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Module Title: Knowledge and Information Management Skills for the Workplace **BMSW5106**

Task Description:

1. Demonstrate the importance of understanding that the effective creation, storing, sharing, application and integration of information is an essential prerequisite for good knowledge management development practices.
2. Demonstrate an evaluation of the identified scenario within the chosen organisation. Relevant alternative academic theories must be identified and evaluated to check the effectiveness of knowledge and information management culture within the chosen organisation in terms of creating knowledge asset and maintaining effective customer relationship management.
3. Develop a framework for establishing a suitable knowledge management culture for the chosen organisational context by identifying the gap between required knowledge management culture/framework for the current or potential market scenarios and existing knowledge management framework for the chosen organisation.

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Executive Summary

Knowledge is regarded and recognized as one of the most important assets of an organization. In order to stay competitive, organizations must have a structure or culture for identifying, capturing, storing, using and unlearning knowledge. All these activities are managed through knowledge management. This report is aimed towards demonstrating the importance of effective creation, storing, sharing, application and integration of information as a basis for good knowledge management practices by using a selected organization (Bus Transport company).

Introduction

Knowledge is regarded and recognized as one of the most important assets of an organization. In order to stay competitive, organizations must have a structure or culture for identifying, capturing, storing, using and unlearning knowledge. All these activities are managed through knowledge management. This report is aimed towards demonstrating the importance of effective creation, storing, sharing, application and integration of information as a basis for good knowledge management practices by using a selected organization (Bus Transport company).

This report will show the relationship between data, information and knowledge. The discussion there will provide a basis for discussing the importance of knowledge and the relationship between individual knowledge and organizational knowledge. It further discusses the contribution of knowledge asset to an organization and the importance of intellectual property rights as knowledge asset in an organization.

Furthermore, this report evaluates the knowledge requirements for the chosen organization in this report and the framework for enabling knowledge sharing. The report indicated the knowledge sharing culture present in the chosen organization and states that the organization mostly uses technology to capture and share knowledge among employees and its customers. The report however concluded by making recommendations towards improving the current knowledge framework in the chosen organization.

3.0 Relationship between data, information and knowledge

The concept of “data”, “Information” and “knowledge” have some sort of relationship. However, before attempting to explain it, it is important to provide some definition for these concepts in order to provide a background to understand the relationship between these concepts.

- (i) **Data:** This is usually referred to as the raw and unprocessed facts that may not have any significance until they are processed into information. According to the Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary 10th edition, data was defined as the factual information used as a basis for reasoning, discussion or calculation. Data can be classified as recorded symbols and signals readings which could be either captured or stored. Signals on one hand include words, (whether text or verbal) numbers, diagrams and images. While Signals may include sensor and/or sensory reading or light, sound smell taste and touch. Anthony (2007, p.5). Examples of data may be 34624. This could be a sequence of numbers without any importance.
- (ii) **Information:** This may be defined as data that have been refined or processed in order for it to become relevant for some form of analysis. Another definition of information is that it is data that has been stored, analysed, displayed and is communicated through verbal language, graphic displays or numeric tables. Nancy (2000). From the foregoing definitions, information therefore helps to reduce uncertainty and assist in making better decision based on the processed data. Thus, by asking relevant questions like ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘what’, ‘where’ such questions can assist to derive valuable information from the data and make the data more meaningful or useful. So, we can say that the number 34624 are the numbers of staff in a bus company
- (iii) **Knowledge:** This may be defined as the thought of a combined result of a person’s experiences and the information they possess. In other words, according to Kelley (2002), knowledge resides in the user. This only happens when human experience and insight is applied to data and information. Knowledge can be explicit or tacit. When knowledge is explicit this means that it can be easily stored or captured in documents, manuals database files and other media. Such knowledge is usually highly detailed and formal. On the other hand, when knowledge is tacit is usually based on factors such as perceptions and beliefs. Such knowledge is difficult to extract because it may be held unconsciously by the user.

Based on the definitions of the concepts, we see that data, information and knowledge can be said to be related, as each is the product of the other. For instance, information cannot exist without a data that has been collected, well analysed and communicated. For example, a research based on a questionnaire to show the gender classification that attends classes the most will not be called

information if the numbers and opinions in questionnaire is not gathered and properly analysed to arrive at a finding. This therefore means that information is the product of data.

When it comes to the relationship between information and knowledge, this may be determined where the information is stored. Where the information is stored in a storage media, it is said to be in the form of data. However, where the information is the human mind it called knowledge. Liew, A. (2007)



Diagram 1: *Relationship between Data, Information and Knowledge*

4.0 The Relationship between individual knowledge and organisational knowledge.

As defined above, knowledge is regarded as the thought of the combined result of a person's experiences and information which they possess. Although defining knowledge can be difficult, Marakas (1999, p.264) stated that knowledge is an organized combination of ideas, rules, procedures and information. Therefore, knowledge is intangible.

Knowledge can be that of an individual or belong to an organization. Individual knowledge may be defined as the information believed by a person to be true and justified and which is stored in his one's memory whereas, organization knowledge is the totality of the knowledge that the organization has which gives it business value (Schwartz, 2010). There are different ways that an organization can acquire knowledge. This can be through product knowledge, experiences from failures and success, customer communication, networking, conferences amongst others

Although there is the argument that it is only individuals that can possess knowledge. Others believe that organizations themselves that acquire knowledge thorough their routines and practices. According to Bhatt (2002), knowledge is an important resource in our society today. However, organizations face a number of challenges in managing knowledge. Because knowledge is difficult to monitor and control only a part of the knowledge is internalised by the organization while the other part is internalized by the individual.

Even with this problem, there is a relationship between individual knowledge and organizational knowledge. For instance, Bhatt (2002) explains that sometimes in a workplace environment, an employee may be faced with circumstances where he or she might need to take quick and immediate decision to resolve an organizations problem, for example a customer's complaint. Rather than the employee relying on the rules and regulation of the organization to resolve the issue, he may be forced to make some judgment to solve the business problem efficiently. At that point their individual knowledge therefore becomes relevant.

Similarly, an organization may create an environment where it can make use of individual knowledge and expertise in seeking the solutions of the organization's problems. But even at that, the organization may not be able to claim right to the individual knowledge. Sometimes organizations may become vulnerable in retaining knowledge because employees may move from one organization to another, thus making it difficult for it to retain the needed knowledge to resolve the organization's problems. This is based on my personal observation, having worked in different parts of the transport industry in the United Kingdom (UK).

Thus, based on the forgoing analysis, we can see that even though knowledge can reside in individuals, there are sometimes that organizations, through the use of individuals in attempting to resolve its problem, may overtime have its own knowledge. This therefore creates a strong relationship between individual knowledge and organizational knowledge.

5.0 Analysis and modelling techniques to identify knowledge assets.

knowledge asset are the recognized as the drivers of an organization's success. It can be defined as the knowledge possessed by an organization and its workforce in the form information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills and capabilities. Knowledge assets which are related to an organization's core business can ensure its competitive edge in business competition by transforming knowledge into goods and services. By understanding the value of their knowledge assets, it will help the companies to manage and retain their precious knowledge. Knowledge assets are important as physical and financial assets. It allows organization to design and perform business processes efficiently and effectively.

Knowledge management incorporates the knowledge assets of an organisation, which comprise the intellectual capital of its personnel. Knowledge management is concerned with the exploitation of the knowledge assets of an organisation aiming to fulfil the organisation's objectives. It includes the structural knowledge (data, methods and regulations) and market knowledge (relations with customers and competitors) (Nordan, 2005: 20).

However, it must be noted that with the litany of knowledge-based theories and tools, the SECI model is widely acknowledged as a theoretical landmark for most knowledge management conceptualization. SECI stands for socialization, externalization, combination, internalization model of knowledge creation. The SECI model considers how explicit and tacit knowledge is generated, transferred and recreated in organizations. The SECI model differentiates four knowledge dimensions. They are:

- (a) Socialization (Tacit to Tacit):** This is the process of converting new tacit knowledge through experiences that are shared in day to day social interaction
- (b) Externalizations (Tacit to Explicit):** This is described as the process where tacit knowledge is transferred into explicit knowledge so that it can be easily shared by others to become the basis of new knowledge.
- (c) Combination (Explicit to Explicit):** This is described as the process whereby explicit knowledge is collected from inside or outside the organization and the combined or processed to create more complex and systematic explicit knowledge. Thereafter, the new explicit knowledge is then distributed among members of the organization
- (d) Internalization (Explicit to tacit):** This is a process whereby explicit knowledge created and shared throughout an organization is then converted into tacit knowledge by individuals.
(Dubberly & Evenson, 2011)

6.0 Requirement needed to create, store, apply and integrate knowledge.

The management of an organization's knowledge is important for its success. Knowledge management in an organization usually addresses issues such as how knowledge can be created, captured, stored, shared, extracted, transferred. Hence, organizations must have an effective knowledge management system in operation, which can create, capture, store, disseminate and document the knowledge assets of an organization and help in business intelligence, business process re-engineering and decision making. (Goswami & Goswami, 2013 p. 614).

For an organization to thrive in a competitive business environment, it must have the ability to create knowledge. The ability to create new knowledge is often at the heart of the organizations competitive advantage. Knowledge creation is therefore the continuous transfer, combination and combination of the different types of knowledge (Tacit and Actual Knowledge) as users' practice, interact and learn.

In achieving the foregoing in an organization, emphasis is placed on three factors. These are People, Process and Technology (Goswami & Goswami, 2013 p. 614)

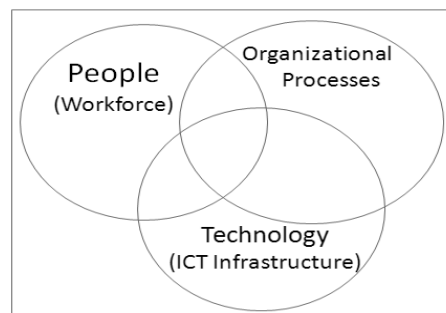


Diagram 2: *People, Process and Technology Factors of knowledge Management*

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is usually an infrastructure that most organizations use and rely on for the storage of an organization's knowledge. ICT can also be relied on to perform the analysis simulation and modelling of the organization's knowledge in order to make effective use of knowledge in decision making. When it comes to the people (workforce), it is the people aspect of an organization which makes use of knowledge and also helps in creating new knowledge. It is the people aspect of organization that makes use of knowledge to add value to organization, share it among them so as to increase expertise of organization and also helps in creating new knowledge. Knowledge management facilitates to standardize all business processes to make them time and cost efficient.

My organization has in place a good knowledge management structure that identifies, captures, stores and integrates knowledge. This helps the organization to make better decisions and also helps to keep the organization competitive in the business environment. It mainly makes use of ICT to stores its data and information in order to facilitate easy access by its employees in order to ensure that the organizations process is smooth.

7.0 Importance of Intellectual Property rights as Knowledge Assets

Intellectual property constitutes part of the knowledge asset of an organization. It is classified as an asset that an organization has to differentiate itself from other competitors in the market. Thus, it is essential to the success of an organization's business and organizations usually put in place measures to protect it against any breach, such as theft.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) defines intellectual property as the creation of mind such as inventions, literary and artistic works and symbols, names and images used in commerce. According to WIPO, intellectual property can be divided into two categories: They are Industrial Property (Patents, industrial designs trademarks etc) and Copyrights (literary works, films, music, artistic works etc) (*What is Intellectual Property?*)

It is important to note that just like any property rights, intellectual property allows its owners to exercise rights over them. They allow creators or owners of patents, trademarks or copyrighted works to benefit from their own work or investment in a creation. As a customer service representative in a bus company, the transport company has a special design and logo which distinguishes it from other bus companies. It the trademark and industrial design of our buses that makes it easy for customers to easily identify and patronize our services. The company also put in great deal and effort to protect it against any form of breach by any of its competitors in the market or any other person

Since intellectual property rights are classified as a knowledge asset, it is important as earlier noted that the rights attached to it should be protected and safeguarded in order to have the following:

- (a) to have an exclusive set of rights in the market over their creations or design.
- (b) to obtain high returns on their investments, since owning intellectual property rights may not only enhance the bargaining power, but may also be exploited through licences in return for royalty payments;
- (c) to enhance the market value and increase future profit expectations of an organisation in the eyes of investors.

In all, it therefore important for organizations to consider protecting their intellectual property and effectively manage their asset in order to reap the benefits from their business. (*Why are intellectual Property rights important for SMEs?*)

8.0 The contribution knowledge assets have on an organisation

As a starting point here, knowledge asset is likened to the life wire of an organization. It is the accumulated resources of an organization. It is actually the knowledge possessed by the organization and its workforce. These assets are in the form of information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills and capabilities.

An organization's workforce databases, documents, guides, policies and procedures, software, and patents are repositories of your organization's knowledge assets. It is imperative to state that Knowledge assets are not exclusively held by an organization they can also reside within its customers suppliers, and partners as well.

Furthermore, just as knowledge can constitute an invaluable asset to an organization, it is also very important that there is mechanism for it to be effectively managed. The management of knowledge asset in an organization raises the potential of the organization by providing important competitive advantages, minimizing risks and maximizing success in a global and competitive market environment.

9.0 Evaluate the organisation's framework for enabling knowledge sharing

Knowledge is becoming an indispensable resource in an organization. And as earlier observed, it is the life wire and possibly what drives organizations to stay competitive. However, questions relating to how knowledge is managed, and the framework being used for knowledge dissemination is equally an important discussion.

Knowledge management plays a significant role to an organization. (Dalkir K, 2005). It can be described as the processes by which knowledge is acquired, created, communicated, shared and applied in an organization. (Karemente et al 2009 p.36) Knowledge management helps organizations have a strategy about their market, products and also how to manage human resource effectively. It also helps to improve each individual's knowledge in an organization to create new ideas and thoughts about products. For example, Samsung company released its new phone series with new and exciting features for its consumers and to attract its customers all over the world. With such unique features like face and voice signature, easy mode image, fingerprint lock amongst other exciting features, people can now ensure the privacy of their phones by having access to it only with their fingerprints,

passcode and voice signatures. Thus, it can be said that knowledge management helps Samsung company invent a new product like Samsung Galaxy.

Furthermore, knowledge management helps managers observe and evaluate employees' work ability, for example, in a restaurant, in order to know which staff is nimble, hard-working, friendly and polite, managers can identify them by their action, behaviour and speech when they serve customers and treat colleagues.

However, it is important to state that in as much as organizations may have in place a knowledge management structure or culture, another question is what framework it has and how do organization position themselves in such a way to facilitate the sharing of knowledge. An article published by the World Bank in 2016 describes knowledge sharing as a subset of knowledge management encompassing the exchange of knowledge (information, skills, experiences, or expertise) within and across an organization. (Janus, 2016, 6).

The chosen organization in focus is a bus transport company and the framework which is mostly used to share knowledge is through the aid of technology, apart from the traditional ways which the organization uses to share knowledge. Because the organization relies more on technology, websites and applications are used to enable knowledge sharing between individuals and /or within the teams in the organization.

These framework for sharing knowledge in the chosen organization is very effective because for example, it enables employees and customers to have easy access to information needed to perform their jobs on one hand, and for customers to easily access our transport services on the other hand. The range of knowledge sharing framework in the chosen organization also facilitates social interaction amongst the team which then leads to the rise in creative problem solving and also helps to preserve exiting knowledge so that it is not lost when an employee leaves the organization to moves to another department.

10.0 Evaluation of knowledge requirements in the organization.

In evaluating the knowledge requirement for an organization, it is important for one take into account the type of products or services rendered by the organization. In a transport company, which is the chosen organization in context here, the type of knowledge requirements needed may be different from an organization engaged in catering services or accounting services. Therefore, it is important for organizations to determine the knowledge necessary for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services.

In a transport service, like a bus transport service, the knowledge requirement is wide. For instance, knowledge about the customers requirement and offering bespoke services to them to ensure client satisfaction is an important knowledge requirement that the organization must have in order to retain its customers base. This has the possibility of increasing the turnover of the organization and also improving its goodwill. The organization has a database of customers who have previously used its services. With this information, it sends out daily and weekly update of our services. It has a suggestion portal on its website where customers can use to make recommendation and suggestions on how to improve the services and serve them better.

Another knowledge requirement that the organization maintains is the intellectual capital of its personnel's/ employee. The intellectual capital of the employees of the organization is equally important as that of the organization's knowledge. Therefore, the organization invests heavily on its employee's knowledge by giving them opportunities to attend trainings and conferences. The idea is to build several skills and improve the delivery of its services. The end goal is to develop competence.

Furthermore, another knowledge requirement that needs close attention is its intellectual property. The organization has a special design and logo which distinguishes it from other bus transport companies. It is the trademark and industrial design of our buses that makes it easy for customers to easily identify and patronize our services. The company also put in great deal and effort to protect it against any form of breach by any of its competitors in the market or any other person

11.0 Recommend improvements to the current framework.

From the analysis and evaluation of the knowledge management framework, there appears to be no identified gaps that needs any recommendations. This is because the knowledge management culture used to create, store and disseminate knowledge is well thought out and regularly updated to meet customer needs in the organization. This has over the years given the organization its goodwill and reputation for offering world class and first-class bus transport service to its customers in the United Kingdom and Europe.

12.0 Conclusion

In concluding, this report has been able to establish the importance of knowledge asset to an organization and the need to have a good knowledge management culture. It assessed the framework for knowledge sharing in my chosen organization. It was discovered that the knowledge framework in place was sufficient to give the organization a competitive edge in the transport industry.

The report further analysed the modelling techniques to identify knowledge asset and also, the relevance and role of intellectual property rights as knowledge assets. In all, the base point is that knowledge still constitutes one of the most important assets of an organization. And for organizations to continue order to stay competitive, they must have a structure or culture for identifying, capturing, storing, using and unlearning knowledge

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