

Knowledge and Information Management Skills for the Workplace

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Introduction

The selected organisation for this report is Amazon. Amazon is an international organisation, an established brand that activates in the e-commerce industry. With the expansion of the business there were developed a variety of other services such as digital streaming, cloud computing and artificial intelligence with subsidiaries such as Amazon Web Services, Zoox, Kuiper Systems, Amazon Lab126, Whole Foods Market, Ring, Amazon Prime Video, Twitch, Amazon Publishing, Amazon Studios (Amazon, 2022).

This report analyses the concept of Knowledge management by debating several definitions, by looking at different types of knowledge and what it means. It assess the importance of Knowledge management for organisations worldwide and its purpose and how can organisation can benefit from having this as an asset. It looks at theoretical models such as SECI and how Amazon applies Knowledge management and specific theories. It is also evaluated the business activity of Amazon from the knowledge management perspective, what models are used and how it manages the information.

The report intends to offer a complex understand of the knowledge management concept by providing arguments pro and contra for the theories, by enhancing the benefits and exemplifying with practical examples from the selected organisation Amazon.

Section 1: Knowledge and Information Management

Knowledge management is defined as the process of collecting, sharing the knowledge in the most effective way (KM World, 2022).

The evolution of technology has transformed the access to information and knowledge being a very important tool for organisations developing expertise over methods for organising information. This has developed even further into the today concept of knowledge management. It has been followed by rapid sharing towards majority of organisation and further that professional associations and disciplines. Knowledge management is recognised as an essential asset across organisation of all sorts.

Another definition of Knowledge Management considers the concept to be a discipline that presents an integrated approach for capturing, analysing and sharing the organisational information. The information can refer to databases, documentation, procedures and policies.

But the concept of Knowledge management does not refer strictly to organisations, it has a broader application (KM world, 2022).

There are different types of knowledge and for that purpose it has been made a distinction between explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. The explicit knowledge can be easily organised and learned whilst the implicit knowledge involves how to use best explicit knowledge and that can vary from individual to individual. The tacit knowledge in contrast with the explicit knowledge is based more on experience and intuition (Atlassian, 2022).

Importance of KM for any organisation

Knowledge management has great importance for organisations because it helps in offering the most efficient support to the customers. The IT teams have great role in implementing and making use of various technologies to support the organisation's activity. Knowledge management ensures that the knowledge within the organisation is harnessed and easily shared so it benefits the organisation at any point and in all circumstances.

The institutional knowledge is formed in time by organisation along with business development and choices for action. When new staff is joining the organisation impacting information is vital for the operations to be successful.

Knowledge management ensures that any untapped and dormant knowledge is effectively managed and the potential is maximised. By using the specific management structures the knowledge then can be identified and stored for entire organisation's benefit. This way it is facilitated the transfer of institutional knowledge across employees and can improve organisational practices. This can consist of learning and training sessions (Atlassian, 2022).

The knowledge management in an organisation transforms raw information in assets that can be used for the business activity. Organisations have available clear resources, don't need to waste time to identify information and its sources (Oslash, 2022).

Therefore knowledge management is important for any organisation because it offers a fast and efficient access to an established knowledge base without being too reliant on specific employees. It reduces time for identifying the information as the employees know where to search and where it is available. Even for new employees a folder with instructions means that they do not need to wait for someone to guide them. Or when employees leave the organisation for any reason then the others are not left in the air if their knowledge is shared or documented. That is why a knowledge

management strategy is essential, but also because it stimulates the decision making. The data-driven decisions is more accurate and more faster.

Another benefit of the knowledge management is that make the operations more efficient, work is not duplicated and can more productive. Also it has a role in building higher levels of trust within the teams and by having available transparent processes and having common understanding and alignment towards the organisational objectives. It has the effect of motivating employees and increasing job satisfaction because with right information they are empowered to contribute and perform.

Knowledge management is very important for Amazon also. Amazon has a modern approach to conduct its business especially because of the type of the business. The organisation's mission focuses on customers rather than on competition and for that purpose it needs very good strategies to keep the customer satisfied. Data collection is one method used by Amazon to identify trends and to fulfil demands an at times Amazon even received criticism for customer data collection practices. Amazon uses artificial intelligence in its operations and it constitutes a pillar for the business (Ivory Research, 2021).

Role of KM in satisfying customers and achieving competitive advantage

Getting the right information to the right employees when is needed is a vey important asset for any organisation because it can have a rapid response for satisfying the customers expectations. That is why through Knowledge management the information can be identified, applied, shared and stored. The usage of valuable data it helps the organisation to formulate the right strategies and then overcome competition.

Another perspective is that it helps with organisational hierarchies and that again reduces the time of response towards the customer increasing satisfaction with problems being solved in timely manner. It is a two way process because a confident and knowledgeable employee will be able to offer immediate answers and offer consistent service and keep customers happy. Also the decision making process is more efficient because it does not start from zero every time is based on existing explicit and tacit knowledge. The learning from dealing with similar situations can be applied to future situation for improve outcome. This applies to teamwork by emphasising the shared commitments towards the organisational objectives and accelerates onboarding efforts (Wiig, 1997).

Section 2: Knowledge and Information Management theoretical models

Tacit knowledge

According to Atlassian (2022) the tacit knowledge is the opposite of the explicit knowledge being the knowledge based more on experience and intuition. Tacit knowledge is crucial to competitive advantage because is difficult for competitors to copy.

Nowadays the world economy is shifted towards knowledge and the power of knowledge and it is considered to be imperative for achieving competitive advantage especially for the service providers. That is why organisations are now allocating important amount of funds to ensure effective knowledge management strategies because it has been observed that the return on investment for knowledge management exceeded over expectations (Khatun, 2018).

Sharing knowledge is referred to social capital knowledge being embedded with the employees interaction and and human capital which is the sum of tacit and explicit knowledge also know as automatic knowledge.

The Tacit Knowledge is considered to be the roots for all the knowledge because it resides in human head and rationale. It can not be expressed that easily because it can be in response to the environment, it can not be formalised in a straight forwards way like the explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is “knowing how” and “knowing-why” while explicit knowledge is “knowing what”.

The explicit knowledge of an employee helps him perform, but is difficult to be described in specific terms. It has a personal characteristic, it is contextual and can be subjective and difficult to be formalised. It also involves body language is articulated though the employees actions. In action tacit knowledge plays important role sometimes outperforming the explicit tacit. The four categories of tacit knowledge are hard to pin down skills-know how, mental models, ways of approaching problems and organisational routines.

When dealing with customers, explicit training can be given, but a novice in customer service will still be reserved in applying the knowledge. After acquiring experience, the employee will get more confident and will be able to assist the customer without even thinking of the explicit knowledge.

Management Information System

The Knowledge management systems are the softwares that facilitate managing the information and increases collaboration within teams. Is defined as a unitary location to access the information. It can be saved in different formats and serve different purposes. It is a solution for making the

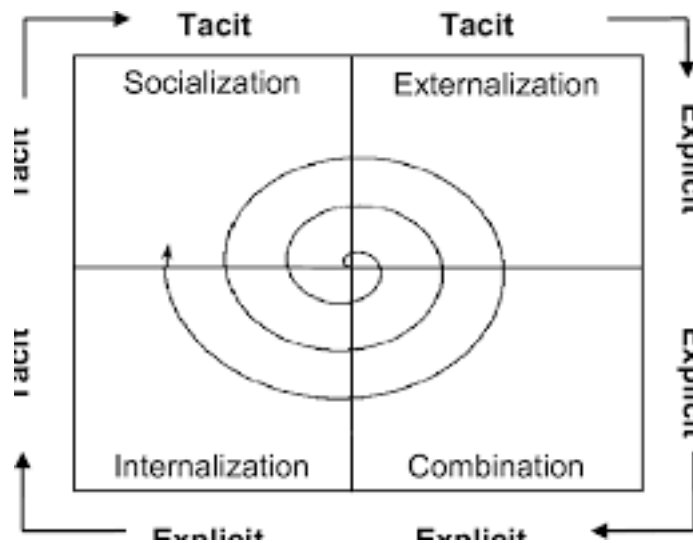
knowledge actionable, because the information is shared and is not disrupted or partial, but it can be extracted with specificity in silos and empowers the employees to act. Therefore it supports the development of the employee and can add value to the organisation and to achieve competitive advantage.

The Knowledge Management system should ensure is functional across the entire organisation if required, it should allow updating, it should address the organisation's needs, it should be customisable, easy to navigate, can prioritise information. This way it is becoming an asset that facilitates the success and achieving competitive advantage. Knowledge Management is in high demands because it facilitates the business excellence and creating sustainable competitive advantage (Khatun, 2018).

Nonaka's tacit and explicit conversion and decision-making model (SECI model)

This theoretical model of Knowledge management refers to the knowledge creation process from the interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge into organisational knowledge. There are distinguished 4 dimensions such as socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation. The socialisation dimension postulates that conversion of tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge, the externalisation from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, the combination from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge and the internalisation from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge. The socialisation expressed shortly tacit to tacit assumes knowledge share but observation, imitation and putting into practice which is realised through apprenticeships which allow this conversion of knowledge (Nonaka, Konno, 1998). The knowledge capturing has to be realised through direct interaction and usually physical proximity and it derives from the common experiences either in a team or with customers. The daily activities that occur by working in the same environment that confer tacit knowledge are the base of this dimension. The externalisation dimension expressed shortly tacit to explicit is the knowledge conversation of sharing individual experiences with others by documenting or articulating the knowledge through different modalities such as images, reporting, conceptualisation. The combination dimension expressed shortly explicit to explicit refers to the process of conversation explicit knowledge that is merged through communication networks, databases, internal or external that generates into new knowledge that is passed to the teams. The last dimension internalisation expressed shortly explicit to tacit converses the knowledge by adopting the organisational knowledge by an individual or collectivity on the job or through training by creating personal abilities and competences (Nonaka, 1990).

Figure 1 SECI model



The model is utilised widely and there are emphasised advantages such as the dynamic process for knowledge creation, gives structure for management. Criticism to the theory includes the research base being different than other organisations as employees usually work for the same organisation many years and the tacit knowledge is more used. Also it is questioned if the model can spiral jumps or change direction especially because it has been acknowledged that tacit is the source of new information, but new information could be explicit knowledge. Another criticism is that it does not explain how new knowledge is used in practice.

The model presented in Figure 1 is highlighted to vortex of knowledge creation and situates the socialisation at the beginning of the spiral. When applied to organisations it can be identified different organisational knowledge, organisational static substance knowledge which is the explicit knowledge and organisational dynamic process knowledge which is the organisational human activity system.

Section 3: Investigating of KM techniques used by Amazon

Amazon applies Knowledge Management theories for the management of the information within the organisation. SECI model helps Amazon to evaluate the knowledge creation and to manage the information. It help the organisation to integrate information and manage it for its benefit. Therefore socialisation is realised in Amazon through sharing tacit knowledge by observing, by imitating, by putting in practice and participating at the working activity. The externalisation transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge meaning that if in Amazon is concluded that some practices are helping the business to be more effective, then it is documented and shared through emails or staff announcement. The combination step integrates the information into the knowledge system and internalisation embodies explicit knowledge into tacit, for example in the warehouses there are trained to sort and organise the products, but each employee will identify how to ply it better to make him perform better.

Communication is essential to any organisation at all levels and adopting and integrated approach towards communication promotes spread of knowledge. The communication contributes the work to be efficient and provide feedback to ensure productivity. The digital methods for communication in Amazon are an important resource, but conventional communication is also very important as tacit knowledge involves physical proximity. Technology is also used for communication with customers who can request information or offer information in order to have their problems solved. Social media is used by Amazon to communicate and share knowledge about business such as marketing. Amazon uses social media to reach out about promotions, adverts, products information, but also to boost the organisations operations. Amazon uses their app as online platform for e-commerce but it is customised for each customer by offering the items they have interest and search for.

By looking at the implementation strategies it can be observed if the knowledge management is managed adequately. Amazon practices information transmission of information from bottom layers to top layers. Amazon takes very serious the customer complaints and uses the information for decision making for their strategies. Amazon practices opposite approach also when management ask staff to manage knowledge from top layers to bottom layers. Both approaches help Amazon to manage their knowledge, but sometimes Amazon uses a different approach called trial and fail where introduces different products to observe the customer reaction.

Both information and communication are the pillars of any business especially for the industry where Amazon activates. Being a top retailer involves continuous work and efforts to maintain the

brand name and managing knowledge well can increase profitability. That is why knowledge protection is vital in maintaining competitive advantage. Further that open innovation is another element for maintaining competitive advantage. Amazon has been trying to continue innovation by expanding business, by introducing various services, cloud computing, by outsourcing various products from remote areas for example the prime service that offers advantages for products delivery but all the innovation strategies are promoting organisation knowledge.

In order to assess Amazon's activity is also important to look at competitors and how is the knowledge managed elsewhere. Because Amazon has expanded so much it is difficult to consider only one organisation as competitor from one segment of the business. Other organisations that base their activity on technology will have the resources to maintain important records of customer data, suppliers, employees and so on. It can be established that competition is high and because of that Amazon has to surpass expectations and continue to identify strategies and this is what Amazon is working on, by engaging in partnerships or purchasing different organisations.

The knowledge protection for such a successful organisation is major because other organisations can search for any opportunity to obtain the same success. Amazon employs encryption that has helped them maintain a good relationship with users and customers. Because the business activity involves card payment and online payment it is ensured that it adheres to the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard that helps it when handling credit card data. In the event of credit card data loss Amazon will lose the customers trust to make purchase and it can lose business. Amazon maintains physical, procedural and electronic safeguards in connection with collection, storage and disclosure of personal information for users and even the devices from Amazon like Alexa protection is put in place from unauthorised individuals. Amazon manages rigorously this aspects of data protection and information privacy and that is why customers don't think about it too much.

The competitive advantage of Amazon to use innovative strategy based on technology identifies with their business model, but it also facilitates the knowledge management in the organisation. Handling knowledge is realised for the benefit of the organisation and applying SECI model ensure the right knowledge is identified. The integrated methods of communication allows the organisation to adjust services to the business needs, making use of customer feedback, employees knowledge and management knowledge from bottom up to top down exchange of communication and knowledge (Vakulenko et al, 2019).

Conclusion and recommendations

Amazon has a very good system put in place to manage knowledge but it should look more at placing the tacit information as source of knowledge. Working in Amazon has received criticism as working separated and lacking team work and that is why improving skills and transfer of tacit knowledge could increase effectiveness and profits.

Digitalisation of the business is very important especially with the pandemic, but a level of direct communication should be engaged and good leadership would help towards that. Good leadership will ensure teams are collaborating and are united for common objectives. Improving delivery service should also be taken into consideration and professionalism in handling customers as drivers are the seen face of the organisation. Amazon is able and has the resources to make use of big data analytics and that would help their strategies and decision making. Gathering information and real time data means that the organisation knows what are the customers expecting, what are their needs or issues. The bottom up approach implementation helps the company gather information that could prove useful in future decision making.

Amazon should make use of Zack model for knowledge management because of the large size and variate activities of the organisation. This model has 4 steps: acquisition, refinement, storage and retrieval, distribution and presentation. This model enhances more the communication and knowledge repository analysis.

In conclusion this report has managed to identify the most important elements related to the concept, has presented in detail on of the knowledge management models and has apply it to the selected organisation. Amazon is an exceptional organisation regarding knowledge management, but points of improvement and recommendations had been formulated.

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Introduction: To transfer explicit knowledge about application of Knowledge Management in AMAZON

KM definition: Knowledge management is defined as the process of collecting, sharing the knowledge in the most effective way (KM World, 2022).

Types of KM:

- Explicit
- Implicit
- Tacit

Importance of KM for organisations

- Easily shared
- Dormant information is effectively used
- Transforming raw information in assets
- Reduces times waste
- Avoiding duplicated work

**Practical Evaluation of the
Proposed Knowledge
Management Framework for
Amazon**



Organisational background

- Amazon is an international organisation
- an established brand that activates in the e-commerce industry.
- Were developed a variety of other services such as digital streaming, cloud computing and artificial intelligence

The input of KM on the business activity of Amazon

- SECI model helps Amazon to evaluate the knowledge creation and to manage the information.
- The digital methods for communication in Amazon are an important resource
- Amazon practices information transmission of information from bottom layers to top layers and downwards, but also from customers
- Both information and communication are the pillars of Amazon
- Amazon employs encryption that has helped them maintain a good relationship with users and customers.

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