Lecture 14: Introduction to Knowledge Communication and Sharing

Dr. Roman V Belavkin

BIS4410

Contents

1 Explicit and Tacit Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge Sharing in KM Cycle

- After knowledge is captured or documented, it has to be shared.

- Technology offers a new medium through which employees who share similar professional interests, problems, and responsibilities can share knowledge.

Information and Human Focus in KM

- Desmarest (1997) contrasted two approaches in KM:
  
  **Information-Based**: focus on representing, codifying, documenting knowledge.
  
  **Interaction-Based**: focus on people, connecting knowers.
  
- Information-based emphasise explicit knowledge, favours externalisation.
  
- Interaction-based emphasise tacit knowledge, knowledge-sharing.
The cost of not finding information

• Feldman (2004) study (International Data Corporation) estimates that knowledge workers spend 15–35% of time on searching information.
• They succeed in less than 50% of the time.
• Organisations with 1000 employees loose around $6 million p.a. for time lost in searching for information.
• Cross and Parker (2004) found that knowledge workers spend more time re-creating existing information.
• There is a surprising decline in productivity despite investment in IT (Productivity paradox).

The cost of not finding information

• Excellent Intranet Cost Analyser

  http://www.dack.com/web/cost_analyzer.html

People as Preferred Knowledge Sources

• It is not surprising that we often prefer people as the source of information and knowledge.
• Most common justifications are:
  – Information is obtained faster
  – The source is credible or trusted
  – Learn how to reformulate the query
  – Follow up queries

2 Social Nature of Knowledge

Communities of practice

Definition 1 (Community of practice). A group of people with common identity, professional interests, and who share, participate and establish a fellowship.

• CoP may share electronic or virtual workspace, such as a part of the organisation’s intranet.
• CoP can be facilitated by e-mail lists, user groups, discussion boards, wiki, community yellow pages and other forms.
• Many organisations have CoPs
Social network analysis

- Social network analysis (SNA) is aimed at measuring and mapping the relationships and information flows between people in CoPs.
- SNA typically involves the use of questionnaires and/or interviews.
- SNA can also use statistical analysis, data- and text-mining techniques in complex networks.
- SNA’s output can be a visual representation (a graph) of the network.
- SNA can reveal patterns of interaction in CoPs (e.g. average number of links between people, subgroups, information sources, sinks, bottlenecks).

Obstacles to Knowledge Sharing

- Knowledge is seen as property, and ownership is important.
- Credit should be given and authorship maintained where possible.
- Knowledge workers are often rewarded for what they know, not what they share.
- Incentives should be provided for knowledge sharing.
- Uncertainty in understanding knowledge by the recipient.
- Uncertainty in credibility of the source.
- Organisational culture influences knowledge sharing.

Additional Reading

   Knowledge sharing: A review and directions for future research

2. Willem, BueIens, and Scarbrough (2006):
   The role of inter-unit coordination mechanisms in knowledge sharing: a case study of a British MNC
References


