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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT – ITS TOOL & ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Today, Knowledge Management is acting as the heartbeat of any country. It is considered as the dominating factor for any country. People have realized that with the help of knowledge workers an organization can plan, develop and implement its schedules and services. It is a well understood fact that only good education institutions can provide good knowledge workers due to which educational institutions play very important role. Education Institutions can not only provide talent to the country but make them ready for upcoming problems and suggest them how to face the problems also. Educational Institutions represent core structure of knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Higher Education, Education, Teaching Research.

1. Introduction

Knowledge Management is an emerging discipline that promises to capitalize on organizations' intellectual capital. The concept of knowledge is far from new and phrases containing the word knowledge such as "knowledge bases" and "knowledge engineering" has been around for a while. The concept of Knowledge Management (KM) emerged in the mid-1980 from the need to derive knowledge from the "deluge information" (Lawton, 2001).

Knowledge management is defined as a process through which organizations create, store and utilize their collective knowledge. KM gives a greater focus on management of knowledge as a strategic asset and encourages sharing of knowledge. KM efforts can help individuals and groups to share valuable organizational insights, to reduce redundant work, to avoid reinventing the wheel per se, to reduce training time for new employees, to retain intellectual capital as employees move out and to adapt to changing environments and markets (Mcadam and McCreedy, 2000; Thompson and Walsham, 2004).

2. Need of Knowledge Management

Studer (1998) explained KM as an engineering technique. The technique uses knowledge and its management helping the organization to develop and use widely its expertise throughout the process of its business, especially in the area of production, marketing, design and so on. Knowledge management is also needed for various reasons to leverage experience and expertise of professional (academicians and other) and acquire knowledge which is at the possibility of diminishing at different level; reduce the duplication of the work and replicating the business process and decision making criteria: alters strategic decision towards better results by reducing loss of information and knowledge; reduce complexity at every step repeated during the process; improve rate of innovation and increase competitiveness; reduce informal method of process to formal method of development; reduce time for decision making process; leverage knowledge and information throughout the life long tenure of the organization and in some case for industry etc. (Mathew, 2010).

3. Knowledge Management in Higher Education

“Higher education institutions have significant opportunities to apply knowledge practices to support every part of their mission” (Kidwell et al, 2001)

KM techniques and tools can be applied in higher education system to improve the overall development. The areas of application involve research, curriculum development, academic services (teaching-learning process), alumni services, formulation and development of strategic plan, administrative services (student and alumni), access to potential customers and other stakeholders, library services, development programs etc. (Mathew, 2010). It can lead to better decision making.

The larger question needs to be answered is that where would the KM be good? Institutions are going to embark knowledge management in culture, believes, value, norms, behavior and unique identity. Knowledge management is moving to the old, new culture consideration and it is developing culture. Management institutions should launch new management lessons by knowledge sharing, transfer, co-ordination and learning.

- **Start with strategies:** before doing anything, predetermine the motto and object in the relevancy of knowledge management.
- **Organization/ Institution infrastructure:** Human resource, financial measurement of success and information technology should support knowledge management.
- **Seek high level satisfaction:** Knowledge management increases high level of believes, growth and co-ordination, it also increases the positive motivation.
- **Select:** Knowledge management should select every pearson who is on the growth stage naturally it will increase proficiency of target oriented people.

Only after gathering all information related to knowledge management and their parameters we can frame the action plan.

4. Knowledge Management Methods and Tools

There are many methods/tools available in support of knowledge management. Some of them are given in Table: 2.1

Table: 2.1 Knowledge Management Methods and Tools (Young, 2010)

➤ Brainstorming	➤ Document Libraries leading to a Document Management System
➤ Learning and Idea Capture	➤ Knowledge Bases (Wikis, etc.)
➤ Peer Assist	➤ Taxonomy
➤ Learning Reviews	➤ Blogs
➤ After Action Review	➤ Social Network Services
➤ Expert Locator	➤ Voice and Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VOIP)
➤ Community of Practice	➤ Advanced Search Tools
➤ Storytelling	➤ Building Knowledge Clusters
➤ Virtual Work Spaces	➤ Knowledge Assessment
➤ Physical Work Spaces	➤ Knowledge Cafe

Various methods and tools of knowledge management are described here

➤ **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a simple way of helping a group of people generate new and unusual ideas

It is split into two main phases

- Divergent thinking - generation of ideas
- Convergent thinking - selection of ideas

➤ **Learning and idea capturing**

A key aspect of knowledge management, at the personal and team level, is to more 'collectively and systematically' capture the learning's and ideas that are taking place. Learning's and ideas capture is a guide to how to do this.

➤ **Peer Assistance**

It is a technique used by a project team to solicit assistance from peers and subject matter experts regarding a significant issue the team is facing.

➤ **Learning Review**

It is a technique used by a project team to aid team and individual learning during the work process.

➤ **After Action Review**

It is a technique to evaluate and capture lessons learned upon the completion of a project.

➤ **Expertise Locator**

- Expertise Locator (Expert Locator, Who's Who) is an IT tool to connect people who need knowledge and people who own the knowledge.
- It also helps building a new team/project by finding right people.

➤ **Communities of Practice**

CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. In the context of KM, CoPs are formed -intentionally or spontaneously, to share and create common skills, knowledge and expertise among employees.

➤ **Storytelling**

Storytelling is conveying of events in words and sounds often by improvisation or embellishment. In the context of KM, storytelling has been used as a powerful way to share and transfer knowledge, especially experiential and tacit knowledge.

➤ **Collaborative Virtual Work Space**

Collaborative virtual work spaces enable people to work together, irrespective of where they are physically located.

➤ **Collaborative Physical Workspaces**

When we share or create knowledge, we usually interact with other people through face-to-face communication –we discuss, dialogue, or simply just ask a question. Physical workspace is where such human interactions take place-and it can support knowledge sharing/creation if it is well-designed.

➤ **Document Libraries Leading to a Document Management System**

From the information management science, and from the library sciences, we have always been interested in better information and document management. Efficient and effective to documents is the antidote to 'information overload'. Maintaining a 'document repository' with good categorization and/or taxonomy and metadata (link to these later) is paramount to filing and, subsequently, searching and finding the right information at the right time.

➤ **Knowledge Bases & Wiki's**

A wiki is one special type of knowledge base with very powerful uses in an organization.

➤ **Taxonomy**

Taxonomy is a technique that provides the structure to organize information, documents, and libraries in a consistent way. This structure assists people to efficiently navigate, store, and retrieve needed data and information across the organization. It builds a natural workflow and knowledge needs in an intuitive structure.

➤ **Blogs**

A blog is a very simple 'journal style' website that contains a list of entries. The entries are typically short articles, or stories, often relating to current events, and potentially containing photographs, videos and audio recordings, as well as text.

➤ **Social Networking**

A social network is a group of people who share a common area of interest.

➤ **Video and Voice-Over-Internet Protocol (VOIP)**

In very simple terms, the internet is now capable of sending both audio and video signals between computers, using nothing more than a broadband connection, and some low cost equipment such as a webcam, and a headset. This capability is often referred to as VOIP.

➤ **Advanced Search Tools**

Almost everyone who has used the World Wide Web will, at some point, have used a search Engine. However, very few users take advantage of the advanced search tools that are offered by most of the search engines. Understanding these tools can result in a significant Improvement in the quality of search results.

➤ **Building Knowledge Clusters**

The term 'Knowledge Cluster' is a term given to a group that-as a result of coming together in this new way-create, innovate, and disseminate new knowledge. In other words, different individuals, teams, and organizations can now come together, virtually, on the Internet, to better communicate, collaborate, learn, and share knowledge through the cluster.

➤ **Knowledge Management Assessment Tool**

It is a survey questionnaire designed to help organizations conduct an initial and rapid assessment of its readiness for knowledge management. The assessment is carried out in the beginning of the KM program.

➤ **Knowledge Cafe**

A knowledge cafe is a way to have a group discussion, to reflect, and to develop and share any thoughts and insights that will emerge, in a very non-confrontational way. Knowledge Cafe suspends all judgment and normally leads to developing deeper insights and sharing than usual. Running a knowledge cafe requires a process to make it work effectively.

5. Benefits of Knowledge Management in Higher Education

Benefits of knowledge management are reported in different areas out of which, we adopt some benefits, which are relevant to educational institutes and they are given below-

➤ **Knowledge Management in Teaching and Research**

- Achieve effective delivery
- Collaboration between various component, internally and externally for teaching and research
- Curriculum enhancement
- Effective use of technological aids for effective course delivery
- Increased adaptability for research, funding and commercial opportunities
- Leverage previous research findings
- Effective training and development process
- Minimize replication of activities
- Reduce cost of overall research
- Reduce risk of uncertainty

➤ **Knowledge Management in Development Process**

- Create quality practices and program outcomes
- Enhance evaluation and administrative activities
- Develop teaching and learning process to achieve quality outcomes
- Enhance faculty development and other development programs
- Develop external and internal relationship
- Foster innovation by sharing
- Ensure proper information transfer

- Improve faculty, student, alumni and staff affairs and services
- Develop and facilitate inter departmental relationship
- Improved adaptability to teaching and learning process
- Technological advancement

6. Conclusion

Knowledge management is the process of gathering a firm's collective expertise wherever it resides-in databases, on paper, or in people's heads-and distributing it to where it can help produce the biggest payoff. Knowledge is a mix of framed experience, value, contextual information, and expert insights that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. Colleges and universities should apply knowledge management practices to support every part of their mission- from education to public service to research. Knowledge management is technique of information sharing while it creates new path for the institutions.

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