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Knowledge and Information Management

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Introduction

This report will present a brief discussion about the importance of information systems and their implementation focusing on the case study of Amazon (Amazon.com). The main objective of the report is to examine the process of knowledge and information management for Amazon.com. The report will start with providing an introduction to the selected organization. This report further will introduce the **relevant key knowledge management theories** and determine the importance of understanding essential prerequisites for developing proper **knowledge management practices**. This report will also include an evaluation of relevant academic theories for analysing the **effectiveness of knowledge and information management systems within Amazon** and determine how it helps in **customer relationship management**. Lastly, this report will identify the challenges related to knowledge management and provide **justified recommendations** to improve the knowledge management practices within the organization taking into consideration the factors like **knowledge acquisition, retention and transfer**. The findings of the overall discussions of the report shall finally be concluded in the conclusion.

Task 1

Introduction to the organization

The person behind the idea to start Amazon (Amazon.com) was Jeff Bezos. He started it from his garage which was located in **Bellevue, Washington, on July 5, 1994**. Amazon entered the marketplace as **an online sphere for books** but gradually it expanded its operations and started selling electronic gadgets, software, video games for the gamers, apparel, home décor, food items, toys, for kids and jewellery, handbags for women (Palmer 2021). Amazon has also started 'amazon prime' which not only ensures fast delivery of ordered products, but one can read books, listen to music and watch movies through that subscription. With the pandemic disrupting the supply chain of amazon, the company continued to tackle all the inventory issues and continued serving people across the globe with their services. The company has always focused on user experience as their way towards success, however, Amazon always utilises their knowledge management techniques for adding more customer value for their customers (Sadq et al., 2018). The KM techniques that the company uses are '**one portal, one interface**' helping the customers with an easy to use interface. The other technique is '**consistent presentation**', helping with a consistent presentation strategy for all the content. Another one is '**modular content**', which helps users to find what they exactly want without any unnecessary searching. The next is '**crowdsourcing**', which is showing the users, frequently

bought together items, the rating columns, helps in building a sense of knowledge amongst the users about their preferences (Palmer 2021).

A brief introduction to the key knowledge management theories that will underpin the report

The business environment has become increasingly more complex day by day (Oliva and Kotabe, 2019). Knowledge management is a process by which Amazon ***collects, organises, shares and analyses its knowledge*** in a way that is accessible to all organisational people. Knowledge management of Amazon involves the process of data mining and some operations to push the data to users for making it easily accessible (Mardani *et al.*, 2018). The company considers this management as a ***primary goal for improving*** critical information, efficiency and productivity within their workplace. The four main components of knowledge management are ***people, process, information and strategy***. Therefore, Amazon considers their knowledge management process important as it helps them in gathering, storing, sharing and managing the information or knowledge effectively and the shared knowledge ***increases the employees' experience*** which increases the knowledge of the overall workforce. Recently, knowledge management has become increasingly important worldwide (Abualoush *et al.*, 2018). Concerning the pivotal role of knowledge management the concerned company effectively manages their whole process.

There are some theories associated with knowledge management that are categorized within '***organisational***', '***ecological***' and '***technological***'.

The European Foundation for quality management

The EFQM model was developed in ***1992 for assessing implementation for the "European Quality Award"***. The framework is widely used by organisations and has become a basis for knowledge management quality. Amazon uses the EFQM model as a management system to encourage the discipline and rules of their organisational self-assessment. The model is known as the EFQM Excellence model; it is a practical tool to help their knowledge management system by ***measuring their path of excellence***. Through applying this theory of knowledge management the company wants to help in understanding the gaps and stimulating the solutions for their improvement. The EFQM model is applicable for organisations in respect of size and structure (tlu, 2021). By implementing this model Amazon does ***self-assessment*** which has large applicability to all types of organisations including public and private sectors. The outputs of the self-assessment are used by the concerned company as a part of their '***business planning***'

process and the framework itself is used as the basis for their project and operational review (plus, 2021). It can be termed as a non-perspective model that is linked with many approaches to achieve sustainable excellence. There are some fundamental concepts also included within the framework that underpins the concerned model. However, the respective model is not fixed, it is accepted by Amazon with the perception of changing over time as excellent business development and improvement (Martins *et al.*, 2019).

The concept of the EFQM model includes ***Result orientation, the focus of customer, partnership development, learning, innovation and development, people involvement and improvement, process management and corporate social responsibility*** (tlu, 2021). Some of these concepts are ‘enablers’ and the remaining criteria are ‘outcomes’. The ‘enabler’ defines what the company does and the ‘outcome’ covers what the company archives. Lastly, it can be stated that the EFQM model of knowledge management helps Amazon to achieve sustainable excellence in all aspects of its business performance.

The Wiig Model to build and use knowledge

Karl Wiig developed this model **in 1993** to make the knowledge useful (tlu, 2021). According to this framework, the knowledge must be organised depending on what the knowledge or information should be used for. The useful dimensions of the KM model are;

Completeness

Completeness means how much the shared knowledge of Amazon is available from the given source. Their source may vary from employees' minds to knowledge bases. The concerned company is first required to ascertain that their knowledge is out there and maybe complete if all knowledge available their requirement is there but if nobody knows about its existence (tlu, 2021).

Connectedness

The dimension is the ***well-known and well-structured*** relations within the various knowledge gathered by Amazon. The connected knowledge base is more relatable and increases its value when major knowledge objects are connected (tlu, 2021).

Congruency

This dimension refers to the fact that all ***facts, values, perspectives, judgements, and concepts related to the objects should be consistent*** (tlu, 2021). However, not most content or knowledge needs to meet such ideas.

“Perspective and purpose”

It is a concept by which Amazon knows something from a specific basis for a particular defined motive. The company organises the majority of their knowledge through two specific dimensions like “perspective and purpose”.

“Complex adaptive system theory of knowledge management”

“The complex adaptive KM theory” consists of various *independent agents* that interact with each other locally. The models include a series of functions to *ensure the viability of any kind of living system and the company*, in particular (tlu, 2021). The framework depends on specific principles such as ‘cybernetics’ that help in communication and control processes to know and predict what should be done as a viable organisation. The model makes possible the appearance of their complex phenomenon of adoption. The general model of a *complex behaviour results from all interactions* (tlu, 2021). The intelligence elements are made of self-organised people within the adaptive model. The challenges are to use the advantages provided by the power of the organised individuals while they are cooperating and keeping a sense of collaboration. In this case, Amazon can *solve their complex problems by creating options and using resources* internally and externally. It will also add value to their initial input. Therefore, the knowledge of the company became more valuable as it is the only source that can help in the uncertain context.

Several views on knowledge management are discussed in different scientific areas (Ferreira *et al.*, 2018). The ICAS model is one of the criteria through which Amazon can *differentiate between information management and knowledge management* (tlu, 2021). The approach of knowledge management is considered as traditional bureaucracy which is not sufficient to offer the essential cohesion to the sustainability of Amazon company. Moreover, it was aimed at an emerging model. Within this the concerned company is allowed to be considered as a system defined by symbiotic relationship within their existing environment.

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.

Knowledge management is the conscious method for defining and structuring, maintaining and sharing information, knowledge and experience of the workforce within an organization. The main objective of knowledge management is basically to strengthen an organization's efficiency and **‘save knowledge’ within their operations**. Knowledge management also

involves training and learning in a company and its consumers. This system is a cycle of *creating, sharing, structuring and auditing knowledge*, to increase the effectiveness of the collective knowledge within the organization (Paulin and Suneson 2015). There are three primary areas of knowledge management, those are **accumulating knowledge**, second is **storing knowledge** and third is **sharing knowledge**. With organizational learning, it becomes feasible for a company to develop a learning culture within their operations, to encourage the **sharing of knowledge** and help the interested ones to learn. Knowledge management is important for a business as it improves the efficacy of the decision-making capabilities of the organization. With knowledge management systems, organizations can encourage better customer value by enriching customer experience. Organizations rely on knowledge management because an acquisition spurs the requirement of arranging knowledge and encouraging workers to talk about their expertise too. Knowledge management helps organizations to develop a workplace with improved efficiency, knowledge skills, better decision-making capabilities, and employee retention (Farooq 2018). Knowledge management also helps an organization to improve the condition of their market share, however for organizations like Amazon, a knowledge management system helps in adding more customer value and boosting customer experience.

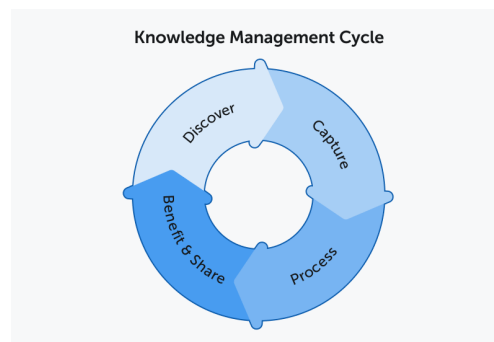


Figure 1: Knowledge management cycle

Source: (Dalkir 2013)

For organizing the knowledge management system for an organization, a four-step process is followed. The first step is Discovery; this process involves an understanding of how the knowledge that is present inside the organization is discovered or identified. For discovering the knowledge, identification of the source of knowledge is done, and learnings from the knowledge are determined along with that scope areas are also identified (Palmer 2021).

The next step is Capture: this involves storing both the existing and discovered or new knowledge. This can be done with the help of a system that enables knowledge mapping, accessibility.

The third step process involves analysis of the gathered knowledge and assessing the same to analyse how well it holds the organizational operations. This step involves knowledge sharing and enhancing a cultural shift.

The fourth step is share and benefit, this involves assessing how well the gathered knowledge can be accessed within the organization. This step helps organizations to access the knowledge and develop a system by helping workers to understand how they can use the system. This can be done with the help of training programs so that understanding the knowledge system becomes easier for them (Becerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal 2014). With the help of knowledge management, the organization will be able to determine efficacy, decision-making skills and bring innovation into the management.

Demonstrate an evaluation of the identified scenario within the given organisation. Relevant alternative academic theories must be identified and evaluated to check the effectiveness of knowledge and information management culture within the given organisation in terms of creating knowledge assets and maintaining effective customer relationship management.

Amidst the global economic downfall and millions of deaths caused during the pandemic, Amazon through its effective e-commerce and knowledge management has been able to successfully ensure its stable sales and unaffected operations (Borjigen, 2015). Through effective competitive market strategies, Amazon has been able to be consistent with low rates of the product and an effective supply chain management system. The pandemic can be considered as one of the primary reasons for the global lockdowns that have prevented people from getting out of their houses to get essential retail supplies. However, Amazon is satisfying the needs of the customer through its effective e-commerce online sales therefore it encourages people to order the essentials through the internet (Boateng, 2016). These strategies have enabled Amazon to ensure record-breaking sales by the second quarter of 2020. Since people were unable to visit out of their houses, servers of Amazon flooded with online orders. Even during the outbreak of the pandemic, the organisation made investments in safety gear for the workers which indicated the high operational level of the organisation. The internal testing initiative of these safety gears was named project ultraviolet. Even during the time of high unemployment in the market, Amazon hired workers to satisfy the excess delivery needs of the

company. According to various sources the company bought approximately 175,000 new warehouses and hired many deliveries and warehouse workers. This fact indicated the high rate of orders received by Amazon. By the end of the fourth quarter, there was an increase in the workforce of the organisation by 34%. The exceptional performance of the E-Commerce company during the pandemic has engraved the brand among the knowledge of the customers (An, X. *et al.*, 2017). Alongside Walmart and Exxon, Amazon is expected to be the company that is going to cross the threshold of the hundred billion dollars mark in sales by the end of the fourth quarter. Through the various knowledge management principles, Amazon has been able to achieve effective consumer relationship management and the element helps the business in insurance enhanced consumer engagement. The following section of the report identifies knowledge management theory implemented within the operations of Amazon. Furthermore, the study will highlight the most suitable knowledge management theory that fits the operations of the organisation along with enhanced operational performance for the firm.

The series of steps that aim at identification, collection, storing and sharing of implicit and explicit information throughout the entire structure of an organisation is known as knowledge management. E-commerce and online sales organisations can be considered as one of the major elements that have helped Amazon in enhancing its knowledge management system. The knowledge management system implemented by Amazon, demands an effective culture of learning. The organisation aims at identifying ways in which it enhances the flow of information among its workforce. There are mainly three areas of knowledge management that are considered to be the accumulation of knowledge, storing knowledge and sharing them. The smooth flow of information among the workforce of the organisation ensures the steady pace of the organisational operations. The two types of knowledge that are considered by the study includes explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge (Venkatraman and Venkatraman, 2018). The knowledge gained through experience can be referred to as tacit knowledge. Amazon's example of knowledge management can be classified under tacit knowledge since the primary data collection of the organisation is initiated through the online selling processes conducted by Amazon. There is another type of information which is known as explicit knowledge. The information on the knowledge that can be easily found and taught can be referred to as explicit knowledge (Bongku and Kurniawan, 2019). Mathematical equations and formulas can be classified under explicit knowledge.

As stated earlier by the report, the Wiig model can be considered as one of the most widely used models that help emerging businesses in developing their knowledge management

strategies (Imhanzenobe *et al.*, 2021). The various discussed dimensions of the model include completeness, connectedness, congruent and purpose. The following section of the report will discuss the various implementations of Amazon in the context of the individual dimensions discussed by the Wiig model.

Completeness: the specific dimension discusses the relevancy or the accuracy of the data collected by the organisation from different sources. To identify the following aspect of amazon's operation the study will first discuss the basic operating procedures of the organisation. Most operational activities like sales and after-sales processes are carried over using e-commerce and the data generated on internet forms as means of data collection source for the company. Due to the large volume of the data involved in the operations of Amazon, it can be classified as big data. Therefore, deriving meaningful market insights or similar trends from these data sets are much necessary for the data to be complete. The operations of Amazon uses big data to drive various market insights that help the organisation in ensuring its smooth and uninterrupted operations. The data analytics division of Amazon is responsible for deriving market insights and the insights derived is thereby transferred to the leadership for the decision-making process of the business.

Connectedness: Correctness can be considered as one of the major elements of knowledge management which form an important activity of data analytics conducted by emerging businesses. In other words, the various trends between the individual variables help the firm in identifying the different market insights. The data analytics of Amazon find the various data trends between the individual variables.

Congruent: as stated earlier congruent knowledge refers to the relationship between different knowledge objects and the interconnection between them. Therefore the knowledge management activities of Amazon make sure that the various information and the trends between the individual variables are interlinked which makes the knowledge management more coherent.

Purpose and perspectives: the different perspectives and purpose of the data collection from the various sources is the last invention defined by the Wiig model of knowledge management. The big data used by Amazon in deriving the market insights must be considered from different perspectives for knowledge management to be effective.

Discuss Amazon's potential knowledge management challenges and offer recommendations to strengthen their knowledge management practices from the knowledge acquisition-retention-transfer perspectives

There are several challenges faced by emerging businesses in their talent management activities. These challenges increase the operational resistances of the businesses, Similarly, the operations of amazon are affected. Following are the various challenges faced by amazon in their knowledge management activities.

- ***Use of obsolete technologies:*** Obsolete technologies refers to the backdated software, hardware, services, as well as practices that can no longer be used even if they are in a good state to work with. Due to the rapid development in the field of science and technology, everyday technology is being upgraded, hence leading to high innovation (Borjigen, 2015). According to reports, the "Amazon Go convenience stores" fail to introduce cashless purchasing which can be considered obsolete. As a result, this can be considered a major challenge associated with knowledge management.
- ***Employee motivation:*** "Employee motivation" can be defined as an external factor that influences the overall performance of the employees as well as business organisations. Motivation acts as a stimulus for enhancing the will of the employees to work more effectively, hence, contributing to improved performance (Ferreira *et al.*, 2018). Lack of effective employee motivation can be considered a major challenge associated with knowledge management. As per reports, it is said that the employees working within the factories show a high rate of demotivation due to a lack of properly safe and healthy working conditions.
- ***Measuring the overall contribution of the knowledge:*** Knowledge is a factor that can be quantified and is complicated. Hence, for ensuring effective knowledge management, the main focus is to prioritise the purpose rather than the outcomes (Laspinas, 2015). As a result, this can be considered a major challenge for Amazon.
- ***Security and protection:*** It is very important to ensure high security as well as protection of the data associated with knowledge management. However, the high rates of cyber crimes have contributed to the manipulation of personal information as well as data (Tisdale, 2015). Hence, maintenance of data protection and safety can be considered a major challenge for Amazon.

To enhance the effectiveness of the knowledge management practices in Amazon, the following recommendations can be used.

Increase the flow of information across the organisational structure.

Knowledge can be effectively managed by organisations if every component of the workforce has access to it. Since most operations in an organisation require some aspects of the derived information for them to proceed with the business activities.

Centralise information to enhance the accessibility of information across the workforce

Centralising the information would lead to steady access of information across the workforce. Enhanced access to information would lead to enhanced flow of information across the workforce leading to increasing the effectiveness of the knowledge management practices.

Incorporate intrinsic form of motivation: Incorporation of the intrinsic forms of motivation

During situations when the workforce experience a high workload most businesses incorporate the use of intrinsic forms of motivation like rewards or incentives. The motivation engages the interest of the employees and thus ensures their optimal performance even during situations with an increased workload. The strategic plan will ensure the motivation of employees which will lead to an effective knowledge management system of Amazon.

Conclusion

This report provides an understanding of the knowledge management techniques used by Amazon. Furthermore, this report also introduces knowledge management theories in regards to the organization and demonstrates the importance of knowledge management practices within the organization. This report discusses the challenges related to knowledge management and recommends a few points for strengthening the knowledge management practices of Amazon. This report is in regards to the provided case study that highlights how the organization stays connected with zillions of users with the help of their knowledge management techniques. This report provides an insight on developing customer relationship management with the help of knowledge management principles by the organization. It can be hereby determined from the report that the knowledge management of Amazon is not only how well they are using and modifying their content, it is mainly how they are connecting users to the information and adjusting with the preferences and interests of the users.

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Knowledge and Information Management

Task 2

Evaluation of Proposed Knowledge Management Framework

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Purpose of the presentation

The main purpose of the presentation is to evaluate the effectiveness of the knowledge management practices implemented in Amazon. The presentation will also recommend strategic plans that will enable the organisation in enhancing its knowledge management. The presentation aims to identify the current challenges faced by the company in terms of knowledge management and thereby recommend solutions that can help them in overcoming the hurdles.

Amazon's potential knowledge management challenge

Several challenges affect the knowledge management practices in Amazon. These challenges are discussed below by the practices encouraged by the company.

- ***Maintaining the pace of technological advancements***: the age of industrialisation and globalisation up-gradation in technology is taking place at a much faster rate. To keep up with the rapid technological advancement, financial investment is necessary from the end of the company. There are several technical requirements essential to continue operations in e-commerce.
- ***The motivation of the workforce***: Motivation can be considered as one of the most significant elements that challenge the knowledge management of Amazon. The flow of information among the entire structure of the organisation is hampered when the workforce of the organisation is demotivated. Although, the elements of job satisfaction in Amazon are more than the elements of job dissatisfaction. However, there are often situations, when the load on the workforce of the employees is much higher. Therefore, in such situations, the management of Amazon uses incentives to boost the morale of the workforce. However, such situations often cause challenges to the knowledge management of the organisation.
- ***Ensuring the security of the database***: Amazon operates with a large amount of data referred to as big data and securing this data from cyber attacks is very crucial for the organisation. How chances of threats for cyber-attacks increase during the transfer of data across different structures of the organisation.
- ***Measuring the overall contribution of the knowledge***: information can be considered as a factor that can be quantified in nature and is very complex. Therefore to enhance the knowledge management practices of Amazon, the organisation should focus on purposes rather than outcomes. This indicates a form to ensure more decision making rather than missing out on opportunities due to its potential negative consequences.

Recommendations

Increase the flow of information across the organisational structure.

Organizations can manage knowledge more effectively if every member of the workforce has access to it. Because most operations in an organisation require some aspect of the derived information to proceed with business activities.

Centralise information to enhance the accessibility of information across the workforce

Centralizing information would result in inconsistent access to information across the workforce. Improved access to information would result in an improved flow of information throughout the workforce, increasing the effectiveness of knowledge management practices.

Incorporate intrinsic form of motivation: Incorporation of the intrinsic forms of motivation

When the workforce is subjected to a heavy workload, most businesses employ intrinsic forms of motivation such as rewards or incentives. Employees' interest is piqued by motivation, which ensures optimal performance even in situations of increased workload. The strategic plan will ensure employee motivation, resulting in an effective Amazon knowledge management system.

Evaluation of the proposed knowledge management framework.

To evaluate an effective knowledge management framework, three components must be considered by Amazon. These components include the People, process, content and strategy.

People - Positioning the right elements in the right places

The mention of the knowledge management framework indicates the need for the businesses to properly position their workforce according to the needs of the organisation.

Process - Ensuring the optimal flow of information across the workforce of the organisation.

The dimension of effective knowledge management indicates the need for the organisations to ensure optimal flow of information across the entire structure of the organisation.

Content - Ensuring proper documentation of the knowledge.

The dimension highlights the need for the best places to store and record day-to-day transactions in the form of databases. These databases form as a means of data processing activities which enables the businesses to monitor their progress.

Strategy - a combination of all the elements

Define element highlights the need for an effective and competitive strategy that will help the company ensure growth. Amazon can incorporate a culture of innovation and accept fresh ideas that can offer further growth to the company.

Purpose of the presentation

- The main purpose of the presentation is to evaluate the effectiveness of the knowledge management practices implemented in Amazon.
- The presentation will also recommend strategic plans that will enable the organisation in enhancing its knowledge management.
- The presentation aims to identify the current challenges faced by the company in terms of knowledge management and thereby recommend solutions that can help them in overcoming the hurdles.

Amazon's potential knowledge management challenge

Maintaining the pace of technological advancements

The motivation of the workforce

Ensuring the security of the database

Measuring the overall contribution of the knowledge











Evaluation of the proposed knowledge management framework.

People
Positioning the right elements in the right places

Process
Ensuring the optimal flow of information across the workforce of the organisation.

Content
Ensuring proper documentation of the knowledge.

Strategy
Ensuring the combination of all the elements





Recommendations

Increase the flow of information across the organisational structure.
Organizations can manage knowledge more effectively if every member of the workforce has access to it. Because most operations in an organisation require some aspect of the derived information to proceed with business activities.

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