

Knowledge and Information Management Skills for the Workplace

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1. Introduction

Information technology is reshaping the operating models across the industries including the retail industry and changing the way consumers shop from the companies. According to Balchandani *et al.* (2020), the changing behaviours of the consumers especially post the pandemic is reshaping the entire retail landscape with most companies switching to Omnichannel operating models to regrow the declining productivity and to stay relevant amidst the increasing competition in the retail market post the pandemic. The Omnichannel operating model is gaining increasing importance in the retail industry, with the widespread use of digital technologies and the use of integrated processes and information systems in business operations to ensure a smooth customer experience and achieve success in the changing external business environment. Lehrer, 2022).

This study will be highlighting the significance of the Information System for maintaining good knowledge management development practices in Amazon and it will identify and evaluate the effectiveness of the integration of the information system in the management practices of Amazon. In addition, the study will discuss the potential knowledge management challenges Amazon faces and suggest ways that can be implemented to strengthen Amazon's knowledge management practices.

2. Introduction to the Company

Amazon is the leading online retail company in the UK, known for providing e-commerce solutions and offering products and services online ranging from books, electronics, apparel, jewellery, homeware products, and others online. The company operates to serve its customers across the world through its e-commerce solutions (Bloomberg, 2022). According to Gurr *et al.* (2022), Amazon opened its virtual doors in the year 1998 which now operates as Amazon.com, Inc from where consumers can easily get their products and services online. The company has always strived to be the most customer-centric company in the world, where customers can easily find anything, they want to buy online. Amazon initially started by providing online book services to the customer.

According to Coppola *et al.* (2022), however, the company with the changing retail business environment over years has successfully transformed itself from just being an online retailer frontier to a formidably giant tech company while offering products and services to customers across the world which surpasses its initial premises to just being an online retailing business. The services offered by the company now encompass cloud computing, video streaming, cutting-edge AI, spoken audio entertainment, and emerging Machine Learning technologies while expanding the service line from just the online books services.

The products and services offered by Amazon are well-liked by consumers worldwide for a long period which can further be reflected in its exponentially growing annual revenue across the world in the span of

the last two decades. Its net sales have doubled now as compared to its net sales in the year 2018 even after two of the most down turning events including Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic as a consequence of which Amazon has marked itself to be the second biggest online retail market in the UK. In the UK, Amazon through its supply chain and logistic operations is aiming to reach the value of over 83 billion British pounds by the year 2026 from the value of 118 million British pounds in the year 2020 to beat its biggest rival Tesco which is currently the leading retailing company in the UK (Coppola, 2022).

3. Introduction to the key knowledge management theory and theories in response to the provided Case Study

The concept of knowledge management mainly refers to the process in which enterprises acquire the knowledge, organize it and analyze it to use it in their operations. There are different types of theories associated with knowledge management. One of the important theories that is able to shed light on the process of knowledge management happens to be the ***stratified systems theory***. The theory highlights that there are mainly four cognitive processes in which an individual is able to manage their information. This includes the assertive processing, the cumulative processing, serial processing and lastly the parallel processing. The ***organizational knowledge creation theory*** highlights that an organization tries to amplify the information that they have gathered and connect it to their knowledge management system.

Ferreira *et al.* (2018) thinks that today businesses need to develop new business structures in their activities in order to remain competitive in their own activity markets. One of the important concepts that have emerged recently is the concept of strategic knowledge management theory. The theory basically talks about the processes and infrastructures that organizations use to gather information about their customers. The ***knowledge based theory*** mainly states that the capability of the organization to collect information about their customers play a significant part in providing competitive edge to the organizations.

In case of the organization, it can be seen that the organization has been able to develop an effective infrastructure that gives them the opportunity to gather a huge amount of information about their customers. In compliance with the organizational knowledge creation theory, it can be seen that the organization tries to generate more information from the information that they have gathered. For example, it can be seen that Amazon tries to understand the preferences of the customers based on the purchasing history of the customers (Baboolal-Frank, 2021).

4. Demonstration of 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

According to Demir *et al.* (2017), Amazon aims to acquire core competencies by creating a unique process for collecting customers' personal information and purchasing trends. Its unique process involves the use of the Management Information System (MIS) as a tool to lead the efficient management and acquisition of information. MIS is integrated throughout the value chain of Amazon wherein the company uses it to initiate the transactions and select the delivery modes through the assessment of the technology, system, and process involved in its MIS. The MIS as used by Amazon throughout its value chain helps it to initiate effective and efficient interaction of its people and its information systems which further facilitates most of the management decisions in the company at the strategic and operations levels.

According to Mutwiri *et al.* (2020), Amazon utilizes a specialized information system in its management practices to improve the efficiency of the managers in terms of collecting, storing and analyzing the personal information of the consumers to support the company in gaining a competitive advantage. The company uses a specialized information system in its value chain to positively influence its business processes in terms of data acquisition and management. The integration of advanced information system throughout Amazon's value chain has been the biggest factor influencing the overall success of the company. It has a key role in increasing the efficiency of the management department to make effective decisions for the betterment of the company through decentralization. Additionally, Amazon's two-part information management system includes a Simple Storage Service linked to the web service, which further simplifies access to the company's integrated database and e-commerce platforms.

The information management system attached to Amazon's web service allows the customers to easily create user accounts and personalize their profiles while further improving the efficiency of transaction processing.

A combination of the advanced systems with different functionalities is integrated with Amazon's web service which adds up to the efficiency of information management in the company and improves the delivery of the business processes. The advanced systems promote a high level of interoperability which further helps the company in leading forward effective communication between the potential buyers, sellers, and employees. CRM integrated within the Amazon Web Service offers distinct features in terms of scalability, reliability, efficiency, and security while making it easier for the company to deliver customer service.

Information technology plays a central role in eliminating the potential communication barriers in Amazon. Collaborative learning, communication, and knowledge seeking are the major benefits offered by Information Technology wherein it has a dynamic role to play in the effective knowledge management in

Amazon. Information Technology increases the success of the knowledge management application and projects (Abubakar, 2019). Machine Learning, Cognitive technologies, Advanced Analytics and AI impose the maximum impact on Amazon's Knowledge Management System. Machine Learning helps in maximizing the accuracy and minimizing the errors from the business process through the prediction engine. It allows the managers to address the various business issues through the accurate prediction engine. Artificial Intelligence, on the other hand, helps managers in discovering effective solutions faster through the delivery of contextual knowledge. Furthermore, both Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning help the management department of Amazon in addressing the missing links in the knowledge flow while further increasing the effectiveness of the knowledge management. AI tools including speech recognition, Natural Language Processing and text processing support the company to build predictive models by identifying patterns, knowledge mapping and feeding them into AI algorithms, unstructured data from a variety of data sources such as social media platforms, emails, and community portals. different business practices (Deloitte, 2018).

According to Sugumuran *et al.* (2016), companies, including Amazon, are investing in the creation of centralized knowledge repositories to improve business processes, foster knowledge sharing, and retain expertise so that processes continue even after staff absences. The company uses the Information system to ensure effective management of information throughout the information management lifecycle. It integrates technologies such as XML, RDF, intelligent agents, Ontologies, and Web services to create an environment that supports collaborative knowledge work. The information management system facilitates access to information and provides Amazon with decision support tools via wireless protocols.

5. Demonstration of an evaluation of the identified scenario within Amazon and Identification and evaluation of the relevant alternative academic theories to check the effectiveness of knowledge and information management culture within Amazon in terms of creating knowledge assets and maintaining effective customer relationship management

As per the given scenario, the sudden outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic posed major devastations to the global economy wherein it brought the industries to a complete standstill. The pandemic accelerated the slow-moving demise of the retail industry when the department store conditions were already going through a rough state. The imposition of lockdowns and social distancing to contain the spread of the virus greatly influenced consumer behaviour in the retail sector which has further implications on the overall revenue of the retail industry. Most non-essential retail stores have been forced to close due to the pandemic, which has caused huge revenue losses reflected in official Retail sales figures where overall UK retail volume has

fallen by 1.9%. However, the severe consequences were faced majorly by the non-essential retail sales while the essential retail sales continued to rise (ONS, 2021). The opposite was the case for online retail during the pandemic as the retail sales rose sharply as the consumers rapidly moved to online retailing for fulfilling their every day shopping needs. The online retail sales rose to around 60% which was reflected in the total sales volume of online retail which went up by 5.8% while the entire industry was facing the heat from the sudden outbreak of the pandemic (ONS, 2021).

As per the given scenario, Amazon was one of the few exceptions where it was not affected much by the pandemic due to its endless selection and convenience to its customers and the low price of the products. According to Weise et al. (2021), Amazon reported an increase in its sales by 220 per cent during the pandemic wherein it recorded a record-breaking revenue of \$108.5 billion even after the negative influence imposed by the pandemic. In addition, the shift to remote cloud computing posts the pandemic boosted Amazon's cloud computing business and its cloud computing business wherein it recorded a revenue of about \$13.5 billion from both of these business services.

The temporary store closures and shortage of supply of sufficient products forces the consumers to turn to Amazon for getting the safety essentials to protect themselves from the pandemic due to which the company increased its investment in the supply chain to ensure the availability of the household products and groceries throughout the crisis

According to Demaio *et al.* (2020), the shift in consumer behaviour to online platforms forced the companies like Amazon to react quickly to the way it supported its employees and its customers. As support, Amazon increased its investments in the AWS technology to push the ability of the employees to effectively connect with the customers through chatbots and curated emergency contact flows wherein the chatbots supported the employees by reducing the average handling time and cost by around 5%.

Furthermore, as part of the company's response to the covid-19, AWS helped the company in providing highly scalable and reliable infrastructure capacity and technical support to its potential employees and it helped its potential customers in gathering the knowledge and addressing their needs during the pandemic. The technologies like Machine Learning and AI played a crucial role in Amazon's success during the pandemic wherein both of these technologies helped the company in improving its supply chain management by enabling the company to access the knowledge about the spending patterns of the consumers and their purchases. AI and ML made it easy to anticipate when the consumers will place another order on the basis of their buying patterns and what they are going to order while further allowing the company to ensure a sufficient supply of the products. In addition, the integration of the technologies made it easier for the company to lead forward the virtual innovations wherein the staffs were able to work remotely while sharing their ideas on a real-time basis and actively participate in the virtual innovations (Masini, 2021).

According to Rosenberg *et al.* (2015), Amazon was able to connect millions of customers with gigabytes of product information using advanced Knowledge Management (KM) techniques as one of its approaches to managing the relationship between customers and information during the pandemic. The advanced Knowledge Management techniques applied by Amazon helped it to easily and quickly access the wants and needs of the customers and deliver value to the customers simultaneously in a more personalized manner. The KM principles and practices help Amazon to deliver value to its potential customers during the pandemic through One Portal, One Interface wherein the customers were able to access the different products and services through the same portal while enabling one-stop shopping for the customers.

6. Discussion of potential information management challenges and recommendations for enhancing Amazon's information acquisition-storage-transfer method and information management practices.

The main difficulties faced by Amazon throughout its knowledge management process are in terms of developing the working definition of knowledge, utilizing the information technology fully, adapting the cultural complexity, dealing with the tacit knowledge, attending the human resources, coping with the increased competition, and developing the new organizational structures (Kalkan, 2015). Furthermore, there are circumstances when it is too complex for the staff of Amazon to understand the use of the knowledge management tools which acts as a barrier to the effective and efficient use of the knowledge management techniques. In addition, there are certain circumstances wherein the staffs in Amazon end up using the knowledge management tools incorrectly which leads to the wastage of time, money, and efforts while preventing operational efficiency and hindering the growth of the company through the knowledge management principles and practices. According to Ganapathy *et al.* (2020), managing knowledge is not at all a simple task as the effective knowledge management requires a comprehensive gathering, creation, sharing, and analyzing the knowledge.

It is necessary for Amazon to ensure the proper involvement of its staff in the Knowledge Management practices ensuring the effectiveness of the KM practices to promote development and growth in the company through improved customer services. Furthermore, the company must ensure that it moulds a good physical structure in its organizational structure, technological, and cultural aspects along with the support from the top management to lead forward a successful KM life cycle. To improve its KM practices, Amazon can implement the use of the Maturity Model wherein it can access the insights on where they are up to now in terms of the expected outcome of the KM practices. Using the maturity model, Amazon can effectively monitor the progress of its KM practices towards the achievement and integrate the new ideas to boost progress simultaneously (Ganapathy, 2020). Training and development are yet other ways through

which Amazon can overcome the challenge of lack of knowledge of the staff to effectively and efficiently use the knowledge management techniques to gather, create, share, and analyze the knowledge to deliver exceptional customer service.

7. Conclusion

As per the above findings, it can be said that the Knowledge Management System plays an important role in creating information assets and maintaining effective customer relationship management in Amazon. Information Technology like XML, RDF, intelligent agents, Ontologies, and Amazon Web Service (AWS) support Amazon in creating an environment that supports cooperative knowledge work and leads forward effective knowledge management practices. Furthermore, MIS is used within Amazon as a vibrant tool to support knowledge management practices that streamline most the knowledge management activities while simultaneously providing diversified services to customers.

AI and ML made it easy to anticipate when the consumers will place another order on the basis of their buying patterns and what they are going to order while further allowing the company to ensure a sufficient supply of the products throughout the pandemic period while promoting the effective KM which is also the reason behind the success of the company amidst the harsh pandemic.

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Task 2: Poster

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9. Appendix

Practical Evaluation of the Proposed Knowledge Management Framework for Amazon

Introduction and Purpose of the posters

Knowledge management is a cornice process through which an organisation can effectively gather, arrange, analyse and share its knowledge which is easily accessible to each employee. In this task, the practical evaluation of the proposed knowledge management framework for Amazon will be done. The major purpose of this task is to identify relevant benefits and obstacles of the proposed framework.

amazon.in

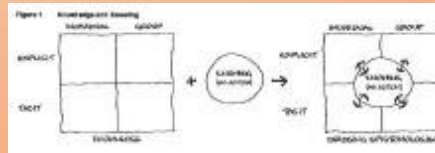
Evaluation of the proposed knowledge management framework for Amazon

Inferring the proposed knowledge management framework, it can be mentioned that the **organisational knowledge creation theory** effectively helps in gathering and sharing the knowledge which can be connected to the system. Considering the proposed knowledge management framework, it can be mentioned that, similar management tools might be way too complex for employees working in the company. People who lack technological knowledge might face issues in adopting the new transformation. This eventually might increase the amount of the cost of training within Amazon. Moreover, the operational efficiency of the organization can also be affected if the knowledge management tools are not properly used. However, with the help of the proposed knowledge management framework, Amazon will be able to collect a wide range of information from its consumers through which it can stay relevant and gain a competitive advantage (Baboolal Frank, 2021).



Figure 1: Modes of the Knowledge Creation

	Tacit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Tacit knowledge	Socialization	Externalization
Explicit knowledge	Internalization	Combination



Knowledge Creation

The formation of new ideas through interactions between easily searchable knowledge (explicit) & knowledge that exists only in our minds (tacit).



Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the role of a knowledge management system within an organisation to gain success and competitive advantage is significant. This has helped Amazon bloom in the business despite the pandemic situation. The organisational knowledge creation theory in this case will create a positive impact on Amazon to gain a competitive advantage.

Discussion on Amazon's potential knowledge management challenges and relevant recommendations

As mentioned by Bloodgood (2018), knowledge acquisition is the process through which knowledge is extracted, structured, and organised from either one source or many. Additionally, the knowledge retention process is associated with the transfer of information from short-term memory to long-term memory. In the case of Amazon, it needs to be mentioned that the fundamental knowledge management challenge that might be faced by Amazon is **keeping up with the ever-changing technology**. Considering the rapid advancement of technologies, the incorporation of every technique to acquire and retain knowledge might be difficult. In this case, it can be recommended that, despite investing huge finance, in particular, one type of knowledge management practice, Amazon can eventually use some prototypes of some contemporary practices, to measure which one works for the brand the best.

Along with that, Nisar *et al.* (2019) mentioned that **measuring knowledge contribution** might be another issue, because knowledge is something that can not be quantified. In fact, within an organisation, the entire knowledge management process is widely dependent on human relationships and experience. Considering the same, it can be mentioned that Amazon might face issues in identifying the amount of knowledge contribution effectively. In order to deal with this potential barrier to knowledge acquisition and retention, it can be recommended that the brand can effectively implement **key performance indicators** regarding the knowledge contribution and sharing process during its operation.

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