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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING: OBJECTIFYING A SYNERGETIC LIAISON WITHIN THE LEARNING ORGANISATION

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Abstract *The rapid evolution of our intensely connected global economy translates into the imperativeness of developing knowledge capabilities. The pioneers of knowledge management have developed valuable tools and approaches. For centuries, scientists, philosophers, and intelligent laymen have been concerned about creating, acquiring, and communicating knowledge and improving the re-utilisation of knowledge.*

However, it is only in the last decade or so that Knowledge Management (KM) has evolved as a discipline, especially on the maps of strategy consultants and conference organisers. KM is harboured on the premise that, organisations, much like their human figments, are incapable of completely harnessing their retained knowledge. Through KM, organisations seek to acquire or create potentially useful knowledge and to make it available to those who can use it at a time and place that is appropriate for them to achieve maximum effective usage in order to positively influence organisational performance. In this context, it is opined that organisational learning (OL) is complementary to KM. OL is accountable for embedding what has been instilled into the fabric of the organisation. In this endeavour, a conceptual model shall be developed which shall seek to unravel the symbiosis between KM and OL through the management of knowledge-related assets, thereby ensuring effective organisation of ICT resources as well as workforce dynamics in the learning organisation.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management (KM), Organisational Learning (OL), Learning Organisation, Knowledge-Related Assets, Strategic KM, Operational KM*

Prefatory Reflections

In today's information-rich era, the avenues to unravelling information are boundless-if truth be told, we would not desire to be bombarded by further information. The conch of knowledge simply needs to be blown in the strategically momentous direction. This is essentially the found of strategic learning, which seeks to engender learning in adherence to eventual strategic initiatives that will, consequently, serve as a beacon light in fostering knowledge asymmetries that can throw light on the discrepancies in organisational performance. It is rather imperative for an organisation which dynamically deals with a rapidly transforming milieu, that it not only processes information efficaciously, but also creates information and knowledge. This would enable them to garner vastly rich degrees of management and leadership strategies.

It is a widely accepted fact that the conception, acquisition, and communication of knowledge and its robust liaison with the learning process have intrigued mankind for aeons. Although, this has broadened the horizons in relation to enhancing the re-utilisation of knowledge, it was not until the 1990s that a distinct domain called 'Knowledge Management' had been nurtured. Closely knitted to this perspective is the realm of organisational learning, which explores the myriad avenues for designing organisations, such that they possess the wherewithal to accomplish their role effectively.

Today 'Organisational Learning' and 'Knowledge Management' are universally noted terminologies in the business sphere. They are typically pursued by firms having massive budgets, who are convinced that the only competitive edge, the company of the future will boast of, is its ability to learn at a brisker pace than its competitors.

Table 1: Distinction between Learning Organisation and Organisational Learning

	Learning Organisation	Organisational Learning
Entities of Learning	Individuals	Concerted (Humans beings as social entities)
Existence of Knowledge	Both internal and external to the individual	Cannot be inventoried: Situational Process of Knowing

Firms which prudently invest in the genesis of new knowledge through research and development endeavours or via more informal learning processes, tend to outperform the enterprises which sip from the cup of knowledge created by others. This essentially underlines the verity that creation of new knowledge is critical from the organisational standpoint of 'learning' and 'conforming'.

It is thus of prime relevance, to fathom the dynamics of the 'learning organisation' and unravel the synergetic bond that dominates the emerging issue of knowledge management and organisational learning.

Rudimentary Conceptualisation

In today's hypercompetitive world, marked by skyrocketing complexity, uncertainty, and fast-paced transformations in the organisational terrain, the concept of the learning organisation is increasingly relevant for the twenty-first century manager. Thus, before a strategic liaison betwixt knowledge management and organisational learning is developed, it is imperative that we orient ourselves with the rudiments of knowledge and its striking managerial interdependence with the facets of a learning organisation.

Illuminating the Discrepancies between Organisational Learning and Learning Organisations

At the very outset, we need to elucidate the constructs of 'organisational learning' and 'learning organisations', which fundamentally differ at their core. Organisations are bound in their quest to unravel the doors of learning so as to thrive in dynamic and ambivalent circumstances. This entails sound decision-making faculties and would necessarily obligate enterprises to ameliorate its capability of learning new behaviours over a period of time (Hedberg, 1981). Fancy the present business setting as a field of honour-'organisational learning' would serve as a pioneering implement in the dubious backdrop (Senge, 1990). This would facilitate managers to frame decisions that would perennially secure the organisation and her long-term goals. To this end, Fiol and Lyles (1985) asserted that organisational learning is related to improving action through better knowledge and understanding. As cited afore, it is primarily about how the organisation learns and adapts. Notwithstanding, when individuals talk about 'learning organisation' they insinuate the learning that everyone in the organisation is engaged in, often on a continual footing. Interestingly, Peter Senge (1990) in his book "The Fifth Discipline" had clearly summed up the basics of a learning organisation. He emphasized that it is related to potential-elevation, insurance of competitive-deportment, complexity-appreciation, profound knowledge-base and focus on past and present experience.

On a simpler note, the learning organisation (LO) is but, an enterprise which discreetly or indiscreetly embraces the canons of organisational learning (OL), thus cultivating a conducive ambience for the latter to flourish. Table 1 aptly summarizes the fine distinction between the two terminologies:

Drawing the Line between Organisational and Individual Learning

Myriad scholars of organisational learning, in the past, have paralleled learning with varied agents, most frequently learning by individuals or learning by the organisation. Indeed, as noted earlier, the paradigms which identify organisational learning with independent learning by individuals, validate the premise that organisations cannot have quasi-individual thought processes, and that only human entities are capacitated to engage in learning by means of intellectual pursuit (Jelinek, 1979).

In a purely organisational context, learning by individuals is the archetypal domain of human resources, embracing activities such as training, nurturing skills, work experience, and formal education. It is evident that the success of any organisation is pillared on the inherent knowledge of the individuals who work for it. However, individual learning is only a prerequisite to organisational learning. The subsequent rung in the ladder is perennial learning. We have undergone a sea change, over the past few decades and change is more the norm than the quirk. Continuous learning throughout one's career has become indispensable for ensuring permanent stature in the workplace. Although individualised continuous learning is of cardinal importance, it is not sufficient to define the parameters of organisational learning. Thus, what does it mean to say that an organisation learns? Primarily, individual learning is incommensurate to model organisational learning. This, like a vicious circle, drives us to the concept of 'learning organisations'. A learning organisation assertively sparks, encapsulates, transfers, and marshals the avenues to knowledge, thereby

facilitating it to adapt to a highly dynamic milieu. This sums up the essential distinction between individual learning, organisational learning and the learning organisation.

Accentuating the Liaison between Organisational Learning and Power

An important issue that requires to be highlighted, is the close rapport that exists between learning and power. How does this relationship spring? This dragoons us to the concept of learning within the organisation, often labelled as '*learning by elites*'. Duncan and Weiss (1979), in this regard sums it up adequately, "Organisational learning thus becomes that process in the organisation through which members of the dominant coalition develop, over time, the ability to discover when organisational changes are required and what changes can be undertaken which they believe will succeed". The so-called 'elite' or 'dominating coalition' may be comprised of the leaders of the organisation such as the Chairman or Vice-President, or puissant members of definite groups, be it union leaders, political alliances or influential members of the board. Organisations, in this perspective, are regarded as oligarchic systems wherein a dominating coalition emerges and governs the organisation. It is in this backdrop that learning and power are perceived as being closely knitted to one another. The underlying assumption, however, is that the knowledge of the dominant and influential has the greatest probability of determining organisational decisions and changes. The same becomes vastly lucid, when charismatic leaders like Warren Buffet or Steve Jobs take responsibility over an organisation and actively change existing structures, overtly question values, or formulate new and challenging goals. Studies have revealed that a change in leadership often functions as a trigger of organisational learning, especially because, germinal changes are made, which had, for many a decade, not even been contemplated! Thus, the leaders, or the elite, serve as agents of learning.

Notional Foundations of Knowledge Management

People often say "He is full of knowledge!" But what exactly do they imply? Is it the fact that the concerned individual is nothing but a library replete with information and understanding? It is essentially a set of re-usable abstractions that assist understanding and render meaning to the decision-making process. We believe, 'knowledge' is the substantiated intimate credence within an entity or individual; this may either refer to the 'embodied' or 'explicit' avenues of knowledge acquisition. Knowledge, at its fount, is essentially tacit in nature-it is only through time, that such knowledge is developed and strengthened, either through trial or error or testing of hypothesis. It is more often than not, underutilised because "the organisation does not know what it knows" (O'Dell and Grayson, 1998). On the other end, explicit knowledge, which is relatively convenient in terms of identification, storage and retrieval, exists in databases, memos, notes, documents of the others (Botha *et al*., 2008). However, from a managerial standpoint, the greatest challenge with explicit knowledge entails the warrantability of people's access to what they require; that important knowledge is stored; and that the knowledge is reviewed, updated, or discarded.

With the evolution of both genres of knowledge, inter-disciplinary researches and studies are gaining immense limelight. The modern knowledge management practices share their roots with a plethora of disciplines and domains; possibly justifying the reason behind why an overarching theory of knowledge management has yet to transpire. Sveiby (1997) asserts that the concept of knowledge archetypally embraces the realm of epistemology-the philosophical study of the nature and conception of knowledge. Notwithstanding, on a recent note, computer science, cognitive psychology, pedagogy, computer science, information theory and brain research have also made their mark in this field. Nielsen (2000) and Swan *et al.* (1999) identified that the foundations of KM are bonded in an array of information technology systems and principles comprising:

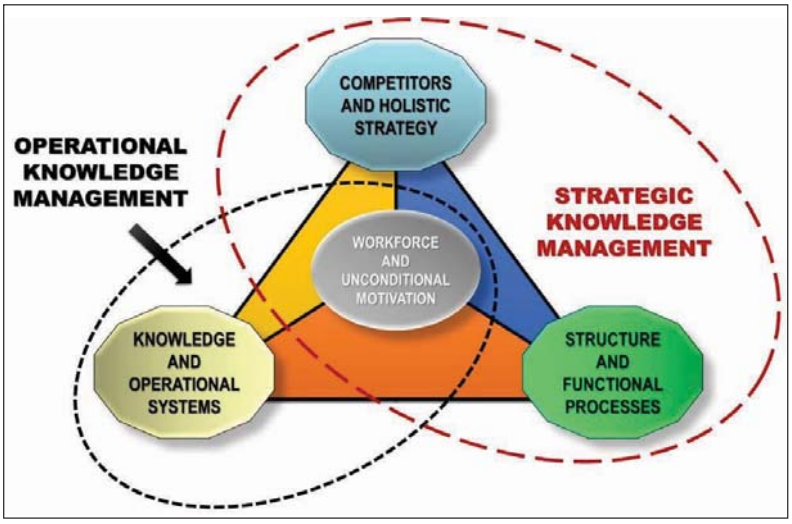
- Adequate Artificial Intelligence Mechanisms
- Business Process Reengineering (BPR)
- Diversified Information Systems
- Competent Information Management
- Versatile Expert Systems and Decision Support Systems
- Data Mining and Data Warehousing

KM owes a dialectic debt to BPR which emphasises de-layering and process-based organisations but eliminates the important forms of organisational knowledge embodied in middle management groups and embedded within functional and professional disciplines (Swan *et al.*, 1999). KM appears to have taken over this mantle of organisational knowledge. As Swan *et al.* also point out, many of the same groups and individuals who promoted BPR (e.g. Davenport & Prusak) have now turned their attention to KM as a more viable means of sustaining competitive advantage.

Foundations of Strategic and Operational Knowledge Management Processes and Systems

Knowledge management is, as noted afore, the cyclical process of planning, organising, motivating and controlling workforce, operations and systems in the enterprise to ensure that its knowledge-related assets are ameliorated and

Figure 1: Dynamics of Strategic Knowledge Management



Source: McInerney & Koenig, "Knowledge Management Processes in an Organisation" http://ridwanattaufiq.wordpress.com/2012/04/10/what-is-knowledge-management-2/

efficaciously engaged. Such knowledge-associated assets comprise knowledge in the form of printed documents such as copyrights, patents, manuals and varied form of intellectual capital. Knowledge warehoused in electronic repositories such as a 'best-practices' database, employees' knowledge about the optima-effective job performance, knowledge borne by teams who have been focussing on crucial problems and knowledge that is embedded in the organisation's products, processes and relationships also fall under the ambit of knowledge assets.

In order to measure the worth of such knowledge-related assets, we must assign a value on the knowledge possessed by individuals and contained within organisational processes. The impact of the knowledge asset and its value addition paradigm must hence be determined strategically to assess its value. Managing knowledge assets involve apperception, analysis and discernment of available and requisite knowledge as well as leveraging and safeguarding the organisational knowledge assets. It is further necessary to comprehend the effect of its use, current impediments to usage, and the plan of actions intended to utilise the knowledge asset.

The processes of KM embrace knowledge acquisition, cultivation, refinement, storage, relocation, mutuality, and utilisation. The KM function in the organisation effectively operates these processes, fosters methodologies and systems to support them, and motivates individual to actively partake in them.

As elucidated in Figure 1, one may think of knowledge management as an amalgam of two discrete approaches: Operational KM and Strategic KM. Operational KM (OKM) is rather the narrow route to KM, dedicated specifically to operational knowledge, which is primarily based on individual competence and know-how nurtured by skilled knowledge workers during their everyday endeavours.

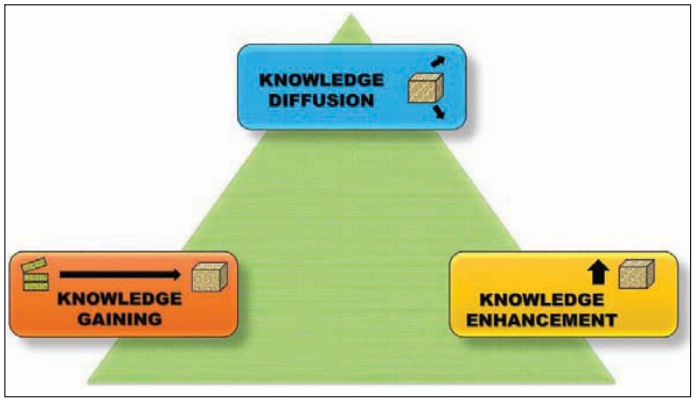
Strategic KM involves decision-making that is archetypally infrequent. Fancy undertaking a business acquisition, where every decision is of large value with little formal prior data to establish perceptions on; it further calls for business rationale, judgement and the balancing of qualitative trade-offs, to ensure successful acquisition of the enterprise.

Fundamentally, KM is by and large, an organisational enterprise that focuses on how and what managers can secure, in light of motivating individuals to participate in actualizing KM goals and engendering social frameworks that will kindle KM success by achieving its goals. This process may be cyclically represented as in Figure 2.

Implementing Knowledge Management in the Enterprise

There exists a pivotal bond between KM processes and the revitalisation of organisational processes, in the light of innovation, collaborative decision-making, and individual and collective learning. These enhanced organisational operations yield intermediate outcomes such as finer and superior decisions, organisational behaviours, products, services, and relationships. These, consequently boost organisational performance. Figure 3 portrays how KM

Figure 2: Knowledge Acquisition and Learning

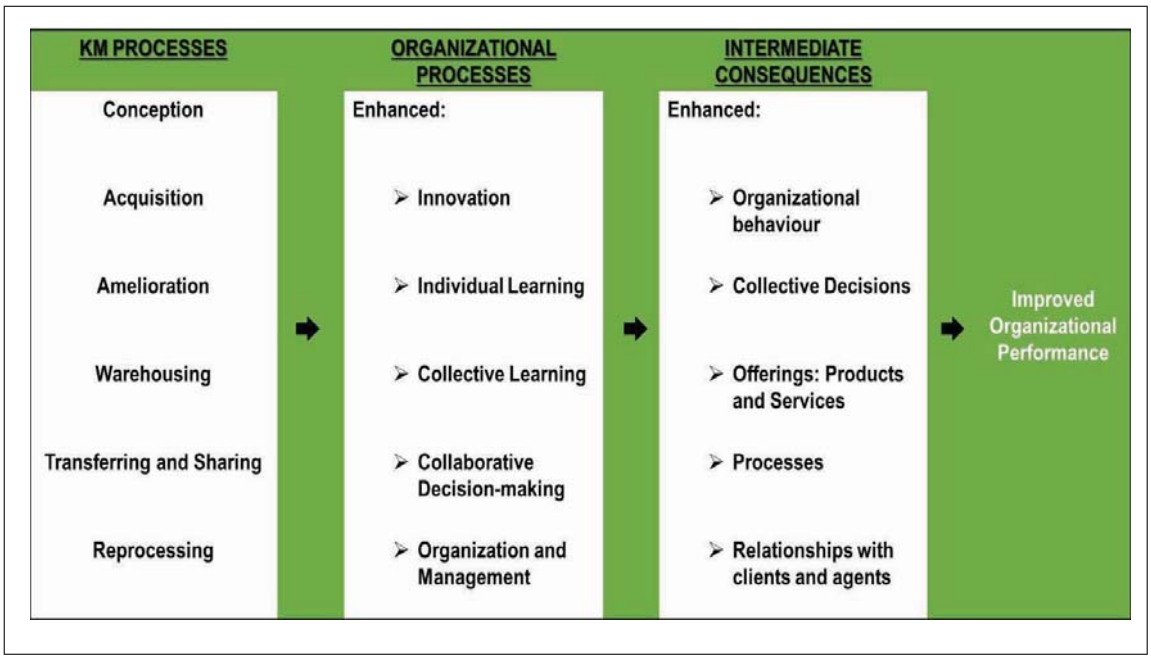


processes lead to effectiveness in the enterprise.

Developing an Integrated KM-OL Model for Organisational Effectiveness

The integrated KM-OL (Knowledge Management-Organisational Learning) Model is a modest attempt to link processes and strategies, while offering discrete initiatives at various stages. The model also adumbrates the relationship of information and information management systems to knowledge management (KM). It is a self-explanatory graphic which clearly exhibits the definite process that define the strategy for management to establish, divest, and enhance knowledge assets, by questioning the 'why' and 'when' aspects originating from organisational memory. It further lays out the strategies for sharing and retrieval of existing knowledge, with a profound eye on the managerial initiatives. The model attempts to maintain a prudent balance between individual and technology orientation. The strengths of this model rest on its strategic focus, which essentially puts knowledge management action into context. It is also worth

Figure 3: Knowledge Management Processes and Organisational Learning Leading To Organisational Effectiveness



Source: King W. (2009) "Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning" p. 4.

noting that the notion of "divestment" is included - something which is often missing from KM models. KM initiatives are the upshot of the response to tactical and strategic changes and demands. The proposed model furnishes an overview of the strategy behind KM. It is in fact, an improvement over the Knowledge Management Process Model, as developed by Botha *et al*. (2008), which fails to ponder over the 'what' aspect of Strategic Knowledge Management, when associated with Organisational Learning.

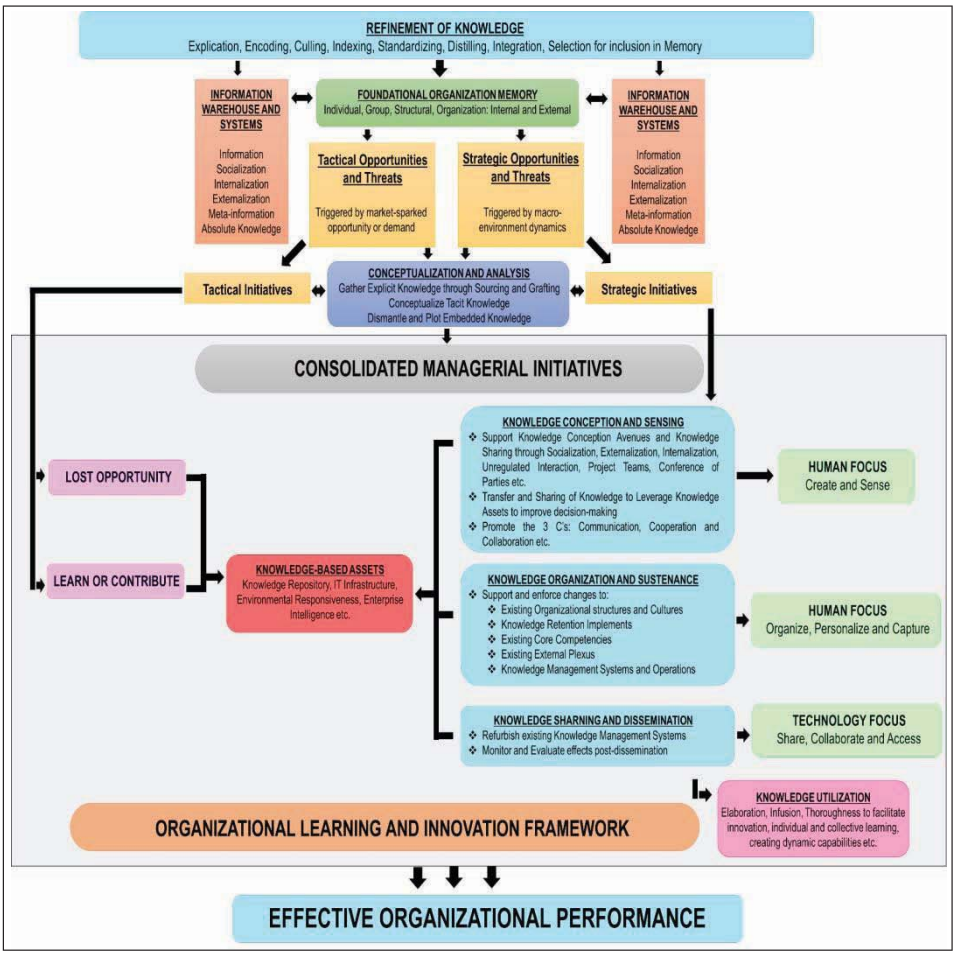
Before we forge ahead to the next construct, which entails the modelling of a KI matrix, we should essentially devote some time to the diverse processes and initiatives of KM. This is in direct correlation to the various facets utilised in the Integrated KM-OL model for organisational effectiveness. The various acts form the backbone of knowledge management processes as they sketch all aspects involved in the actual management of knowledge.

By virtue of the various initiatives or "acts", the integrated KM-OL model delineates a plethora of knowledge management processes, noted as follows:

Knowledge Creation and Acquisition

The much-appreciated ability to create new knowledge is often rooted at the heart of the organisation's competitive advantage. However, this issue is, at times, not treated as a component of knowledge management since it circumferences and overlaps with innovation management (Wellman, 2009). To ensure success in the interplay of learning and knowing, it is important that organisations support unstructured work ambiences in areas where creativity and innovation are crucial.

Figure 4: Developing the Integrated KM-OL Model for Effectiveness in Organisational Performance



Based on: Bukowitz & Williams (1999), Gamble & Blackwell (2001), Botha et al. (2008);

http://www.knowledge-management-tools.net/three-km-models.html

Knowledge acquisition is associated with the external fount of knowledge that concerns a firm. Such external knowledge sources are relevant and hence, one should holistically perceive the value chain (Gamble and Blackwell, 2001). The myriad sources for acquisition of knowledge comprise suppliers, competitors, partners or alliances, customers, and external experts.

Knowledge Analysis and Refinement

The notion that firms should categorise their knowledge assets is not one that has originated of late (Horvath, 2000, Bukowitz and Williams, 1999). Enterprises must organise their knowledge or memory into a manageable framework, so as to unravel the resources they possess at their disposal, while pinpointing their strengths and weaknesses. Markus (2001) assigns the role of preparing, sanitizing, and organising the organised knowledge to a "knowledge intermediary", which may be a knowledge manager or the actual knowledge impresario. In order for knowledge to be shared, either for reuse in a business setting or as a vital tool for knowledge creation, it must be prepared and presented in such a fashion, that it can be identified, retrieved, and fathomed by the user of the knowledge.

Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

Just like the essence of personnel selection, which involves selecting the right person on the right job and at the right time, knowledge management also has its mantra for effectiveness. It is principally about making the right knowledge or the right knowledge sources (including individuals) available to the right people at the right time. Knowledge sharing is therefore, possibly the most significant aspect in this process, since the vast realm of KM initiatives depends upon it. Knowledge sharing can be described as either push or pull. The latter is when the knowledge worker actively seeks to unearth diverse springs of knowledge, by virtue of library search, seeking out an expert, collaborating with a co-worker, while knowledge push is when knowledge is "pushed onto" the user via newsletters, unsolicited publications. Simply put, the 'pull' occurs when the inherent drive urges the individual to share and disseminate information; the 'push' is undertaken by numerous sources and agents like publishing houses or organisations, who wish to spread awareness about the momentousness of their information. Although we have previously discussed the three types of knowledge, it would be worthwhile if some amount of time were dedicated to the affiliation between these knowledge-species and knowledge sharing.

For explicit knowledge, certain issues have been substantiated:

- Asseveration
- Cognizance
- Ingress
- Counselling and Guidance
- Integrality

IT has also been observed as a vital constituent of this type of knowledge sharing, facilitating and lowering the cost of storage, access, retrieval, and diversity of explicit knowledge.

Sharing of tacit knowledge is related to socialisation and practice. KM must offer the means for this to take place by furnishing the right forum, supporting networks and communities and acknowledging unstructured work environments. Knowledge managers or the euphemised 'generalists', help in gaining a holistic understanding of the location of knowledge sources, while bridging the apertures between communities and networks.

Embedded knowledge sharing entails a process whereby embedded knowledge is passed on from one product, routine, or process to another. Several implements, which can help management fathom the effects of embedded knowledge and thus aid in its transfer, have been thrown light upon. Some of these include: scenario planning, post-action reviews, and management training modules.

Knowledge Reutilisation

Markus (2001) catalogues three roles in the reuse of knowledge. This overview is crucial from the perspective of understanding the versatile situations in which knowledge can be reutilised.

- **Knowledge Farmer**, who is the legitimate creator of the knowledge
- **Knowledge Intermediary** is the individual who packages and prepares the knowledge so that it may be inventoried, retrieved, and shared. This may embrace any volume of functions such as indexing, categorisation, standardizing, publishing, charting to name a few.
- **Knowledge End-user** is the ultimate recipient and user of the concerned knowledge.

In a nutshell, some entity has to produce the knowledge, someone has to make this knowledge available, and some individual has to unravel and use this knowledge. This is not just an implication of the capability, but also of the willingness to share, search, and retrieve the knowledge facet.

Modelling the KI Matrix: A Cyclical Relationship between Knowledge and Innovation

There also exists a cyclical paradigm to the creation and utilisation of knowledge. This relationship has been tapped into a modular framework: KI Matrix (Knowledge-Innovation Matrix). It has been elucidated how increased understanding of KM dynamics through the various knowledge-related assets such as current best practice in strategic thinking, can spark innovative breakthroughs. Current knowledge is explicitly portrayed and is processed by the cognitive faculties together with information about the specific issue at hand, leading to comprehension, decision-making and effectual action. This is sometimes accompanied by novel ideas or hypotheses, which, if supported, engender innovative endeavours and contribute to new-fangled knowledge that is added to the explicit representation of current knowledge. This relationship framework is diagrammatically portrayed through the following graphic (Figure 5), labelled as the KI Cyclical Relationship Matrix for easy understanding and utilisation.

Discussing the various Strategic Investments of Knowledge Management

Strategic investments are reflective of the company's choices to enable and enhance the processes such as knowledge sharing and to offer aid in defining which knowledge is relevant, that is, in line with strategic objectives. In fact, many a few business ventures focus primarily on one or the other of two broadly defined KM strategies-'codification' or 'personalisation' (Hansen *et al*., 1999).

Codification is primarily implemented in the form of electronic document systems that codify and store knowledge and permit its lucid dissemination and re-use. This strategy is based on "re-use economics", which stresses on investing once in creating or acquiring a knowledge asset and re-utilizing it as many times as feasible.

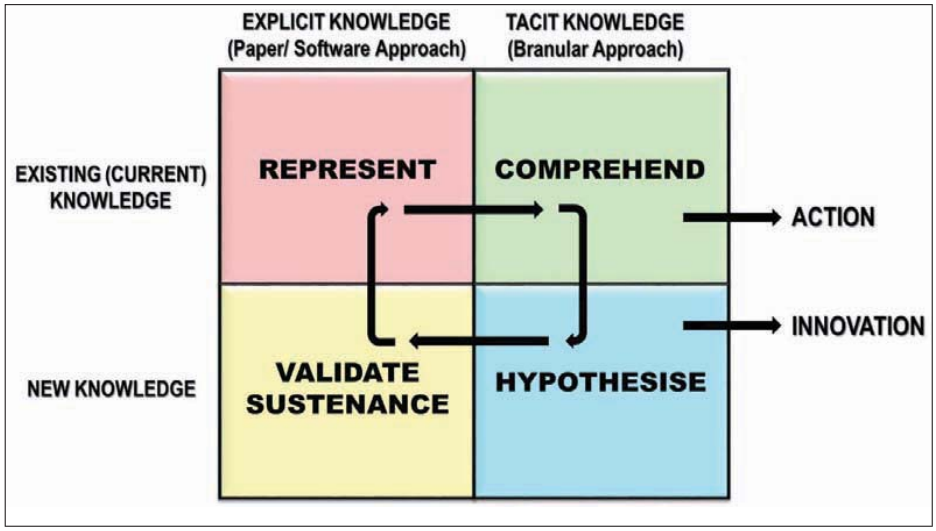
Personalisation, au contraire, focuses on bourgeoning networks to facilitate people-to-people knowledge transfer and sharing. It is based on "expert economics" – channelling individual expertise to others with less expertise that may employ it to further the organisation's goals.

Following are some of the avenues based on the firm's ability to serve as a scaffold for existing structures, competencies, knowledge retention mechanisms, culture, external network, and knowledge management systems, prior to its implementation.

KM and the Organisational Scaffold

Organisational structure is concerned with the archetypal hierarchical or matrix arrangement of lines of authority, communication, rights and duties of an enterprise, on the basis of the overall long-term and short-term goals of the enterprise. It determines how the roles, power and responsibilities are assigned, controlled, and coordinated,

Figure 5: The KI Cyclical Relationship Matrix for Knowledge and Innovation



Source: Lang I. (1999), Strategic Knowledge Management: What it is and why it is important? http://www.assistum.com/2002/solutions/knowledge_management/knowledge_management.htm What is it and why is it important?

and how information flows between the various tiers of management. In this regard we can classify the organisational structure into two categories:

Bureaucratic Structure

The manager must ensure that the organisational structure is not so rigid that it stifles communities of practice, where knowledge sharing and creation occur. Previous studies observe that flatter, decentralised structures are more effective for KM (Choi and Lee, 2000; Claver-Cortés *et al*., 2007; Chen and Huang, 2007). This is only logical, since knowledge flows would be less hindered in such a structure.

Matrix Structure

It is in fact a hybrid version of the functional and divisional structures and mirrors the manner in which people actually interact. Brown and Duguid (1992) advocated visualising the firm as a community of communities. Germinating intrinsic social networks is vital in this regard and can be influenced by managers through the following means:

- Gatekeepers or knowledge managers can be empowered to identify communities and their expert know-how, in addition to coordinating activities such as cross-functional projects.
- Project teams and other forms of teamwork can serve as the means to bridge the gap between communities.
- Shared physical meeting arenas or hubs can foster the growth and development of internal communities.
- Virtual socialisation and people finders can support communities of practice.
- Unified vision, objects, ideals, social gatherings and a milieu of trust can help diminish the distance between organisational members and communities.

KM and Organisational Culture Dynamics

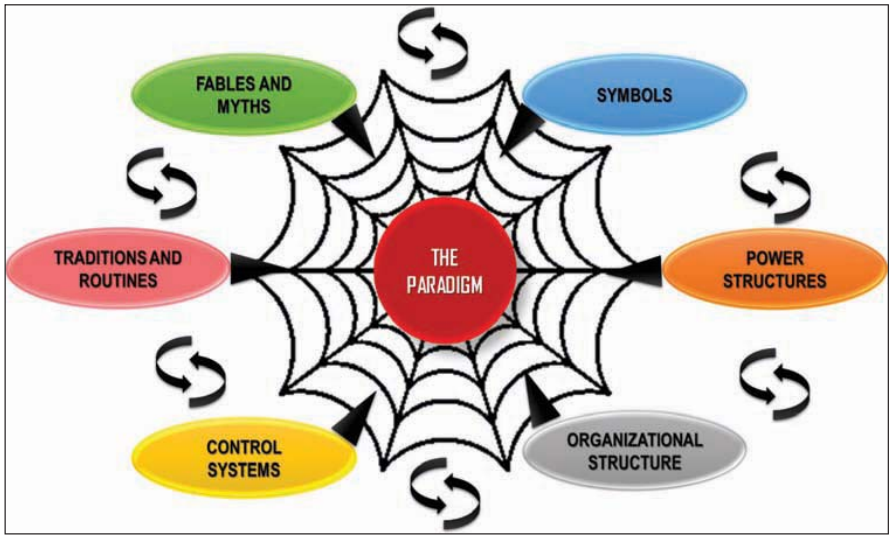
Organisational culture is simply an interplay of diverse elements and activities of the enterprise. These may blossom from conception or evolve with the breath of time. Johnson (2001) has fascinatingly propounded a model called the 'Cultural Web'. This is aptly represented in the Figure 6.

Change in organisational culture is a herculean process, which is likely to encounter significant resistance. Its recalcitrant attitude is attributed to its strong adherence to primordial traditions that are intertwined into everyday practice, and used as socializing mechanism for new entrants (Beitler 2005). It is, nevertheless, argued that despite all the hassles, managing culture is of paramount relevance.

KM and Knowledge Retentiveness

Knowledge retention is the simple process of harnessing knowledge in the organisation for subsequent use. Walsh and Ungson (1991) defined five knowledge repositories, namely individuals, culture, metamorphosis (procedures and formalised systems), active structures (formal and informal networks), and external enterprises. These are the avenues where knowledge can exist or be retained in an organisation.

Figure 6: Cultural Web Model for Effective Organisational Change Based on: Johnson (2001) 'Organisational Culture Change' http://www.knowledge-management-tools.net/change-culture.html



Knowledge retentiveness ability should be integrated into how the organisation functions. Indeed, a knowledge retention strategy as a part of knowledge management (KM) will identify the knowledge resources that are at risk and must essentially be retained, and then implement specific initiatives so as to withhold these resources in the firm.

KM and Extrinsic Knowledge Plexus

Knowledge management has a pivotal role to play in the broader, long-term process of building an external knowledge network. We have previously identified the potential founts of external knowledge as customers, suppliers, competitors, partners and mergers and acquisitions. But what role does KM have to play in the OL process of Extrinsic Knowledge Network? A methodology has been suggested in Figure 7, which should aid in the expansion of the potential network.

Figure 7: Steps for Expansion of Knowledge Sharing Network

KM and Knowledge Management Systems

One of the boiling issues of KM is that of Knowledge Management Systems. Special emphasis must be given when there is a focus on the impact of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in all KM strategies, especially for knowledge sharing and dissemination.

James Robertson (2007) argues that organisations should not cogitate in terms of knowledge management systems; although enhanced by technology, KM is not a technology discipline, and thinking in terms of knowledge management systems leads to expectations of "silver bullet" solutions where the action cuts through complexity and provides an immediate remedy to the fix. It is opined that the focus should be determining the functionality of the IT systems that are strictly interwoven with the requisites of the workforce who operate within the enterprise.

Consider the following quandary: How would the organisation determine the ROI on a discipline which is specifically germinated to subtly ameliorate literally all prime aspects of the organisation? This is the essence of Knowledge Management systems and strategies, which has its processes spread throughout the enterprise, thereby making it arduous to evaluate its returns from a specific discipline. The function of KM is essentially a synergetic one, especially when it plays a dominating role in organisational learning. If KM strategies and tools are properly implemented, it would be a noteworthy investment that would kindle efficiency, learning, innovation, and competitive advantage.

Conclusive Remarks

Knowledge management contemporaneously emerged on the maps of strategy consultants and conference organisers around 1995. It was the next big thing after business process reengineering and total quality management. It shared its roots with multifarious initiatives on competence management and organisational learning, gaining credibility from the daily news on the imminent arrival of the knowledge society and the perennially expanding Internet. This eventful past, which has also been discussed in the initial constructs, will indeed serve as a beacon light guiding the successful road ahead.

In the much vaunted "hype cycle" of business trends and fads, knowledge management has already plumbed the profundity of disillusionment. However as it edges towards maturity as a business discipline, it is spawning successors that are more relevant to our times, and that offer more direct business traction.

The skyrocketing evolution of our intensely networked global economy imperatively calls for the development of knowledge capabilities. The pioneers of knowledge management would definitely prune out five key frames for leveraging knowledge in organisations that are emerging as the successors to knowledge management, and that executives find relevant, peremptory and actionable.

Social webs feature primarily on this frame. Archetypal organisational charts and business process maps are, in the changing workplace, incapable of defining how work is actually performed in an organisation. Verity is that work and knowledge flow in often highly informal patterns, depending on individual idiosyncrasies. Social network analysis is being applied by many a few top-notch companies around the globe to gain insights into this "invisible organisation," and to design interventions that enhance the productivity and effectiveness of knowledge work.

It is also critical to establish a knowledge-oriented conjunction. In our global hyper-connected economy, the drive to commoditisation is relentless. Professional firms and organisations are cognizant of the fact that outsourcing and offshoring only work if there are efficacious knowledge-

flows betwixt companies; their clients are increasingly demanding knowledge transfer as well. In fact, engaging in knowledge-based relationships boosts customer loyalty and profitability. Relationships are the future of society and business, and rich knowledge exchange will be at their heart.

Coaction is also critical in today's fast-paced highly specialised knowledge-centric economy. Many of the approaches pioneered in knowledge management, such as communities of practice, are extremely relevant and useful. However what is critical now is a focus on fostering collaboration between individuals, teams, divisions, and organisations. Collaboration tools such as video conferencing and web conferencing are becoming orthodox, with companies prioritizing the development of skills and culture for high-value collaboration.

In a world of gargantuan information overload, we would only want to be exposed to information that is highly relevant to our work and interests. Among the many evolving technologies that support this, there are a couple of rudimentary practices that will be central to enhancing information relevance: Implicit Profiling (IP) and Collaborative Filtering (CF). IP learns from what we search for thereby striving to improve our useful understanding over time. CF permits the withdrawal of the insights and discoveries of similar-profiled people.

Knowledge work literally flows through an organisation. The next decade will bear testimony to the shifting of business processes of companies to effectual workflow platforms, which will even enable clients and suppliers to participate in the KM processes, creating powerful lock-in. The bourgeoning discipline of "workflow learning" integrates access to every type of learning (information, e-learning modules, or human experts) into the everyday flow of work, so these are available when required.

In essence, it is vital for us to remember that technology (ICT) is a critical component of KM today. Improving company performance in necessary change areas would imply that managers are metamorphosing their organisations from closed-minded, top-down, authoritarian behaviours, to open-mindedly handling mutual information flow as part of building learning organisation (Dimovski et al, 2005). It is never a solution in itself and should be utilised prudently as part of a holistic knowledge management strategy when infused with the dynamics of organisational learning.

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