Knowledge Management Utilization in Organizations /
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Abstract

Since 1994, both academic and business-oriented research projects have been conducted, proposing models for understanding and implementing Knowledge Management. Today, more than a decade later, the knowledge seemingly continues to be an important asset of every organization, one that enables a competitive advantage in business (Winter, 1987), (Nonaka & Takauchi, 1995), (Bou-Llusar & Segarra-Cipres, 2006). Nevertheless, Knowledge Management is not considered a resolved issue. Organizations understand its importance, and invest time, money and managerial efforts, seeking the right enablers and turning it into organizational reality.

This research aims to seek some of these right enablers of Knowledge Management. One of the many (close) definitions of Knowledge Management is "distinct but interdependent processes of knowledge creation, knowledge storage and retrieval, knowledge transfer and knowledge application." (Alavi 8c Leidner, 2001).

The research deepens in each of the definition's components - knowledge creation, knowledge storage and retrieval and knowledge transfer - offering a framework that will ease knowledge application, and hence leverage Knowledge Management utilization in the organization. The research method is qualitative, and uses a multi-case study research strategy.

The research is based on three papers, each emphasizing one of the Knowledge Management definition's components, as described above. The papers have been all published in the past year in academic journals dealing with Knowledge Management.

The list of the papers includes:

a. A Case Study of Successful Implementation of a Learning Model.

b. WEB2.0 Implications on Knowledge Management.

c. Leveraging Knowledge Understanding in Documents.

The researches conducted in these papers stand each by itself, yet are interconnected, answering the same research question and following the same research design.

The findings of research a, "A Case Study of Successful Implementation of a Learning Model" focus on knowledge creation and imply that:

al. Groups that found it hard to accomplish creation processes, succeeded, working by the guidelines of the suggested framework.

a2. The resources invested in knowledge creation process are limited, and therefore the framework can be considered affordable in many organizations and situations.

a3. The knowledge developed was highly appreciated by colleagues and organizational managers. The new knowledge was presented across the organization, and in inter-organizational conferences.

a4. The framework design leads to higher knowledge application. Thus, as result of the combination of the graphic model and knowledge tools defined.

The findings of research b, "WEB2.0 Implications on Knowledge Management" focus on knowledge sharing, learning from the WEB2.0 phenomena and imply that:

b1. Analysts' opinions are mixed whether core concepts can be learned from WEB2.0 in favor of knowledge management. The research follows the majority opinion and suggests deducing from WEB2.0 to knowledge management.

b2. Analyzing WEB2.0's principles in a Knowledge Management perspective yields the conclusion that WEB2.0 principles are very close to Knowledge Management ones. There are differences, mainly in the centralization, and in the controlled attitude of Knowledge Management in contrast to the uncontrolled, decentralized WEB2.0 environment. Decentralization and less control can be adopted as sharing enablers.

b3. Most WEB2.0 tools' attributes have roots in Knowledge Management tools. Many of the features presented in WEB2.0 tools were already introduced and used previously, even though gaps do exist. Yet, Knowledge Management should not settle only for its classical tools, making the excuse that most attributes already exist. It should adopt usage of WEB2.0 tools, especially WIKIs and Blogs. These tools, also with similar attributes but a different focus, can facilitate Knowledge Management sharing.

b4. Knowledge management can benefit by adopting some organizational culture components as deliberately involving younger people in organizational Knowledge Management initiatives; focusing more on the people; and, enabling people to decide, wherever organizationally mature, to rely on altruism and adopting it more widely in Knowledge Management organizational activities.

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The findings of research c, "Leveraging Knowledge Understanding in Documents" focus on knowledge storage and retrieval and imply that:

cl. The suggested framework serves as a simple to use enable technique.

c2. Users find the documents written as to the guidelines of the suggested framework, easier to read and understand.

c3. In organizations where the framework was used, people indicated that the newly designed documents were more user-friendly to read, re-read and understand.

The findings imply that the research has both academic and practical contribution: Frameworks do exist, and can be further developed. Developed frameworks, as the ones described in the three researches conducting this dissertation, ease knowledge application, and leverage Knowledge Management in utilizations. They are based on academic research and analysis and constitute a bridge between knowledge management theory and practice.

Further research, which will offer more frameworks for the above, is recommended.

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