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ACTIVITIES (D5)

Knowledge management for space activities in the digital transformation age (2)

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IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Abstract

Today knowledge management (KM) is accepted as an integral element for organizations seeking to secure and keep a competitive advantage. In literature it is pointed out that, to become a useful tool to the knowledge workers, KM also needs to take into account organizational culture, keeping in mind the values that define the culture such as, belief frameworks; shared attitudes; and the written and unwritten rules that support the understanding-, processing-, and utilization of knowledge. While KM can be embedded into an organization's processes and tools, as a means to aid and support the use of organizational knowledge, it does not mean that it also gets embedded into the organizational culture or mentality. KM processes may organize and lead the knowledge flows, but it is the culture that determines whether these flows will be bolstered or constrained by socio- and business-oriented cultural barriers. For example, the knowledge sharing as an enabler for the transfer and creation of knowledge is directly impacted by the culture. In order to make KM initiatives work in practice, the employees must be willing to share their knowledge with others. Managers must understand the culture both at an organisational and community level. While culture often exists at the organizational level, each community may have its own norms, perspectives, collective understandings, and individual attitudes. The willingness to share and seek knowledge will be strongly influenced by these collective views. Internal competition is yet another aspect of the organizational culture that may interfere with the knowledge sharing and knowledge creation process. This paper aims to illustrate the influence organizational culture has on the implementation and application of KM initiatives and activities. Affording a healthy organizational social and business-oriented culture can be paramount in securing successful implementation of any KM initiative or activity. Ensuring that there is a strong interdepartmental connectedness based on mutual trust and reciprocity, while keeping the level of interdepartmental conflict low, is key. In particular, the paper will try to identify the problems with managing organizational culture that may hinder the success of the KM initiatives, i.e. learned responses that are hard-wired, falsehoods, etc. To summarise, the paper seeks to review the supportive and braking elements of organizational culture, its influence over KM, and to define a framework for steering organizational culture with the aim of strengthening KM initiatives and activities.