

Applied Leadership and Management in the Workplace

Module Assignment Submission

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1. Introduction: Evaluation of Knowledge Management

"Knowledge," "information," and "skills" are terms used in many different contexts and with different results, sometimes confusingly so. This book focuses on those terms in relation to work. Throughout the book, "knowledge and information management" and "knowledge and information management skills" are used in a way that encompasses traditional views of knowledge management and information management, while also making it obvious that they focus on work and the ways in which knowledge, information, and their flow at work can be managed effectively. In its simplest form, knowledge management, whether at work or not, involves organizing what one knows, identifying and making use of the gaps in knowledge, and appraising and critiquing what one learns from experience (Dalkir, 2017). Information management involves those same processes, together with all activities associated with other data sources, such as printed materials, electronic records, and other databases (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). With the deployment of advanced technology, these terms appear to become less meaningful. Recorded files can be screened and actioned or filed with the use of software that both manages the volume of work and helps people decide how to manage knowledge and information effectively. It is argued here, instead, that since the use of modern technology demands a greater rather than a lesser understanding of what that technology can and cannot do, knowledge and information management skills become even more important (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

1.1. What is Knowledge Management?

Knowledge management is a revolutionary and groundbreaking interdisciplinary business model that is sweeping through the business world with incredible force and impact (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Notably, labor economists have long been investigating and conducting extensive research in the realm of industrial/organizational psychology, exploring similar avenues as knowledge management (Grant, 1996). However, it is the concept and practice of knowledge management that has truly gained traction and prominence in recent years, fueled by the unstoppable forces of globalization and the insatiable demands of customers for superior quality products (Wenger, 1998). In addition, the ever-decreasing life cycles of products also contribute to the necessity and urgency of effective knowledge management strategies (Nonaka & Toyama, 2003).

While the fundamental principles of maximizing employee expertise, flexibility, and responsiveness have always played a crucial role in business success, what sets today's changing business model apart is the remarkable array of tools and

technologies available for disseminating information throughout the corporate ecosystem (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Gone are the old-fashioned methods of communication, overshadowed by the emergence of cutting-edge advancements in the field of knowledge management. In this modern business landscape, the knowledge management business model encompasses a wide range of innovative strategies and technological solutions (Dalkir, 2017).

One such advancement lies in the realm of database tracking, which revolutionizes the way organizations store, organize, and access information (Davenport, 2005). Gone are the days of cumbersome physical filing systems; instead, knowledge management leverages the power of digital databases, allowing for seamless organization and retrieval of vital corporate knowledge. This, in turn, empowers employees to tap into a vast wealth of information, enabling them to make better-informed decisions and contribute more effectively to the company's overall goals (Grant, 1996).

Moreover, groupware tools have emerged as a groundbreaking addition to the knowledge management arsenal. These collaborative platforms facilitate seamless communication, knowledge sharing, and brainstorming among employees, regardless of their physical location (Wenger, 1998). The ability to collaborate effortlessly and tap into diverse perspectives not only enhances the quality of ideas and problem-solving but also fosters a sense of unity and cohesion within the organization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Additionally, internal broadcasting of information flows has become an invaluable aspect of the knowledge management business model. Through various internal communication channels, organizations can now disseminate critical information and updates swiftly and efficiently to all members of the corporate body (Dalkir, 2017). From important policy changes to market trends and competitive intelligence, employees have immediate access to the necessary information to adapt, innovate, and drive the organization's success forward (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

Overall, these remarkable advancements in knowledge management have facilitated the creation, management, and dissemination of corporate memory, transforming the way organizations operate and thrive in the fast-paced, dynamic business world (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). By harnessing the power of these tools and technologies, businesses can empower their employees, enhance operational efficiency, and ultimately stay at the forefront of their industries. In this new era of knowledge management, adaptability, agility, and the relentless pursuit of excellence are the keys to success (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

1.2. Relationship between Data, Information, and Knowledge

To better understand the relationships between data, information, and knowledge, we can use the DIKW model (Rowley, 2007). The model starts at the base of the hierarchy with data. Data are the raw, unstructured facts describing the state of the universe. They can refer to anything from atomic particles, bytes, numbers, letters, etc. With no further interpretation, we can describe data as "data are just data; they are simple facts, mainly analytical" (Ackoff, 1989). As mentioned before, without interpretation, data are meaningless. Data need direction or aid from a data-processing system to have any relevance. "Data is not for anything in discarding it. Is it immediately information?" Our common response is clearly no to both questions, and thus we move to the second level of information. Only with direction or purpose does data become information (Zins, 2007). Information can be seen as "just data or events, and we can assign meaning to them." For there to be unit parts, we need a system for assigning awareness to assemble them (Frické, 2009).

1.3. Analytical Techniques for Identifying Knowledge Assets

Knowledge and information management involve a systematic process of identification, generation, selection, dissemination, and use of knowledge and information within organizations (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Knowledge and information management activities are pervasive and are performed by both individuals and teams within the organization (Wiig, 1997). To achieve high performance, a comprehensive understanding of the needs and requirements of users for knowledge and information, and the skills to recognize and process knowledge- and information-ready problems and opportunities, are crucial for both managers and other professionals (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). A new graduate embarking on a professional career needs to understand how to manage knowledge, where to find relevant knowledge, and how to meet the information needs of users. For example, when a management team is faced with problems, or opportunities to improve organizational performance, their first activity is to identify the problem or opportunity and then to recognize all possible knowledge resources within and outside of the organization that can contribute to a solution strategy (Choo, 1998). The next steps are to use and share their results and experiences and to store or institutionalize the knowledge gleaned from the process (Dalkir, 2017).

The body of knowledge needed to form a more precise definition of KI skills is found in numerous fields of study. Among the significant and specific disciplines most frequently associated with KI are information systems, information management,

information science, business, management, and strategic management (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011). Outside the field of business, and of the same importance, are the areas of knowledge management and human capital (Bontis, 1999). Other more general areas that contribute to the body of knowledge concepts include economics, cognitive science and psychology, organizational behavior, organizational theory, and communication theory (Simon, 1991). These are the domain disciplines that provide the primary concepts and theories from which the definitions are derived. Theoretical work in these fields describes the process of knowledge acquisition, creation, storage, transfer, and use needed to answer the question of what a knowledge organization is and why individuals are motivated to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge processes (Nonaka, 1994). Furthermore, the theoretical frameworks from these areas provide models of decision-making and behavior needed to answer the questions of what knowledge and information management and use is and how it is performed (March, 1991).

1.4. Evaluating Actual and Potential Knowledge Assets

Individuals within the organization need access to the knowledge and information required by workflows and business processes (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). People inside and outside the company must also be able to share information and knowledge to improve business performance (Brown & Duguid, 2000). Business today is awash in information and knowledge. Knowledge workers sometimes are more like surfing information workers, trying to keep above the waves of information every day (Bell, 1973). Businesses use knowledge in many ways and as an asset to realize business value (Stewart, 1997). Knowledge workers are users of knowledge. They develop the knowledge to improve some business process. They then use new knowledge to improve the results received after the process's next activity (Drucker, 1999). Each business process's input is the output of some other plan's process. Knowledge of the firm – its collective competencies – is an asset of a firm developed with business value in mind (Grant, 1996). Knowledge workers require actual and potential knowledge assets to improve the results from business processes (Sveiby, 1997). Individual workers need access to knowledge in forms that are usable in their tasks. These workers also obtain information to enable the knowledge shared with co-workers both inside and outside of the organization (Nonaka & Konno, 1998).

1.5. Rationale for Capturing and Managing Knowledge

If there is one mistake almost every leadership team seems to make, too often it is in failing to manage and control the high-level knowledge required to achieve the organization's business direction (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). It is left to chance that the organization's "brain trust" will accumulate enough internal organization-specific experience and expertise to remain competitive and meet current or emerging market opportunities (Wiig, 1997). With growing numbers of experienced people exiting the workforce and new hires being less experienced, this loss of experiential knowledge will occur, and it will do so at an increasing rate (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The case for capturing and managing knowledge is even more compelling now, and the value and result will be even more significant within the next five years (Stewart, 1997).

The KM structure should support and sustain the organization by leveraging the intellectual assets of its workforce (Sveiby, 1997). Every person within the organization has a body of knowledge that the organization cannot afford to lose. The organization must find ways of capturing this information so that it is not walking out the door. This practical and necessary information should be kept close to the organization in a readily available format (Dalkir, 2017). The formal organization and well-versed employees can help ensure improved chances that less formal, yet valuable, information is also shared and stored (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). The association of this information can lead to new discoveries and can aid in the exploitation of new opportunities and improve customer service (Grant, 1996). The capturing and storing support provided helps to preserve the "brain trust" and will often reveal opportunities (Choo, 1998).

2. The Importance of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a business process, formal or informal, that is found in all organizations and is focused on the way an organization works and performs (Nonaka, 1994). It is about ensuring the right knowledge and skills are available for the organization to perform efficiently and effectively (Drucker, 1999). It is part of an integrated approach to people management, which is the key to business success (Wenger, 1998). It is the process of deciding who needs what knowledge and ensuring that knowledge is available for the right person at the right time (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Sharing knowledge, whether tacit, explicit, documented, or undocumented, is about recognizing the contribution of knowledge and what it can bring to the organization (Brown & Duguid, 2000). Knowledge thus made accessible depends on

computer software, internal databases, practical methods, and applications (Wiig, 1997).

Knowledge helps in a better understanding of employees and external contacts such as suppliers and customers; it enables better risk management and fosters independence (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The ability to handle knowledge is becoming more and more important in the creation of wealth (Sveiby, 1997). It is not just the quantity of knowledge that distinguishes businesses, but also its quality. Indeed, quality depends largely on the relevance and currency of the knowledge and enables the development and enhancement of the skills essential for innovation and the provision of customer service, which are key to success (Stewart, 1997). Knowledge feeds on data that must be analyzed and interpreted in order to be used for decision-making (Choo, 1998). Managing knowledge thus requires an information system to help people work (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Technology comes first for many people, but to really make the most of technology in decision-making processes, it is important to structure, organize, and analyze information and knowledge to unlock its potential as a decision-making tool (Dalkir, 2017). With knowledge, decisions can be made in an informed manner, exploiting the power of the knowledge of the company's own professionals who communicate and share their skills with each other (Grant, 1996). Decisions can be made quickly, at the right level, and with the appropriate degree of delegation based on the sharing of knowledge (Nonaka, 1994).

2.1. Explain What is Required to Create, Store, Apply, and Integrate Knowledge

The skills required to manage knowledge and information involve a holistic combination of IT and decision-making skills from Information Science, as well as interpersonal, intrapersonal, and communication skills from human behavior (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). A manager would require comprehensive knowledge about a service, from research to operational level, which can be expressed as a set of skills: technical, logistical, and commercial expertise; interpretation, analysis, and synthesis; judgment; problem-solving; communication; formulation of ideas; leadership and management skills; strategic thinking; and taking action and demonstrating results (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The job of managers involves knowledge, its application, performance, and the ability to capture, share, and build it. These skills can assist in the transformation of systems thinking into real long-term advantages (Wiig, 1997). The model also involves transformation processes, from the internalization of explicit knowledge to the conversion of tacit knowledge through dialogue (Wenger, 1998).

2.2. Consider the Importance of Intellectual Property Rights

Considering the importance of intellectual property rights involves ensuring appropriate permissions are gained before using protected information (Bontis, 1999). It is important to remember that many websites are still under copyright. In addition, the information itself may be the intellectual property of the provider (Dalkir, 2017). Before reproducing or redistributing such information, it is customary to obtain the consent of the owner (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011). If unauthorized files and data are downloaded and then used, ethical and secondary legal problems may occur (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). One basic rule is to ask when in doubt. If in a professional context, ask the person providing administrative support or responsible for information management (Wenger, 1998). If in doubt about software or manuals, contact your IT support; or for print material, ask a librarian (Choo, 1998). Additionally, gaining prior approval protects the legal rights of individuals and helps to conform to good ethical and professional standards (Bontis, 1999).

However, not all material may be protected to the degree that other material is. Governments intend that information on their sites is in the public domain (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011). Their sites often contain information to assist in understanding law and due process. Information produced by governments is usually not subject to copyright, resulting in a legal framework of affordable access, free use, and liberal dissemination (Sveiby, 1997). Commercial usage rights are available if you require information from a government website. Alternatively, it may be subject to a license or a disclaimer statement that explains the intended level of protection. Government information is considered a public good providing societal benefits (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Although it is doubtful that non-government providers consider their information as a public good, information that one provides may also potentially benefit society. If providing information, consider the legal ownership rights and distribution terms (Brown & Duguid, 2000). If unclear as to the best copyright approach, professionals can receive further advice and protection by obtaining legal guidance. Based on the need concerned, additional advice on intellectual property issues can be gained from persons responsible for knowledge management or intellectual asset management (Stewart, 1997).

3. Provide a Framework for Establishing a Knowledge Management Culture

Establishing a knowledge management (KM) culture within an organization is a strategic endeavor that requires alignment with organizational goals, leadership involvement, cultural integration, and a focus on professional growth. A robust framework for fostering such a culture incorporates the following elements:

Reaffirm the Knowledge Strategy

A KM culture begins with a clear and evolving strategy. Leaders must ensure that the KM strategy remains relevant by adapting to the organization's goals, direction, and emerging challenges (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). By continuously associating KM initiatives with organizational priorities, the strategy gains relevance and demonstrates its value to stakeholders. For instance, focusing on small, high-impact projects tied to the strategic objectives can illustrate the tangible benefits of KM to both leadership and employees (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Organizations must also embed KM into their broader strategic frameworks. This includes ensuring KM processes support innovation, problem-solving, and decision-making in critical areas. For example, aligning KM with customer relationship management or product development ensures it directly addresses pressing organizational challenges.

Align Leaders, Behaviors, Incentives, and Goals

Leadership is a cornerstone of a KM culture. Leaders set the tone for the organization, and their active involvement in KM efforts signals its importance (Sveiby, 1997). Demonstrating how KM supports the achievement of business outcomes can engage leaders and motivate them to champion KM practices (Dalkir, 2017).

Additionally, aligning incentives and goals across all levels of the organization reinforces the importance of KM. Performance management systems should include metrics that reward knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation. For instance, leaders who model desired behaviors, such as sharing insights during meetings or mentoring employees, help establish norms that permeate the organizational culture.

Integrate KM into Organizational Culture

A KM culture thrives when it is inseparable from other organizational practices and values. The organization must make KM a criterion for membership, meaning employees are expected to demonstrate KM-related behaviors and skills (Wiig, 1997). These expectations should be reinforced through recruitment, onboarding, promotions, performance evaluations, and recommendations (Grant, 1996).

Embedding KM into everyday activities also ensures it is viewed as an integral part of the organization. For instance, regular knowledge-sharing sessions or forums can foster a sense of community while promoting collaboration. Additionally, ensuring that employees have access to user-friendly tools and platforms for capturing and sharing knowledge makes it easier for them to integrate KM into their workflows.

Promote Professional Growth Through KM

Organizations must highlight the role of KM in professional development and career growth. Employees should view KM skills as essential to their success and as a pathway to advancement (Wenger, 1998). Proposing career models that emphasize the importance of KM can encourage employees to actively participate in knowledge-sharing initiatives.

Moreover, personal development plans that include KM-related training, such as knowledge capture techniques or collaboration tools, help employees build and refine these skills. These initiatives also create opportunities for employees to contribute meaningfully to the organization's KM culture, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment (Choo, 1998).

Foster Continuous Participation in KM

For KM to thrive, every employee must actively engage in creating, sharing, and utilizing knowledge at all levels of the organization. This includes ensuring that informal knowledge, such as practical tips and lessons learned, is captured and shared alongside formal processes. By supporting continuous participation, organizations create a dynamic and evolving KM culture that adapts to new challenges and opportunities (Stewart, 1997).

3.1. Explain the Contribution Knowledge Assets Have on an Organization

An organization is made up of people and processes that come together to achieve defined goals. It does so based on information, which refers to the data made meaningful for a particular context (Drucker, 1999). Information is vital as the opportunities and threats in a company's situation determine its strategic issues. Information is also required for setting up work schedules and controlling the activities of individuals, groups, and the organization as a whole, as efforts are directed and resources are allocated to operational activities (Nonaka, 1994). It enables the organization to understand and respond to the demands placed upon it by the various interested parties (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

Management is about making good decisions that help the organization because a good decision is one that achieves its objectives in the best possible way, all things considered. All the information an organization relies upon constitutes the knowledge owned by that organization (Sveiby, 1997). The company uses knowledge to blend information and call upon the skills that people possess to make good decisions (Wiig, 1997). It is knowledge, not information, that has a direct impact on the organization's goals (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). It is knowledge, used wisely, that enables an organization to develop new products and services, diversify a business, discover new markets, develop a novel marketing strategy, or design more efficient production processes (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Knowledge is therefore central to securing the long-term future of an organization (Stewart, 1997).

3.2. Evaluate the Knowledge Requirements for the Organization

It is crucial that the knowledge requirements of the organization are understood and defined. This is often easier said than done because knowledge can sometimes be hard to see (Choo, 1998). There are no proven tools or methods like there are for the organization of other resources such as money or people (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). However, there are sets of skills and knowledge associated with every system, process, and person within the organization (Grant, 1996).

To understand these skills and the types of knowledge requires a systematic approach that caters for:

- The organization-wide knowledge requirements.
- The unit, department, or team-wide knowledge requirements.
- The specific knowledge requirements of each person, job, and process (Wenger, 1998).

The organization-wide knowledge requirements should inform the organization-wide strategies. The unit, department, or team-wide knowledge requirements cater for any differences or unique requirements of that unit, department, or team that contribute to the implementation of the organization-wide strategy (Dalkir, 2017). Each person, job, and process should have unique knowledge requirements that cater for the fact that every person, every job, and virtually every process within an organization is unique (Wiig, 1997).

3.3. Evaluate the Organization Frameworks for Enabling Knowledge Sharing

A good understanding of information management in the context of organizational needs such as customer service, and the values and attitudes that show recognition of the importance and strategic potential of knowledge management in relation to organizational purpose, enables the thinking about enabling knowledge sharing within the organization to take place (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Knowledge sharing usually encompasses issues of what to share, when to share, whom to share with, and how to share (Brown & Duguid, 2000).

Knowledge and information sharing deliver insights and information that can affect the competitive position and long-term strategic direction of the organization (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Enabling knowledge sharing therefore needs frameworks and structures to allow discussion on the necessary confidence, organizational culture, and the external conditions of the organization (Nonaka, 1994).

Organizational knowledge as a form of asset, the need for proper personal and management skills focus for the management of knowledge-based assets, will outline how the management of knowledge-based assets can be managed in cooperation with the overall strategic development of the organization (Grant, 1996). The concept of working smarter rather than harder, allowing an increased capacity of workers to be transformed into product or organizational knowledge, has always been an aim of succession planning within libraries (Sveiby, 1997).

The ideas of working smarter put them forward as key elements of knowledge management, with certification as a means for libraries to better identify and develop the kinds of knowledge management capabilities (Wiig, 1997). The use of knowledge management capabilities, however, must not end with the settings in which libraries provide services, but is likely to have its own practical basis in the organization of the units with which libraries communicate on a more or less regular basis (Wenger, 1998).

3.4. Recommend Improvements to the Current Framework

The final component relates to recommendations for improvements to the current framework. In this section, areas that need further clarification or updating are presented (Dalkir, 2017). This does not pretend, however, to provide an exhaustive list of such enhancements to the system. In fact, it is likely that many further needs for improvement will emerge as entities start to apply the principles of digital information and records management to more diverse ranges of records and information and

develop the necessary software to control and manage digital data (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

Both of these areas are rapidly developing, and periodic reviews are needed to evaluate and update the current conceptual intuitions and practical advice (Choo, 1998). Digital information and records management skills are an important component of the solution to the current problems posed by digital data. The section includes recommendations for establishing specific skills and training programs in this area (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

While it is clear that not all information needs to be managed at such detailed and exacting levels, there is some information, and some purposes behind keeping the information, that necessarily requires an accurate and complete set of related metadata (Wiig, 1997). The pertinent question at this point is: What type of information subsequently requires specific, detailed, and exacting metadata? Being able to tease out this more precise description would be quite helpful (Grant, 1996)

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, information management, knowledge management, and learning organization concepts have received a considerable amount of interest over the last couple of decades. All three are means to help an organization improve its performance. As learning organizations, organizations continuously create, store, recall, and learn from their knowledge base, and through the exchange of knowledge and information, create and apply knowledge. Historically, government organizations have not successfully focused on learning, knowledge, or information as core attributes. Unfortunately, the private sector, public sector, and traditional private industry have very different cultures and face somewhat different challenges in effecting and implementing knowledge management and learning organization initiatives. With the advent of electronic commerce, increased information needs, as well as increased opportunities for the management and sharing of knowledge have emerged. The increasing importance of knowledge management, information management, and learning organizations will require the attention of managers, executive leaders, and workers throughout the organization. Organizations must prepare to meet the challenges and opportunities brought about by this rapidly changing environment characterized by global business opportunities, increasing amounts and types of information, and employee desire to contribute to positive organizational performance.

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