

## GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

# Special Issue on Knowledge Management for Sustainability

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If knowledge sharing and collaboration lie at the core of providing added-value to either products or services, and ultimately in building and sustaining competitive advantage, can we improve the knowledge sharing and generating process? The aim of the special edition is to contribute to the ongoing debate on how knowledge assets impact organizational performance, examine the characteristics of such value generating processes, assess factors which affect the process of building organizational capabilities and competencies and look at how organizations translate specific capabilities into competitive sustainable advantage.

The following papers examine the relationships between knowledge, learning, capabilities, innovation and competitive advantage in different forms of organization: clusters, networks, regions, as well as practitioners who are working towards designing knowledge management models and systems that are closer to the needs of the ultimate users and the organization needs and requirements.

In this special edition of the Journal, learned colleagues from around the world seek to articu-

late the realities of knowledge management in a number of different contexts. Furthermore, the special issue offers researchers and practitioners the most recent concepts, methodologies, and techniques in this important field of enquiry.

The first paper titled 'Case study of an organization trying to reimagine its place in the supply chain: transformation towards industrial sustainability' explores the applicability of different frameworks on organizations seeking to become more sustainable. The paper proposes an overview of existing frameworks, highlighting their advantages and limitations to support academics and industrial users in their choices on gravitating towards industrial sustainability, and highlight the significance of experimentation and collaboration on sustainability knowledge on the path to change.

Paper two titled 'Organizational Knowledge Management for Defect Reduction and Sustainable Development in Foundries', presents a novel framework for creation, storage and reuse of product specific process knowledge within a continual process improvement environment, in order to achieve sustainable

development within the Foundry industry. The framework is reviewed taking into consideration theoretical perspectives of organizational knowledge management as well as addressing the challenges concerning its practical implementation.

In the third paper titled ‘The use of Virtual Environments for knowledge sharing in Distance Learning education, with a view to informing industry’, the effectiveness of the virtual environment as a knowledge transfer/sharing tool is examined in higher education. The authors highlight a number of valuable lessons and limitations emerging from their own research in the use and implementation of virtual environments to support distance-learning students on a MSc programme, that can be transferred to industry seeking to implement virtual learning and development platforms for a globally dispersed workforce.

The final paper titled ‘Open Innovation Models for Knowledge Driven Food and Packaging Manufacturing’, proposes a novel methodology and knowledge networking platform that places customers firmly in the prod-

uct development loop. The platform seeks to integrate both manufacturing and distribution to create an open innovation environment for both the design of new food products, but also to enhance manufacturing and distribution processes to better meet customization and sustainability.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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