledge, and the SECI Model as a foundation, Amazon's KMVC demonstrates that Amazon is aware of how to acquire, store, disperse and apply its knowledge for the company's long-term success.

Recommendations

1. To maintain its existing customer base and find niches in the market, Amazon must constantly analyse the threats from nearby competitors, further enhancing their knowledge in regards to Skyrme Six Knows Typology's know-where and know-when.
2. When it comes to Amazon's inimitability, another online business with similar financial resources can easily copy and follow their lead. This is an area that needs to be improved in the near future. Ensure that Amazon has a competitive advantage in all VRIO-related aspects

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