KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

C.RAMANIGOPAL
PROFESSOR AND HEAD, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
VINAYAKA MISSIONS UNIVERSITY – SALEM

ABSTRACT

Are the concepts of knowledge management (KM) applicable to colleges and universities? Some would argue that sharing knowledge is being rationale. If that is the case, then the higher education sector should be replete with examples of institutions that leverage knowledge to spur innovation, improve customer service, or achieve operational excellence. Knowledge in research and development, improved learning methods, improved learning capacity, achieving competitive advantage in learning process. However, although some examples exist, they are the exception rather than the rule. Knowledge management is a new field, and experiments are just beginning in higher education at college level and university level in some areas. We believe there is tremendous value to higher education institutions at college and university level that develop initiatives to share knowledge, transfer knowledge if possible capture knowledge to achieve excellence in education as a business objectives. This study explains and explores the basic concepts of knowledge management as it is applied in the corporate sector, considers trends, and explores how it might be applied in higher education and whether higher education is ready to embrace it as a strategy. Also it narrates the possible benefits and relevant critical areas to be covered to celebrate Knowledge management implementation.

KEY WORDS: Knowledge Management, Strategy, Sharing, Knowledge Repository, Intellectual Assets.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management is the process of transforming knowledge in the form of information and intellectual assets into enduring value. It connects people, technology, and process with the knowledge that they need to take action, whenever they need it, whoever wanted to use, provided with authenticity. In the corporate sector, managing knowledge is
becoming equivalently protecting it as an asset called intellectual asset and as a duty to be considered key to achieving breakthrough competitive advantage. But what is knowledge? Knowledge starts as data—raw facts and numbers—for example, the market value of an institution’s endowment. Information is data put into context—in the same example, the endowment per student at a particular institution. Information is readily converted and captured in documents or in databases or any other relevant form may be in digital called e-format or printed; even large amounts are fairly easy to retrieve with modern information technology systems. Before acting on information, however, we need to take one more step to utilize it in useful manner. Only when information is combined with experience and judgment does it. Then it becomes knowledge. Knowledge can be highly subjective and hard to codify since certain information can be practiced but cannot be narrated, because, it includes the insight and wisdom of employees involved in the operation. It may be shared or transformed through email “best practices” memos or even sticky notes on a cubicle wall in a corporate environment. And once we have knowledge, we can put it to work and apply it to decision making or in any relevant purpose.

As per Knowledge management concepts knowledge can be classified into two broad spectrums as Explicit and Implicit Where explicit knowledge can be easily documented and handled according to the need of the user and can also be shared or expressed in formal method in use and language in practice. In an education environment, knowledge or research, formulas, rules and regulations, other practices considered as best. Explicit knowledge can be easily communicated, packed, transferred and even codified. But implicit knowledge is knowledge represents the know-how and information embedded within the minds of expert in the think tank. According to the experience, people differ in their perception, insights, craftsmanship they are using, skill they have tested and practiced, beliefs and value system they have long followed, ideas, and innovative thinking. Which may in different format such as Personal information, concept specific, information which are not expressible but enjoyable, and not easily communicable and transferable but can be applied? In higher education also it requires the road map of both explicit and implicit knowledge as in other organizations.

How does knowledge work in Higher Education?

Knowledge originates in individuals, but it is embodied in teams and organizations in educational sector also. Examples of explicit knowledge in educational sector are educational strategies, teaching methodologies, teaching and learning processes, innovation patents, teaching and learning products, and relevant services. Examples of Implicit knowledge in an educational sector context are skills and competencies, experiences, relationships within and outside the educational environment where teaching and learning components are in practice.

Knowledge also is embedded in work processes people involved and technology, and it exists in all core functions of any educational organization as well as in its systems and infrastructure. Effective knowledge management programs identify and leverage the know-how embedded in teaching and learning process, with a focus on how it will be applied for effectiveness. The challenge in knowledge management is to make the right knowledge
available to the right people at the right time where higher educational environment is not an exception.

Trends in Knowledge Management Practices

Several trends will shape the educational field of knowledge management is not far away but in near future

- Applications of knowledge management to enhance innovation and development in Higher Education
- Convergence of knowledge management with R&D oriented Higher Educational System
- Emerging technology solutions in the entire teaching learning process
- Implementation of implicit knowledge (rather than explicit knowledge) in Higher Educational System as much as possible
- Movement from conventional teaching and learning process to knowledge management Oriented Higher Education system

Technology Solutions for Higher Education

Most KM applications have migrated to intranet-friendly, Web-based platforms in Higher Educational Environment particularly at university level maximum if possible even college level at minimal. Due to technological growth, presently available solutions for search and retrieval, e-mail, collaboration, and so forth are much better today than earlier. As a single application for knowledge management in higher education system will be the portal—a gateway to applications that integrate collaborative tools, business intelligence, video lectures, e-learning materials, administrative information and unstructured text search capabilities, institutional marketing, creating brand identity, building community with prospective students and parents, becoming the gateway for finding information about university resources and programs, and providing a rich information environment for decision making. Portals started as a way to organize a variety of Web-based information sources on one desktop interface: a search tool, news feeds, links to favorite Web sites, content organized by topic, and so forth. University portals do the same thing, allowing users to customize their desktops to show information from a variety of sources within the university. The portal serves multiple functions for multiple users with one tool. Based on the need, the same portal can provide supports the vision of a new intercampus collaborative for teaching and learning with technology. That vision calls for uniting the collective interests and goals of the campuses in the system in nurturing excellence in the use of technology for teaching and learning.

The portal will improve the efficiency of knowledge exchange and deliver a set of shared Higher Educational objectives that include communications around best practices, a gateway to research on the use of teaching and learning through technology, Management development, faculty development, policy development, even Community Development and review & resource development. The portal provides the faculty members at the individual campuses with efficient, direct links to current knowledge about teaching and learning through technology among the campuses of the university system, nationally, and
Internationally to share expert knowledge irrespective of the time and distance. With help of this portal knowledge provided by an expert can be shared by a learning mind at rural irrespective of the geography or demography and may fulfill the dream of any government also become true that provides policy and support to education should be in such a way as “education for all” can be changed as “Knowledge for All” as a justice and equity. Being Portals as the technology tool of choice for knowledge, to create, deposited, share and transform are now being applied to support KM (and vice versa), where both Concept are about creating conversations, sharing knowledge, and building communities. Knowledge management has been about breaking down barriers within the Higher Education System as in organization in business where the learning community and teaching community are the customers.

As knowledge management grows as a corporate discipline, higher educational institutions will get gravitate toward a more holistic approach to KM. Research shows that although many business organization have begun to develop some sort of knowledge management capability, very few Educational institutions have implemented knowledge management programs on an introductory level. This study provides strategies which are successfully implemented as Knowledge Management Practices in business organizations which are relevant to Higher Education Systems.

Based on the practices in organization, implementing KM as a strategy in higher educational institution should be Learning centric than technology centric. Those learning centric initiatives can yield the best results as knowledge sharing can be made available at any where, at any time, to any body at effective cost, in effective manner. Any knowledge management program should focus on creating repositories for storing and diffusing best practices, focusing on operational excellence and cost reduction which may hold good for educational product delivery. Though organization’s primary objective is profit making or at least payback from these efforts, the real payoff may lie in applying knowledge management to spur innovation, which is a hidden agenda of higher Education at University level not in the name Return on Investment but Service to the nation or technically solution but politically economy. For the betterment of growth in higher education the applied knowledge management should good enough to encourage innovation in its R&D and product development functions at as all level of education. The University uses knowledge management practices for higher education which enable to make sense of emerging market trends, learners’ requirements and quickly puts that knowledge into action in the product development according to the trends, with help of industry expectation along with to the socio and economical changes.

**Advances in Working with Tacit Knowledge**

In business organization, protecting implicit knowledge is very crucial one, where as in educational system being a service in certain aspects, protecting implicit knowledge is not considered as a product secret but purely knowledge sharing for innovation and development. Even that can be protected with help of patent and copyright along with statutory legal system where in many countries it has been enacted in the name intellectual property rights and protect by a special law. So the though implicit knowledge is little portable it need not be treated as a competitive advantage. The ability to manage tacit
knowledge as much as possible and as early as possible, on the other hand, promises to deliver huge returns or services for Universities that learn to use it effectively, to eradicate illiteracy which is a sin. And also in the fast growing techno society, the mantra “Get ready to be updated or else you will be outdated”, becomes true.

**Applying KM in Higher Education**

Like business organizations updation become inevitable in higher education in the fast growing society to meet out the global competition. So it becomes vital and essential to use knowledge management techniques and technologies in higher education at the earliest. If Knowledge management implementation done effectively, it can provide a great service to this nation in the aspects of affordable education, enrichment of knowledge, the best decision making abilities, competing curriculum updation at global level, continuous research and development, effective administrative and academic services, effective utilization of human resources through knowledge sharing, uniform standard of delivery, even knowledge sharing, multiple group research contribution, the best report submission, opportunity to innovative minds, recognition to creative personalities, better chances to participants to contribute, collective decision making, greater flexibility in preparation, to meet out the current and future challenges in higher education implementations.

While implementing knowledge management in College or University level, it always a best practice to implement it as an institution wide approach to knowledge management can lead to exponential improvements in sharing knowledge—both explicit and tacit— which leads to wide benefits. For the Benefit of Higher Education Institutions crucial Key areas for application of Knowledge Management at higher educational institutions, which has been tested and proven in business sectors can be summarized in the following heads viz., any number of university processes and services: the research process in higher education according to the industry expectations, curriculum development process with industry interfacing, student and alumni services for the followers knowledge enhancement, administrative services and supports with effective accessibility and delivery of information with content, and strategic planning for continuous updation as per the global changes and challenges. To attain the maximum benefits in every key areas Knowledge Management implementation should be focused in the aspects of knowledge repository and knowledge portals than other areas.

**Research process in higher education according to the industry expectations:**

**Benefits:** Knowledge management implementation in the area of Research and Development in Higher Education can increase competitiveness and responsiveness in the aspects of research grants, Consultancy, Field contracts, and even commercial opportunities to support industry specific. Also these attitudes in research environment will increase time management for research aspects and decrease devotion of research resources in the aspects of administration. To encourage and offer, necessary facilities for interdisciplinary research, which continuous a chain of accessibility in existing research areas. Also, can accelerate, effectives both internal and external research areas at effect costs.
Applications: To attain the above benefits knowledge Management in the area of research and development Knowledge Management Application should possess a repository of areas of those Research interests within an institution or at affiliated institutions under that leadership. Also it should maintain repositories which can offer Research results and funding organizations with easy search capabilities to facilitate interdisciplinary opportunities, which reach the ultimate result as commercial opportunities for research results as per the need of industry expectations.

Every Higher Educational Institution inclined towards Knowledge management should have a knowledge portal, which is specific for research administration procedures and best practices related to: opportunities for funding, details for proposals, budgets, and protocols to be followed as per the statutory norms and institution norms. Details where, when and how about proposals and eligible notifications for award, accounts along with policy and procedures. Also portal should provide templates for Technical and financial report with policies and procedures to maintain time frame. Also it should keep details to access availability of internal services, resources, and staff.

Curriculum development process with industry interfacing, electives

Benefits: Knowledge management implementation in the area of Curriculum development process with industry interfacing, electives can be DEVELOPED with help of quality programs by identifying and leveraging best practices and continuous monitoring of the outcomes. Socio – technical aspects of curriculum revision and updating with periodical interval, well updated faculty development efforts, especially for new faculty will be the outcome. These areas can provide effective administrative services related to teaching and learning with technology, where learner centric is the key area to be assessed. Continuous monitoring and lessons learnt from experience with fellow knowledge workers and stakeholders provides higher and effective inputs for better progress and process. Also provide opportunity to design and develop interdisciplinary beyond departmental boundaries.

Applications: To attain the above benefits knowledge Management in the area of Curriculum development process Knowledge Management Application should possess a repository of areas of that contributes curriculum revision efforts that includes research conducted, effectiveness measures, best practices, lessons learned, and so forth, which covers the content modularized and arranged to facilitate interdisciplinary curriculum design and development.

Any repository at higher education should maintain pedagogy and assessment techniques, including best practices in use and updated, outcomes tracking for critical areas, faculty development opportunities with proper interval, and research in progress and present and also should provide accessibility and tools to analyze student evaluations to be updated each semester for lessons learned and best practices for all faculty on role. To attain industry institution interfacing without gap, the repository should serve as a bridge for corporate relationships to identify curriculum design advisory task forces, guest speakers, adjuncts, case study sites, and so forth according to the industry expectations.
Every Higher Educational Institution inclined towards Knowledge management should have a knowledge portal, which is specific for **Curriculum development process should possess a portal of information related to teaching and learning with technological know-how, including management development and faculty development opportunities, outcomes tracking with appropriate feedback yardstick, lessons learned, best practices in use, technology overviews for updation, and if any more with so forth. Portal should act as a Hub for information in each disciplinary area, including updated materials in every possible format, recent publications with complete data if required encryption facility, applicable research and key areas details, and so forth. Also the Portal for new faculty with supervisors and guidelines for developing curriculum, working with senior faculty to share their expert knowledge, establishing effective teaching styles with or without technology, advising do’s and don’ts along with counseling, supervising PhD students with ethics, and so forth.**

**Student and alumni services for the follower’s knowledge enhancement and Placement Benefits:** Knowledge management implementation in the area of Student and alumni services for knowledge enhancement and Placement can be developed to provide perfect services for students, ability and capability to provide the services with commitment to both learning and teaching community, also for alumni. This may provide efficient way of services in the aspects of counseling for all the stakeholders.

**Applications:** To attain the above benefits knowledge Management in the area of Student and alumni services for knowledge enhancement and placement services Knowledge Management Application should possess a repository of student affairs services for faculty to ensure all following institution under their umbrella to provide appropriate information to the allowed user.

Every Higher Educational Institution inclined towards Knowledge management should have a knowledge portal, which is specific for Student and alumni services for knowledge enhancement and placement services should possess a portal for both students and faculty at the institution so that they are well informed to advise students in the aspects of policies and procedures related to admissions, financial aid, registration, degree audit, billing, payment process, advising and tutoring, housing, dining, and other services if required. This portal could be with facility for personalization to individual schools or student groups to customize service offerings. Also it should provide support for career placement services to provide a one-stop service center for students, but also for faculty and staff to ensure they are informed. This portal helps for continuous updation with student affairs and provides information and accessibility to alumni and development services to minimize redundant efforts; capture contact reports; and link to research, curriculum, and career development efforts, through alumni students.

**Administrative services and supports with effective accessibility and delivery of information with content Benefits:** Knowledge management implementation in the area of Administrative and Support Services can provide benefits such as efficient and effective administrative services and ability to identify those improved efforts for decentralization. It may provide higher benefit in scrutinizing vendors, policies, budgeting with guidelines as its responsiveness and communication capability
Applications: Every Higher Educational Institution inclined towards Knowledge management should have a knowledge portal, which is specific for Administrative and Support Services, such as financial services, procurement, and human resources, which covers FAQs, best practices in use, procedures, templates and communities of interest to share information and serve as impetus for improvement efforts.

Strategic planning for continuous updation as per the global changes and challenges

Benefits: Knowledge management implementation in the area of Strategic planning for continuous updation can be developed to provide improved ability to support the trend toward decentralized strategic planning and decision making with Better information which leads to better decisions. Also supports improved knowledge sharing of internal and external information to minimize redundant efforts. Also offers ability to develop up-to-date and market-focused strategic plans, Shared knowledge from a variety of constituents to begin to create a “learning organization”.

Applications: Every Higher Educational Institution inclined towards Knowledge management should have a knowledge portal, which is specific for Office of Knowledge Management, emerging from the previous Office of Institutional Research and a Portal for internal information that catalogs the strategic plans, reports developed for external audiences, clear data definitions, presentations by executives, and so forth. This portal should accommodate information for external, including benchmark studies, environmental scans, competitor data, links to research groups, higher education research groups and publications, presentations by executives, and so forth. This portals should provide facilities for Monthly “market watch” developed in tandem with Admissions, Continuing Education, Alumni and Development, and others that document key trends and potential implications.

To attain the above benefits knowledge Management in the area of Strategic planning for continuous updation Knowledge Management Application should possess a repository of data related to accountability and outcomes tracking by monitoring assessments, performance indicators, benchmarking, and so forth if any other relevant areas required as essential.

Possibilities of Implementing Knowledge management in higher education
Culture is the primary key area in Higher education where Knowledge Management implementation can identify for relevance to implement in the aspects of readiness. Particularly in the aspects of the beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors that are unique to an Institution. Present scenario in Educational System is student Centric as customer centric in business organization. So, the phenomena has changed in Higher education system, from the state of “What we can provide to our learning community” to “What the industry expects from us and what the student feels as his area of interest” become the primary importance. And also instead of traditional class room learning to any where learning become the “mantra” of today’s learning community where the knowledge management implementation can get great welcome in the view of all the stakeholders. This is interpretation of the word “Culture” meant the word and it is developing a culture that is ready to embrace knowledge management as concern to implement.
As Higher Educational institutions launch knowledge management initiatives, they can learn lessons from their counterparts in the corporate sector who got success after successful implementation of Knowledge Management.

**Essential Factors to be Considered before Implementation**

- **Prepare a Road Map:** Any institution should sketch a road map which should be first step to be completed the moment higher educational institutions decided to go with Knowledge Management strategies.
- **Allocate and align Appropriate resources effectively:** Identify and chart out required human resources, financial allocations and measurement to attain success, and Technological support required which needs for knowledge management implementation.
- **Monitor technical progress and Measure the feedback in the aspects of economy involved, cost effectiveness, user satisfaction, and market penetration.**
- **Identify people with interest and involvement having potential knowledge about the outcome.**
- **Engage Pilot study and encourage identified people for implementation**
- **Keep ready a well defined and detailed action plan for the pilot that defines the process at every level along with people who understood the rewards and awards, and technology proposed of the pilot project team.**

**CONCLUSION**

Higher Education has significant opportunities to apply knowledge management practices to support every part of their mission, from education to learning society to research and development. The Implementation of knowledge management practices wisely is a lesson that the colleges and universities are learning all over again. This study concludes that the real success of Knowledge management implementation, if supporting, developing and nurturing new leaders in education were largely neglected until recently so too was the question of sustainability. It still is, yet sustainability is essential if a universities or education system is to continuously regenerate itself by the intelligent use of knowledge management. Knowledge Management about applying on the higher education, which a strategy to focus, on the KM is a key to integrate knowledge and skills into education system in universities.

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