Knowledge Management in Organizations

A Critical Introduction

Donald Hislop,

Rachelle Bosua, and

Remko Helms

OXPORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Detailed Contents

Figures xvii

Tables xviii

Guide to the Book xx

Guide to the Online Resources xxii

1 The Contemporary Importance of Knowledge and Knowledge Management 1

Introduction 1

Key assumptions in the knowledge management literature 2

The knowledge society concept and its links to Bell's post-industrial society concept 3

A critical evaluation of the knowledge society concept 6

Aims, philosophy, and structure 8

Review and Discussion Questions 12

Suggestions for Further Reading 12

PART 1 Epistemologies of Knowledge in the Knowledge Management Literature

2 The Objectivist Perspective on Knowledge 15

Introduction 15

Objectivist perspectives on knowledge 15

The knowledge-based theory of the firm 17

Typologies of knowledge 18

Tacit and explicit knowledge 19

Individual-group knowledge 20

An objectivist perspective on the sharing and management of knowledge 23

Conduit model of knowledge sharing 24

Knowledge management processes 25

Conclusion 27

Case study Factors shaping the successful transfer of knowledge within an MNC: an objectivist analysis 27

Review and Discussion Questions 29

Suggestions for Further Reading 29

3 The Practice-Based Perspective on Knowledge 30

Introduction 30

Features of a practice-based perspective on knowledge 31

The embeddedness of knowledge in practice 31

Knowledge as multidimensional and non-dichotomous 33

Knowledge is embodied 35

The socially constructed and culturally embedded nature of knowledge 37

The contestable nature of knowledge 39

A practice-based perspective on the management and sharing of knowledge 40

Conclusion 43

Case study The collective knowledgeability of care: a case study of an Italian care home 43

Review and Discussion Questions 44

Suggestions for Further Reading 45

PART 2 **An Introduction to Key Concepts**

4 What is Knowledge Management? 49

Introduction 49

What is knowledge management? 49

Factors influencing organizational approaches to knowledge management 53

Conceptualizing the diversity of knowledge management approaches 58

Knowledge strategy frameworks 58

Von Krogh etal. (2001): leveraging, expanding, appropriating, and probing 58

Kim et al. (2014): internal and external codification, internal and external personalization 60

Knowledge management strategy frameworks 60

Hansen et al.'s (1999) codification versus personalization framework 60

Alvesson and Karreman's (2001) four knowledge management approaches 63

Conclusion 64

Case study Centralizing knowledge management: McKinsey's Knowledge Network 65

Review and Discussion Questions 67

Suggestions for Further Reading 67

5 Knowledge-Intensive Firms and Knowledge Workers 68

Introduction 68

The knowledge economy and the growing importance of knowledge-intensive firms and knowledge workers 69

Defining and characterizing knowledge-intensive firms 70

Defining knowledge workers: the professional knowledge work perspective 72
Defining knowledge workers: the 'all work is knowledge work' perspective 74
Knowledge work and ambiguity 76
Knowledge and knowledge processes in knowledge-intensive firms 78
Knowledge workers, intellectual capital, and innovation 78
Knowledge creation 79
Knowledge integration/application 79
Social capital, knowledge workers, and knowledge-intensive firms 81
The willingness of knowledge workers to participate in knowledge processes: contrasting perspectives 82
Knowledge workers: the ideal employee? 82
Factors inhibiting knowledge workers' work efforts and knowledge management activities 83
Conclusion 84
Case study The linkages between learning orientation, knowledge assets, and HR practices in professional service firms 85
Review and Discussion Questions 86
Suggestions for Further Reading 86

PART 3 **Innovation, Knowledge Creation, and Unlearning**

6 Learning and Knowledge Management 91
Introduction 91
The heterogeneity of learning 92
Characterizing learning in organizations 92
Learning mechanisms and processes 92
The dynamics of organizational learning 94
The learning organization: emancipation or exploitation? 96
The learning organization: the advocates' vision 97
The learning organization: the pessimists' or sceptics' perspective 100
Conclusion 106
Case study The role of time and discontinuities in shaping the complex dynamics of organizational learning 107
Review and Discussion Questions 109
Suggestions for Further Reading 109
7 Innovation and Knowledge Processes 110
Introduction 110
The scope and evolution of Nonaka's knowledge creation theory 111
The epistemology of knowledge creation theory 112

SECI and knowledge creation/conversion 113
Ba *116*
The critique of Nonaka's knowledge creation theory 116
Innovation, knowledge processes, and absorptive capacity 120
Conclusion 123
Case study Knowledge creation, absorptive capacity, and product innovativeness 124
Review and Discussion Questions 125
Suggestions for Further Reading 125

8 Unlearning, Knowledge Loss, and the Protection of Knowledge 126
Introduction 126
Unlearning and forgetting in organizational contexts 128
Unlearning as a type of deliberate forgetting 128
Unlearning, learning, and change 131
Antecedents of unlearning 133
Individual-level antecedents of unlearning 134
Organizational-level antecedents of unlearning 135
Knowledge leakage 137
Leakage from tacit and explicit knowledge perspectives 138
Knowledge protection 140
Conclusion 143
Case study The impact of team reflexivity and stress on unlearning and innovation in new product development teams 143
Review and Discussion Questions 144
Suggestions for Further Reading 145

PART 4 **Introduction to ICTs and Knowledge Management**

Inseparability of knowledge management and computer-based technology 148
Linking knowledge management and ICTs 148

9 Objectivist Perspectives on ICTs and Knowledge Management 151
Introduction 151
Objectivist perspective on ICT-enabled knowledge management 151
Epistemological assumptions and ICTs 152
Three ICT-enabled knowledge management approaches based on the objectivist perspective 152
Repository-based approach to ICT-based knowledge management 152
Process and domain knowledge model approach to ICT-based knowledge management 155
Sensor-based approach to ICT-based knowledge management 157

Critical reflection of objectivist approaches on ICTs and knowledge management 159
Conclusion 159
Case study Wiki as tool to share knowledge in an SME 160
Review and Discussion Questions 161
Suggestions for Further Reading 162

10 Practice-Based Perspectives on ICT-Enabled Knowledge Management 163

Introduction 163
Epistemological assumptions and ICTs 163
Practice-based perspectives on knowledge and the three roles for ICTs in knowledge management 164
Network-based approach to ICT-based knowledge management 164
Collaboration tools to facilitate ICT-based communication and knowledge sharing 166
Crowd-based approach to ICT-based knowledge management 169
Conclusion 171
Case study Yammer at Deloitte Australia 171
Review and Discussion Questions 172
Suggestions for Further Reading 173

PART 5 **Socio-cultural Issues Related to Managing and Sharing Knowledge**

11 The Influence of Socio-cultural Factors in Motivating Workers to Participate in Knowledge Management Initiatives 177

Introduction 177
The share/hoard dilemma 178
The context of the employment relationship: employer-employee relations in business organizations 180
The ubiquity of conflict in business organizations and its impact on knowledge processes 182
Inter-personal trust 184
Group identity 187
National culture 188
Personality 190
Conclusion 191
Case study ParcelCo: a case study of factors inhibiting knowledge sharing 192
Review and Discussion Questions 193
Suggestions for Further Reading 194

12 Communities of Practice 195

Introduction 195

Defining communities of practice 196

Communities of practice: origins, features, and dynamics 197

Communities of practice and intra-community knowledge processes 200

Types of communities of practice 200

Online communities 203

Managing communities of practice 204

Visualizing and analysing communities of practice: social network analysis 207

Critical perspectives on communities of practice 209

Power, conflict, and the internal dynamics of communities 210

Blinkered and inward-looking communities 211

Conclusion 212

Case study Communities of practice as means to implement agile software development at Ericsson 213

Review and Discussion Questions 214

Suggestions for Further Reading 214

13 Boundary-Spanning Knowledge Processes in Heterogeneous Collaborations 216

Introduction 216

The significance of boundary-spanning collaboration 218

Characterizing boundary-spanning knowledge processes 220

Identity 220

Knowledge 222

Identity, knowledge, trust, and social relations 224

A classification of boundary types 226

Facilitating/managing knowledge between communities 227

Relationship management 228

Boundary objects 229

Conclusion 231

Case study Cross-functional knowledge sharing in R&D via co-location: the case of Novartis 232

Review and Discussion Questions 233

Suggestions for Further Reading 234

14 Power, Politics, Conflict, and Knowledge Processes 235

Introduction 235

Two perspectives on power and the power/knowledge relationship 236

Power as a resource and the critical discourse on knowledge management 238

Theorizing power and power/knowledge relations 238

Linking power and knowledge to conflict and politics **240**

The critical discourse on knowledge management and the inevitability of power and conflict in business organizations **243**

Power/knowledge and the dialogical discourse on knowledge management 244

Conceptualizing power/knowledge **245**

Discourse, power/knowledge, and the legitimation of truth claims **246**

Power/knowledge and conflict across organizational boundaries **246**

Conclusion 248

Case study Power matters: the importance of Foucault's power/knowledge in knowledge management research 249

Review and Discussion Questions 250

Suggestions for Further Reading 250

PART 6 **The Management of Knowledge Work (and Workers)**

15 Facilitating Knowledge Management via the Use of Human Resource Management Practices 255

Introduction 255

Why HRM practices are important to knowledge management 256

HRM practices and knowledge management 258

Recruitment and selection **259**

Job design **260**

Training **261**

Coaching and mentoring **262**

Reward and performance appraisal **263**

HRM, staff retention, and knowledge management 265

Conclusion 267

Case study Rethinking the role of HRM practices in facilitating knowledge exchange: a case study of CERN, a knowledge-intensive organization 268

Review and Discussion Questions 269

Suggestions for Further Reading 269

16 Leadership, Organization Culture Management, and Knowledge Management 271

Introduction 271

The impact of organizational culture on knowledge management activities 273

Creating and managing an organizational culture to support knowledge management activities 277

The conceptualization of leadership in the academic business and management literature 278

Knowledge management and leadership 281
Conclusion 284
Case study The impact of organizational culture on knowledge sharing: the case of Danisco 284
Review and Discussion Questions 286
Suggestions for Further Reading 286

References 287
Index 315