



Knowledge Management (KM) System in practice at Fello Travel

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1. Introduction

Fello Travel, a renowned travel agency established in the UK, takes great satisfaction in providing a broad range of travel services to meet all of your needs, including corporate travel, leisure travel, group travel, luxury travel, etc. The importance of personal growth in developing a motivated, engaged, and skilled staff is acknowledged by Fello Travel UK. The company can ensure increased productivity, employee retention, and overall success by supporting employee growth (Business travel you Canlook forward to, 2023).

In the highly competitive and fast-growing travel and tourism industry, organizations must now prioritize delivering customer service that exceeds past norms in order to obtain a competitive advantage and attract potential holidaymakers and travellers. Due to intensifying competition, there has been a significant surge in the number of customers making online bookings in the past decade. Consequently, it has become necessary to develop solutions to effectively oversee these growing demands.

As a result of the emergence of the information economy, the significance of knowledge management has become increasingly significant. The realization of the transformation of tacit knowledge and explicit resources is the fundamental aspect of knowledge management. Knowledge can be broken down into two categories: explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. (Massingham & Massingham, 2014)

Individuals no longer have to make the trek to their neighbourhood travel agency in order to book their long-awaited vacations. Instead, they can now access a wide variety of travel businesses and possibilities with just the click of a mouse when they book their vacations online.

As a consequence of this, customer contact centres are becoming increasingly burdened with large numbers of client inquiries, whether they are pre-sale or post-sale inquiries, which require agents to possess levels of travel expertise that have never been seen before. Therefore, in order for agents to reach their maximum potential for productivity, extra technologies need to be installed.

The realization of the transformation of tacit knowledge and explicit resources is the fundamental aspect of knowledge management. Knowledge that is capable of being effectively reproduced through learning and use of procedures is referred to as explicit knowledge. Implicit knowledge, on the other hand, is a form of intuitive knowledge that is learned via experience (Garcia and Sosa-Fey, 2020). Experience is one of the origins of this tacit knowledge, which indicates that the individual's own personal experience is a significant source contributing to the formation of this tacit knowledge. In addition, traveling is an excellent opportunity to get a direct experience of it. In recent years, with the end of pandemic epidemics and the reopening of airline routes, traveling has become a popular way for individuals all over the world to kill their time and experience life from a different perspective. As a means of developing their own unique perspectives, people like traveling to new locations in order to gain exposure to a variety of lifestyles and environments. These processes include a wealth of tacit knowledge that has the potential to be placed in the human knowledge system and transformed into a valuable source of information. Through constant travel, individuals have the opportunity to enhance their tacit knowledge, so

developing a solid knowledge basis for knowledge management (KM). Tactic knowledge, on the other hand, is not readily apparent; therefore, persons must gain the ability to recognize it, as well as successfully acquire and apply it in their travel planning and procedures.

Knowledge Management – Moving with the Times

Knowledge management software is the answer to the problem of how to handle these ever-increasing demands. This software gives the client the ability to self-serve and gives the agent the ability to quickly access a vast repository of reliable information.

The use of knowledge management software is a perfect option not only for lowering the number of calls received from customers by contact centres, but also for lowering the number of calls that are escalated to higher levels by dramatically increasing the percentage of calls that are resolved on the first call. Your customer care representatives will have the opportunity to address more difficult customer inquiries and provide the standards of customer service that are essential to the reputation of your organization as a result of this.

Not only do the solutions to the problems that are currently being faced in the travel and tourism industry provide your travel company with cost-saving measures, but they also add an abundant value to the process of improving customer satisfaction and experience. This is accomplished by significantly reducing the amount of time required to locate accurate answers and by providing self-service channels that are exceptionally beneficial to customers.

Knowledge at the Agent's Fingertips

It is no longer necessary to waste time by sorting through a huge number of company documents and PDF files when you have a Knowledge Management system that can be deployed quickly.

Rather than going through this laborious procedure, customer support representatives may easily search through an entire library of papers by utilizing a natural language search tool, which is capable of returning results nearly immediately.

Giving the People what they want

A customer might easily be driven away from one travel firm and into the hands of a significant competitor if they have a negative experience while using the company's website. Therefore, a self-service platform that is accessible online and provides the consumer with

effective help in the shortest amount of time feasible is becoming an important factor in the acquisition of business.

Customers have an increasing expectation that any company operating in the modern era will give them with an online self-service platform that satisfies their requirements, without requiring them to pick up the phone and call a contact center.

A recent analysis from the technology research organization Software Advice Software Advice revealed that 91 percent of customers would use an online knowledgebase if it satisfied their demands. This finding demonstrates that self-service alone is not sufficient to sway the customer's decision to purchase a product or service.

Customers are able to have access to answers that not only self-maintain but are also highly relevant to their question when self-service is combined with a Knowledge Management system that is capable of self-learning and contains a Natural Language Search feature. Furthermore, this information may be accessed by naturally asking a query, which provides a self-service platform that is more user-friendly and friendly to customers

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In the past, self-service platforms have traditionally been subjected to frequent and, at times, quite laborious maintenance. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sections are the most prevalent type of part, and they consist of a list of frequently asked questions together with their answers. Keyword searches that are frequently discovered to return irrelevant responses or, even worse, no answers at all.

Employee Knowledge Sharing Solutions Benefits

Create a Knowledge Sharing Culture

The internal knowledge management systems provide a more efficient method of decision making and of accelerating the growth of the organization. This is accomplished by recording and distributing the pertinent information between and within divisions.

Increased Employee Productivity

You will spend less time looking and more time working. Employees at every level are able to self-serve their inquiries and have quicker access to the information they require thanks to the implementation of self-service.

Reduced Knowledge Loss

By properly harnessing the intellectual capital, it is possible to transfer the invaluable tacit knowledge that experienced personnel possess and make it accessible to those who require it either before or after they leave their positions.

Enhanced Relations with Customers and Partners

Providing a convenient solution for all parties concerned, allowing customers and partners to self-serve their inquiries regarding your products and services results in considerable time and financial savings. This is because the solution is convenient for all parties involved.

Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Learning and Service Innovation in Tourism

Both peer-to-peer and master-prentice succession are examples of different types of mechanisms for the exchange of information. Knowledge sharing refers to the process by which individuals of an organization interact, share, and transmit their experiences, information, skills, and expertise pertaining to their respective fields. When employees communicate with one another on a daily basis, information and abilities are passed from one coworker to another in a manner that facilitates transversal transmission. In contrast, skill can be passed down from master to apprentice in a linear fashion, allowing for the transmission of knowledge. Knowledge sharing may be supported and motivated throughout the process by a number of elements, including cultural climate, interpersonal relationships, social networks, and social trust.

The initial step in the process of information sharing among peers takes place within the organization. The exchange of information among employees of hotels or travel organizations can take place in either a formal or informal manner, depending on the conduct of the employees. The majority of the time, management is the one who is in charge of the formal knowledge sharing, which often consists of scheduled experience sharing sessions or seminars among members of the organization's internal staff. Knowledge sharing may take place in regular gatherings or workplace discussions, and the roles of knowledge giver and recipient can be freely exchanged without any set boundaries. On the other hand, the informal method is significantly more flexible and diversified than the formal

method. The process of knowledge sharing in tourism businesses is comprised of both of these two forms of communication. In addition to that, peer-to-peer sharing can also take place between different organizations. From a horizontal point of view, tourism businesses collaborate with one another in the form of industry alliances to exchange information about their customers and trends in the market. This allows them to construct an effective customer relationship management system and protect themselves from the external threats that are present while they are in operation. When seen from a vertical perspective, touristic businesses have the ability to improve their industrial competitiveness by sharing their knowledge with partners both upstream and downstream. Using the travel agency industry as an example, the sharing of information with airline companies has the potential to improve the alliance as well as the market competitiveness of travel agency groups. Generally speaking, the process of corporate knowledge sharing in touristic businesses is comprised of both horizontal and vertical information sharing behaviours.

In addition to the practice of sharing information with one's peers, we also come across the master-prentice succession as a pattern of knowledge sharing. There is a common relationship that occurs inside the interpersonal network of tourism staffs, and that relationship is the apprenticeship. Considering that tourism is a labour-intensive industry and that the majority of the new knowledge that is created during industrial activities is tacit knowledge, which is not very clear and distinct, it is the most effective and common method to pass on the knowledge by passing it down verbally or to learn the skills and expertise by imitating it. As we can see from the training structure that is now in place in hotels, the transition from master to apprentice is a widespread practice in the hospitality business. As a general rule, new employees at hotels are required to participate in two different types of training sessions: training on the corporate culture and training on the departmental culture. For the latter, it is precisely that senior staff members share and convey their expertise to new staff members by hands-on operation and explanation, which is of major significance for newcomers to learn a new talent. On the other hand, taking into account the impact of knowledge exchange, it is generally accepted that the master-prentice succession is still considered to be a lower-tier type of expertise transfer. In the long run, tacit knowledge would get established in the inheritance system, making it difficult to make it explicit. This could result in low sharing efficiency and unsustainable knowledge creation. The rationale for this scenario is because tacit knowledge is difficult to make explicit. Therefore, in order to achieve highly effective knowledge sharing in the tourism industry, the enterprise, which is a third party with distinctive characteristics, is desperately required to get involved in order to promote and facilitate the process of knowledge sharing. This can be accomplished by controlling different aspects of the enterprise's organizational structure, such as the cultural atmosphere, social network, and social trust relationships.

The process of generating, retaining, and passing on information inside an organization is referred to as organizational learning. The extent to which information is shared is of the utmost significance for the processes of organizational learning. Employees have the ability to modify their attitudes toward their work through the sharing of knowledge, which will, in turn, impact their behaviour at work and drive them to innovate on their own. Furthermore, the dissemination of information within an organization may be accomplished through the

sharing of knowledge, which will not only enhance and broaden the internal learning of businesses but also create a favourable learning environment for the members of the organization. In light of these findings, an increasing number of academics started incorporating the research viewpoint of knowledge into management and began focusing their attention on the mechanism of information sharing that occurs during the process of organizational learning.

Knowledge management as a strategic function in tourism

According to a report published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2001, "an essential factor for economic growth and changes that are essential for innovation and knowledge economics" is the generation, dissemination, and utilization of information.

(Mistilis & Sheldon, 2006; Nielsen et al., 2011; Omotayo, 2015) In the modern knowledge-based economy, knowledge is regarded as an essential resource that is intended to build and improve the competitiveness of organizations. This competitiveness is founded on the processes of information production, distribution, and utilization. In this sense, organizations are required to establish and manage processes of generating, sharing, and implementing new knowledge. This is accomplished through the continuous improvement of their business activities, the creation of new applications that originate from their efficient and successful processes, and the implementation of continuous innovation as a component of the organization's strategy (Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Scott & Laws, 2006; Tribe & Liburd, 2016).

Knowledge is multifaceted perspective which may be regarded in variety of categories such as "object, interpretation, process or relationship" (Faulkner et al., 2003), while "knowledge management (KM) refers to the creation of knowledge repositories, the improvement of knowledge acquisition; the enhancement of the knowledge sharing; and the management of knowledge as an asset" (Yiu & Law, 2014).

Knowledge is much more than information from a business viewpoint, and knowledge sharing in terms of exchanging experiences, methods, and procedures goes beyond information sharing (Omotayo, 2015). Knowledge is a far more comprehensive concept than information. It is for this reason that knowledge management (KM) as both a concept and an approach is essential for effective management practice in all organizations, including those in the tourist and hospitality industry. According to Baggio and Cooper (2010), Faulkner et al. (2003), and Scott and Marzano (2015), knowledge management (KM) concepts and models for application as a *modus operandi* in tourism services have been gradually developed on both levels of a tourism destination and tourism and hospitality organizations. This is despite the fact that the tourism sector is not as effective in adopting KM approach as an advanced business practice.

Based on research conducted by Baggio and Cooper (2010), Hallin and Marnburg (2008), Nielsen et al. (2011), and Tribe and Liburd (2016), it is essential for an organization's knowledge strategy and knowledge management practice in the tourism industry to establish

a connection between the generation of business value and the development of a competitive advantage. This involves assessing the organization's knowledge resources, competencies, and capacity to successfully execute business processes.

Therefore, the tourism industry's key skills are a reflection of the competitive advantage that the industry has. According to Budeanu et al. (2016), Cooper (2014), Kabene et al. (2006), and others, core competencies are the composition of resources and abilities that are unique to each and every organization. These core competencies are based on the knowledge of employees, knowledge of customers, knowledge of technology, knowledge of processes, and other similar aspects. As a result, they are the factors that determine the effectiveness of knowledge management (KM) within an organization. As a result, the essential knowledge processes of an organization are influenced by the features of the organization itself, which include individual and organizational technology, as well as individual and organizational skills and behaviors (Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2011; Racherla & Hu, 2009). Transformation of knowledge into key competencies and competitive advantage in the tourism and hospitality organisations primarily is influenced with transferring and sharing knowledge within the organization and with cooperating enterprises, resulting in connecting KM practice with organisation's vision, mission, strategy, organisational architecture, organisational culture, management style and procedures, employees, and organisational processes as tools for managing both the tacit and explicit knowledge such as destination knowledge and logistical knowledge (Liu, 2003; Mistilis & Sheldon, 2006; Racherla & Hu, 2009; Scott & Marzano, 2015).

The applications of knowledge management can be broken down into six primary categories, which are as follows: transactional management, asset management, process-based management, analytical management, innovation management, and developmental knowledge management practice (Cooper, 2014; Kabene et al., 2006; Tribe & Liberd, 2016).

The difficulties that arise when attempting to implement and make use of the knowledge management approach in the tourism sector include the following: how to recognize and collect information that is significant, appropriate, accurate, and genuine; how to organize and process information; how to access, share, and make use of resources; and how to recognize knowledge and previous experience in order to prepare for the future.

Knowledge management is an important tool for organizations to address the significant challenges of adapting, surviving, and remaining competitive in a rapidly changing business environment (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017; Liu, 2003; Maier & Hadrich, 2011; Yiu & Law, 2014;). In the tourist and hospitality sector, this transformation is evident in the supply chain and the behavior of guests. Tourist destinations, intermediary sector, and linked service organizations must continuously adapt by creating and implementing knowledge (Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Cooper, 2014; Faulkner et al., 2003).

Although there have been several research on tourism and related fields, there is limited empirical evidence about the implementation and utilization of knowledge management (KM). Some instances of KM usage can be found in tourist information centers, the intermediates sector, and hotel management (Budeanu et al., 2016; Liu, 2003; Racherla & Hu, 2009).

Key determinants of successful knowledge management in tourism firms

The significance of employees and their performance in hospitality and tourist firms is enormous, since it greatly influences the overall performance of the organization. The adoption of a knowledge management approach in a tourist organization is greatly influenced by the accomplishments of its employees. The responsibility of cultivating a KM culture that promotes the use of knowledge management lies with the human resource management function in the organization (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008; Hjalager, 2010; Jones et al., 2016). Agyeiwaah et al. (2017) discovered a strong correlation between employee motivation, performance, competences, and knowledge management (KM) when studying the connection between human resource and KM.

The implementation of knowledge management strategies in the tourism industry has been sluggish, particularly in sectors that have a significant emphasis on service provision. The effective application of knowledge management (KM) principles has been observed in certain tourism-related sectors, including transportation and distribution. The rapid advancements in these specific fields are attributed to the utilization of information technology and the creation of suitable applications (Oppermann & Weaver, 2000; Hjalager, 2010; Maier & Hadrich, 2011; Altinay, Paraskevas & Jang, 2015).

Implementing a Knowledge Management (KM) approach can assist organizations in both retaining their personnel and enhancing guest/visitor satisfaction (Maier & Hadrich, 2011; Tribe & Liburd, 2016). The tourism and hospitality industry heavily relies on labor, with employees utilizing their knowledge of guest preferences to deliver exceptional customer service. This is because guest satisfaction and loyalty are crucial factors for success in the tourism business (Racherla & Hu, 2009; Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Agyeiwaah, McKercher & Suntikul, 2017).

The successful and efficient implementation of knowledge management in the tourism sector is influenced by several crucial elements. Here are a few examples:

The organizational culture plays a crucial role in implementing the knowledge management function in tourism organizations. Human interactions encompass several knowledge management difficulties, including technological, social, managerial, and personal aspects (Cooper, 2014). Establishing an organizational culture that places importance on sharing and creating information might aid in the conversion of individual or implicit knowledge into collective knowledge. It is crucial to have a strong organizational learning culture in order to facilitate knowledge generation (Hottola, 2004; Maier & Hadrich, 2011; Tribe & Liburd, 2016).

The knowledge management processes encompass various activities and processes related to the generation, capture, implementation, development, creation, transfer, sharing, and measurement of knowledge. These processes are based on the process-oriented perspective of management theory. They include: i) the generation and creation of new knowledge; ii) the capture of knowledge from external sources; iii) the implementation of knowledge management in decision-making processes; iv) the development of knowledge-intensive processes, products, and services; v) the creation of knowledge databases; vi) the facilitation of knowledge creation through organizational culture; vii) the transfer and sharing of existing knowledge; viii) the measurement of the outcomes resulting from the utilization of knowledge management processes and knowledge resources (Racherla & Hu, 2009; Hjalager, 2010; Budeanu, Miller, Moscardo & Ooi, 2016).

- **Knowledge creation:** The efficient production of novel knowledge, particularly tacit knowledge, relies on robust interpersonal connections among people inside an organization. The KM strategy must prioritize the consideration of tacit knowledge and the exploration of new organizational structures, cultures, and incentive systems in order to enhance human interaction and social interactions (Hjalager, 2010; Yiu & Law, 2014; Tribe & Liburd, 2016).

Leadership has a crucial role in managing knowledge by comprehending, nurturing, and supporting the process of knowledge generation. Senior management must facilitate and endorse the process of generating, fostering, developing, and disseminating knowledge. This involves establishing systems and environments, as well as fostering a culture, where knowledge can naturally and openly arise. (Faulkner, Laws & Moscardo, 2003; Yiu & Law, 2014).

- **Learning and Participation:** Employees have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills by actively engaging in communities where they may share their unique viewpoints and practices.

The fundamental tools for generating knowledge are communication, deliberation, discourse, and bargaining. From this perspective, the organizational culture should create an environment that values learning and knowledge, with leadership taking the responsibility to foster trust and promote the sharing of experiential learning, which in turn generates tacit knowledge. Tourism organizations must establish a corporate learning strategy in order to attain the advantages of knowledge management (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000; Yiu & Law, 2014).

Strategic approach: Within a tourist firm, personnel have the ability to utilize their skills and expertise either externally or within to generate additional value. The external perspective encompasses the interactions with customers, suppliers, and the reputation of the company. The internal perspective encompasses concepts, management, administrative systems, models, and attitudes. The integration of a comprehensive knowledge strategy with the overall business plan is essential (Faulkner et al., 2003; Hallin & Marnburg, 2008; Hjalager, 2010).

Conclusion

Initiating and coordinating reactions to crises and probable mishaps in the tourism sector can be challenging due to its inherent characteristics, operational methods, and decentralized structure.

This industry is heavily reliant on information and necessitates a well-functioning management system that incorporates a knowledge framework to effectively handle the organization's operations in the competitive tourism market.

The current methodologies for implementing knowledge management fail to address and resolve certain challenges that impact the tourist and hospitality sector. Hence, in order to enhance the tourism sector and meet its special needs, the KM method must be enhanced. Furthermore, managers in the tourist sector frequently encounter difficulties in

comprehending ambiguous and intricate knowledge management (KM) concepts and practices. This hinders their ability to identify the most suitable KM model and consequently hampers the rapid adoption of KM concepts in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Implementing KM procedures necessitates a shift in management practices and a significant commitment of both time and financial resources in order to attain favorable outcomes (Cooper, 2006). Tourism and hospitality firms prioritize their everyday business activities, and while employees and management have access to many types of information, they tend to avoid the difficulties associated with discovering and strategically utilizing existing knowledge. However, despite the recognition that information is crucial for the rapid and profitable growth of the tourism and hospitality industry, the dissemination of KM principles to the tourism sector is progressing slowly.

Similarly to tourism's role as an important economic component of the destination, the concepts and perspectives of knowledge can be developed and integrated into the broader destination business plan, facilitating its transformation into a learning destination.

However, simply being aware of and comprehending the concepts and processes of KM is not enough to gain a competitive edge and generate profits. The adoption and deployment of KM applications can enhance company performance and fulfil the organization's goal and vision. However, to do this, it is crucial to establish a connection between business strategy and KM, and to apply KM processes in all business operations.

The future progress of the tourism and hospitality sector will be consistently influenced by a diverse range of economic, social, political, environmental, and technological challenges and opportunities. These include the sustained growth and expansion of tourism, the evolution and transformation of visitor preferences, the rise in travel mobility, and the rapid advancements in technology. Adopting the knowledge perspective in the tourist industry is one of the necessary prerequisites, together with investment and financing, for transforming the sector into a sustainable environment that is low in carbon emissions, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive (Budeanu et al., 2016).

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