

# Contemporary Management

- Dr. I. Anand Pawar
- Dr. R. Nageswar Rao



*Himalaya Publishing House*

# CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT

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# PREFACE

The world of managing people and processes continues to change dramatically. Managers are faced with the conflicting challenges of understanding and motivating an increasingly diverse workforce, being open and accountable to a wide variety of stakeholders, planning for the future in an increasingly changing environment and considering the ethical implications of decision-making. Contemporary Management offers a fresh and integrative view of the manager in the workplace in line with this changing environment. It views the manager as a person, working with people and within an organisation, and holding values and ethics. As such, modern issues such as diversity, cultural change and global management are given careful attention. Management is an integrated and sometimes intricate balance of dealing with people within an organisational context. For students, the prospect of managing others can be particularly daunting. Contemporary Management is written with the student in mind, with many current case studies, exercises and support materials included. In this thoroughly modern text, students learn that successful human interaction and communication are the real basis for effective and efficient management in business.

“Contemporary Management” by Anand Pawar and Nageswar Rao distinguishes itself through its authorship, comprehensive, current contents, rich and relevant examples and applications and experiential exercises provided in every single chapter. This number 1 best-selling text continues to redefine what principles of management texts should look, sound, and feel like. As an author team Gareth Jones and Jennifer George are uniquely qualified to write about both the strategic and organisational challenges managers face. “Contemporary Management” is a comprehensive text that surveys the theoretical underpinnings of modern management thought and research. Through a variety of examples from an expanded number of small businesses to medium and large companies it shows the reader how those ideas are used by practicing managers. A hallmark of this text is its focus on the ‘Manager as a Person’, which discusses managers as real people with their own personalities, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and problems.

Management has never been generally thought of as an exciting or thrilling activity. But this is mostly due to ignorance. Only a small proportion of people have direct experience of what’s involved in management, what managers are like, and the enormous difference effective management styles can make in the world. You would have expected the excitement quotient to have risen in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. After all, management is the consolidation of opportunity – and there can be no argument with the proposition that the number and scale of opportunities have risen with a speed and power that managers must surely follow.

It is interesting to note that no totally new conceptualization of management has emerged to completely replace the traditional perspectives on management. Regardless, managers continue to seek new insights into how to better lead, motivate, organise and control their organisations. It is interesting to speculate on whether the majority of contemporary management thinking and writing is advancing management thinking or simply educating the next generation of managers. In other words, are we really becoming better at management or simply struggling with the same issues managers

have always faced and simply defining new terms and descriptions of the solutions? Most likely there is a mixture of both. The text identifies a number of best-selling books published in the past two decades that are considered essential reading for students of management. Reading a selection of these provides a breadth of understanding of issues relevant to today's managers. Two common themes in this contemporary management literature are speed of responsiveness and individuality in orientation.

The challenges faced by managers today include downsizing, managing diversity, the speed and nature of change faced by individuals and organisations, and new technology. The globalization of the economy, a complex array of approaches to organisational design, the shift to a services orientation in the economy and the re-emergence of ethics and social responsibility as a prime concern of businesses all present significant challenges, and opportunities, for managers at all levels in all organisations. It is important for managers to see their education in management as a lifelong process. Most readers of this text and Study Guide will be managers in several different companies and/or in several different industries throughout their career. The broader an individual's understanding of the external environment, and the greater their depth of managerial experience and knowledge, the more value they can add to any one organisation and the more transportable their skills are across industries.

Modern managers are supposed to involve themselves in the process of — gathering, analyzing and disseminating information. It is interesting to note that Frederick Taylor, and indeed much earlier writers on what we now call management, noted the informational role of managers. Modern IT makes this faster and easier and provides access from remote locations, but the fundamental purpose remains the same. As we shall discuss in a number of areas throughout this book, it is important to keep the emerging technologies in perspective. As innovative as they are, they remain tools to use in the pursuit of better management of organisations. The technology itself should not become the end or drive the business.

All the above dynamics have give raise to a new realm of Contemporary Management. This book brings several issues, challenges, strategies, policies and practices emerging from management of modern businesses. Further, this book covers all major areas of management such as: (i) General management; (ii) Human Resource Management with special reference to leadership; (iii) Finance and Banking aspects by focusing on macro-dynamics of micro- finance and its governance; and (iv) Marketing— a dynamic field of management. This book has made an attempt to bridge the research gap in all most all the major areas of management and will serve as a novel book for not only industry but also scholarly academicians and students too.

We earnestly thank all the contributors of this book without whose efforts, this task would not have been possible to us. We also thankful to Sri Krishna Poojari and his team at Himalaya Publishing House and who has been very cooperative in bringing this book on time. Our thanks also to Mr. Shiva, System Administrator at AS Graphics, SR Nagar, Hyderabad who has helped us with the DTP work of this book.

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SECTION – A



**GENERAL  
MANAGEMENT**

# CHAPTER

# 1

## The Contribution of IT in Knowledge Management A Conceptual Study

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**Abstract:** *The contribution of IT in Knowledge Management is rapidly increasing in the competitive world. Every organisation intends to have hedge over other organisations in management of its operation efficiently. In this eternal and infinite ambient, our fate depends on our knowledge. Although Man is the most developed amongst the phenomena we know, this does not guarantees our survival. Rather than indulging in this relative perception, it is reasonable to assume that our ambient - the Universe - may soon bring in new challenges that stretch beyond our current capabilities. A rational strategy is to speed up both the development and transport of our knowledge. This can be enhanced by sharing and disseminating knowledge to adequate human resources, not to mention broader possibilities. The Knowledge Management efforts typically focus on organisational **objectives** such as improved **performance, competitive advantage, innovation**, the sharing of lessons learned, and **continuous improvement** of the **organisation**. Managing an organisation's knowledge more effectively and exploiting it in the marketplace is the latest pursuit of those seeking competitive advantage. The interest in knowledge management has surged during the last few years, with a growing number of publications, conferences and investment in knowledge management initiatives. The present paper focuses on the contribution of IT in Knowledge Management and its impact on organisational efficiency.*

## INTRODUCTION

Today, knowledge management (KM) has been overwhelmed by information technology (IT). Many of the IT disciplines previously mentioned, and the tools that they have enabled, have undoubtedly transformed the face of knowledge management for the better. Yet, most of the truly difficult barriers to successful knowledge management environments lie not in the problem domains that IT can address, but in those that Nonaka and Takeuchi initially identified: Who owns an enterprise's knowledge? Where does it reside? How is it transferred from an individual or group of individuals to others? What are the incentives for sharing? What is the impact of IT contributed knowledge to the organisations? It is the need of the hour that all these questions are to be considered for managing the knowledge organisations. Today we can say that while IT may be the cornerstone of an enterprise's knowledge management architecture, one cannot be successful at knowledge management with IT alone. There are too many other components outside the IT domain that must play an active role to ensure success.

The field of knowledge management is of great importance in the commercial world, in part because technological economies are increasingly knowledge based, Sallis, E & Jones, G (2002) emphasized on the growing realization that intellectual capital is the key driver in organisational success, and that an organisation's people are the locus of much of its knowledge Osorio, J, Zarraga, C, & Rodriguez, J (2001). "Knowledge management is not the activity only for resources called knowledge, but the activity to consider how all resources are utilized. One has to make the new structure by repeating new discovery and new creation rather than storing knowledge and considering the combination. Creation can be performed only by people's capability instead of a system." Apparently this expresses the disappointment to the information technology. However, if this is true, systems scientists cannot contribute to knowledge creation theory. Now, let us consider the definition of knowledge creation, especially what creation means, and roles of systems science and technology. There is a nuance of a completely new thing in the word creation.

In the absence of a universal and comprehensive definition of KM, it is common myth that KM and IT are conceptually interchangeable. However, KM means much more than IT and it is crucial to view them as mutually exclusive. This is because an organisation does not have to employ IT for it to manage some of its knowledge assets.

## KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information (Davenport 1998). It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organisations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organisational routines, process, practices and norms. All these components could be understood in the next page manner.

*Table 1.1: Knowledge Components*

Knowledge Types	Definitions
Cognitive Tacit Technical Tacit	Knowledge is rooted in actions, experience and involvement in specific context Mental Models Know-how applicable to specific work
Explicit	Articulated, generalized knowledge
Individual	Created by and inherent in the individual
Social	Created by and inherent in collective actions of a group
Declarative	Know-about
Procedural	Know-how
Causal	Know-why
Conditional	Know-when
Relational	Know-with
Pragmatic	Useful knowledge for an organisation

Source: Alavi & Leidner (2001)

## KNOWLEDGE WORKER

Veteran management guru Peter Drucker's thought transformed corporate management in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His ideas and writings are still considered by many to be the most indisputable in management. He will be remembered for many things, especially for his concept "Knowledge Worker" which brought revolutionary changes in the way the workforce is treated today in the corporate world. He coined the term, "knowledge worker" in his book *Landmarks of Tomorrow*.

He describes the character of knowledge workers-are not satisfied with the work that is under taken but they consider it as only a livelihood. Their aspirations and their view of themselves are those of the "professional" or "intellectual". They demand that knowledge become the basis for accomplishment. They rely on knowledge rather than skills to perform his or her job and who know more about what they are doing than their managers do. According to Drucker, "The most important thing about these knowledge workers is that they do not identify themselves as 'workers' but as 'professionals'.

Peter Drucker forecasted then that the management's new role is to make knowledge more productive. The core idea of his belief is that highly skilled people are an organisation's most valuable resource and that a manager's job is to prepare and free people to perform. Drucker pointed out, " We live in an economy where knowledge, not buildings and machinery, is the chief resource and where knowledge workers make up the biggest part of the workforce." Drucker commented, in his book *Post-Capital Society*, individuals are central to the knowledge societies. Knowledge is very individualistic and sustains the society. Increasingly, knowledge workers would have to learn to live and work simultaneously in two cultures- the first one, intellectual culture that thrives on ideas and

the culture is important, for individuals to transform themselves into good employees of knowledge-based organisations.

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management is a prerequisite for competition. It is the critical element for innovation. Theories elaborated in the 1980s by economists such as Romer (1986) predicted the shift to a new era in which knowledge is the primary source of wealth. Labor, land, and capital are no longer enough to generate wealth. In the same time, Drucker (1993) introduced the concept of knowledge worker and translated it into business practices.

## IMPORTANCE

The term KM was coined in 1986 as a core business competency practiced in most corporations, especially in knowledge intensive industries such as software and pharmaceutical industries. Expectations were high, mainly because people believed that a new economic era requires new business concepts. During the last decade, KM has had its ups and downs. The last few years have been particularly tough. Since 2001, IT budgets have been reduced drastically by the recession. Although, KM should not be considered as another IT application, it is still perceived as such. Consequently, KM practitioners had to abandon most of their projects. KM became a luxury that cannot be afforded in difficult economic times. Does it mean that KM is useless? Most people inside the industry, without going so far in their conclusions need to see and hear more about success stories. KM has gained dubious reputation because of too many failing projects. Nonetheless, most management experts would agree that KM can provide both strategic and tactical business advantages.

## FOCUS

Knowledge management is given much scope in knowledge economy. It is the systematic management of the knowledge. “Knowledge management” refers to a set of different practices to identify, create, gather, organise, innovate, transfer and re-use knowledge in spreading the learning process across organisations. Examples of such practices are identifying and managing intellectual capital, creating of teams to innovate and share knowledge, recruiting and retaining talented persons, reward and appraisal systems to motivate employees to do the best and so on. Knowledge-based organisations must understand these practices which will support the creating, acquisition, sharing and transferring of knowledge. Knowledge management focuses on getting better performance and results from knowledge workers. It is the most important task. Management practices pool the resources of the organisation to improve the productivity of knowledge workers. Inefficient work of managing authority affects the efficiency of an organisation both internally and externally. Thus, responsible management practices are always needed for the success of any organisation.

In this global knowledge economy, competitiveness is derived from the knowledge, skills and innovation of the workforce. Learning, training and the education system play a crucial role in the

nation's ability to prosper. Knowledge is the key factor in sustaining competitive advantage at both the organisational and national levels. Today, without knowledge workers, much of the world business came to a standstill. Knowledge workers account for more than two-thirds of the global workforce. In an era of knowledge workers, companies are increasingly gaining more value from them than they do from the physical assets or products. This is more visible in the internet world, in which knowledge workers are in high demand. At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, unskilled labour accounted for about 90% of the workforce, but today it is closer to 20%. As the countries across the globe morphs into a knowledge economy, the new workforce has become the kingpin to an organisational success. However, on the other hand, many companies are yet to figure out to manage this vital workforce.

## IT CONTRIBUTION IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Although, IT is important in its own right and remains a critical success factor in the development of an effective KM programme. Browning (1990) contends that, "information technology is no longer a business resource; it is the business environment". Since the 1960s, IT has become an all pervasive force in the business world, superseding more conventional tools for data storage and communication. It has been argued that IT has the potential to, "redefine the management and control of innovation on a global basis through the removal of barriers such as time and distance" (Egbu, 2000).

## USING IT FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The impact of each technology varies enormously from situation to situation. Several technologies recur in many knowledge management programs, partly because they are generic and pervade many core activities and processes. Internet/intranet/email, IT based database, Telephone, Informal Networks, E-Document & Reports, Knowledge based expert systems, Video-conferencing, Decision support systems, Knowledge maps and Groupware. The main ones are now briefly reviewed.

**Intranet, Internet:** The ubiquitous Internet protocols make it easy for users to access "any information, any where, at any time". Further, browsers and client software can act as front-ends to information in many formats and many of the other knowledge tools such as document management or decision support. Remember too, that the basic functions of email, discussion lists and private newsgroups often have the biggest short-term impact.

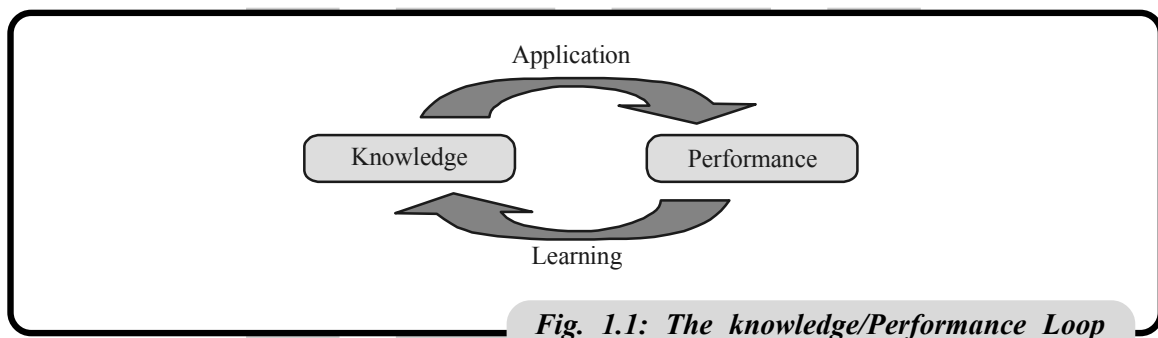
**Groupware - Lotus Notes:** What groupware products like Lotus Notes add over and above Intranets are discussion databases.

**Intelligent Agents:** The problem of information overload is becoming acute for many professionals. Intelligent agents can be trained to roam networks to select and alert users of new relevant information. Additionally, they can be used to filter out less relevant information from information feeds. However, in practice it seems that a well run knowledge center, such as those at Price Waterhouse, the best intelligent agent is still a human being!

**Mapping Tools:** There are an increasing number of tools, such as COPE and IDONS, that help individuals and teams develop cognitive maps or 'shared mental models'. These have been used by companies such as Shell to develop future scenarios and resolve conflicting stakeholder requirements. In addition, other mapping tools, such as those found in knowledge X, can represent conceptual linkages between different source documents.

**Document Management:** Documents, and especially structured documents, are the form in which much explicit knowledge is shared. With annotation and redlining facilities, they can become active knowledge repositories, where the latest version and thinking is readily shared amongst project teams.

**Knowledge Management and Performance in Continuous Development:** Knowledge Management consists of making sure that the teams and individuals have the know-how they need, to make their task easier and to improve their performance. Knowledge therefore feeds performance, and knowledge is also derived from performance. Performance and Learning can form a closed loop.



**Fig. 1.1: The knowledge/Performance Loop**

The knowledge/performance loop shown in figure-1 shows the close link between these two elements, and it is fairly obvious from this link that Knowledge Management and Performance Management will also be strongly linked. The more you know, the better you perform. If you learn from performance, you increase knowledge, if you increase knowledge, you improve performance. KM will be therefore be one of the engines that drives continuous performance improvement, and the Knowledge Management cycle should be embedded within the performance management cycle, whether this cycle is applied to a project, or to an operation.

Many organisations employ IT in one form or another to manage their knowledge. It is primarily used to store and transfer explicit forms of knowledge. However, IT is not just about computers. Tools such as video-conferencing may also be useful for the transmission of tacit knowledge as it is, in crude terms, a form of socialization (as defined by Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Capturing tacit knowledge and then storing it in ITcon, (2002); Egbu and Botterill; repositories is vital for effective KM. Many organisations have developed sophisticated methods for storing their intellectual capital, including patenting knowledge assets to protect trade secrets.



## FRAMEWORKS FOR THINKING AND ACTION

From the perspective of a knowledge architect, frameworks provide a convenient way of thinking about the role of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in supporting knowledge processes. Most frameworks map different ICT tools according to their function and whether they are used individually or by teams. One such framework is shown in Table 1.2.

*Table 1.2: Knowledge Transfer Mechanisms*

Transfer	Passive (Information)	Active (Knowledge)
Person to Person	Computer conferencing Expert networks	Meeting support Video-conferencing
Person to Computer	Document management information retrieval knowledge base	Expert Systems Decision Support
Computer-Computer	Data Mining	Neural Networks, Intelligent Agents

It is argued that KM is about mobilizing the intangible assets of an organisation, which are of greater significance in the context of organisational change than its tangible assets, such as IT. While IT is an important tool for a successful organisation, it is often too heavily relied upon as a guarantee of successful business. Edvinsson (2000) contends that such tools as the Internet are merely 'enablers' and that the true asset of an organisation is the brainpower of its workforce. He stresses that it is the intellectual capital (IC) of an organisation that is the key to success (as cited in Dearlove, 2000). Thus, IT is not just about databases or information repositories. "In computer systems the weakest link has always been between the machine and humans because this bridge spans a space that begins with the physical and ends with the cognitive". In McCampbell's IT in Knowledge Management opinion IT should be understood less in its capacity to store explicit information and more in its potential to aid collaboration and co-operation between people. Dougherty (1999) argues that IT should be seen as a tool to assist the process of KM in organisations. Such a process relies more on the face-to-face interaction of people than on static reports and databases (Davenport and Prusak, 1998).

Some organisations have developed software to encourage social interaction in organisations in the hope that a unique forum for tacit knowledge exchange will be established. For example, Teltech is a consultancy service offering KM services to businesses, including an Expert Network which brings together a network of thousands of technical experts to share and develop knowledge in technical areas holistic approach to integrating technology and people is Virtual Teamwork (VT) initiative connecting employees all over the world through IT, such as video-conferencing, Lotus Notes, electronic whiteboards and a corporate intranet. In a global forum, knowledge can be shared instantly which leads to the development of an 'empowered culture' and a set of structures that transcends traditional boundaries.

## CONCLUSION

The contribution of Information Technology is an important ingredient of virtually every successful knowledge management program. An ever wider range of highly effective solutions are coming to market, including a new generation of artificial intelligence solutions, new flavors of document management systems and various collaborative technologies such as the Internet. IT is becoming more sophisticated and is being recognised among construction organisations as a useful and effective tool for KM. The Internet and corporate intranets are especially commonplace in such environments, for the effective acquisition and transfer of knowledge and information. However, despite greater availability of more sophisticated IT, such as Groupware and Knowledge maps, perceptions about more conventional techniques for acquiring, developing and applying knowledge, such as telephone and face-to-face interaction, seem unchanged. Successful implementation depends, as always, on giving appropriate focus to the non-technical factors such as human factors, organisational processes and culture, the multi-disciplinary skills of hybrid teams and managers, and the already existing knowledge repository of prior learning - providing, of course, that it is well structured, accessible and gives you access to critical expertise.

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