Strategic Knowledge Management for Innovation and for Organizational Agility

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1. Introduction

The objective of this minitrack is to focus on the contribution that knowledge management (KM) makes to innovation and organizational agility. After two decades of KM research, organizations continue to evaluate the theory that KM translates into practice by creating, sharing and transforming knowledge into business value. In this minitrack we focus on the contribution that KM makes to innovation in products, services and processes, and thus to organizational agility. Recent challenging economics situations and the global 24/7 paradigm focuses our attention on KM theory and activities. In particular we look to knowledge intensive activities and on knowledge-based practices. The challenge for researchers is that a fundamental transformation has been taking place in two directions: (1) exploring how the inflows and outflows of knowledge have expanded to accelerate internal innovation and expand the markets for external use of innovation, and (2) how KM is used to support organizational agility and sustain business agility. Both these themes support alternative approach to organizing for innovation and organizational agility in an open environment with multiple participants and stakeholders. Both strategic themes explore the effectiveness of new methods and organizational structures for improving innovation and organizational agility by engaging a broader base of outside knowledge holders and raise important new issues about how knowledge is created and applied to derive business value, generate new ideas, and develop new products and solutions. In line with this challenging research issue, the objective of this mini track is to draw appropriate papers on the broadest range of research methodologies.

This minitrack provides one of the key international platforms for the exploration of the most recent developments in KM research and our authors contribute important new research about how knowledge is created and applied to derive business value, to generate new ideas, and develop new products and solutions that enhance organizational agility, efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness.

Many papers were received with an acceptance rate of 20%. The authors of these papers look at the role of KM in organizations and its role in growth, agility and innovation within these organizations.

2. Summary of Articles

The first paper by Gloet and Samson examines the links between KM and innovation in 16 Australian manufacturing and service organizations that exhibited successful innovation and robust KM practices. A review of the literature indicated the contributions of KM to systematic innovation capability. Using a multiple cross-case analysis methodology and applying a framework of sustained innovation capability, the authors held in-depth interviews with managers of the case study organizations. The analysis of the data revealed the main contributions of KM to systematic and sustained innovation. The authors also discuss areas where KM could contribute more to sustained innovation capability.

The second paper by Zyngier and Owen presents findings on organizational agility as an aim of implementing KM. These findings are contextualized by examining the leadership roles and the tasks that achieve this goal. In particular the authors examine structures in KM: of the authority; of the development; and of the implementation of KM strategy that support agility. Using data from a global survey they find a definition of leadership in types. The authors disclose common patterns of KM leadership and its delegation. The data demonstrates that clear transparent lines of delegated authority exist, and that these delegations enable the operationalization of KM strategy in a planned manner, that can also be clearly implemented to realize anticipated benefits.

The third paper by Tsuji, Saga, Albert, and Tiwana proposes the concept of trajectory mining to find the growth path for companies. The central idea is to find the constraints and normal growth paths from the volumes of the trajectories on the capability space where capability space is spanned by multi-dimensional axes. The authors identified trajectory shows the reasonable direction for future growth. The authors use an application for software outsourcing clients that demonstrates the proposed concept.