Chapter 6

Augmenting Transcultural Diffusion through Knowledge Management: The Critical Role of Internal Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses the enabling role of internal marketing in adoption of knowledge management in the non-profit sector. The chapter considers the novel concept of transcultural marketing that strengthens transcultural diffusion and discusses the cultural complexities of the non-profit sector and the cultural barriers requiring consideration in the adoption of knowledge management. Transcultural marketing encompasses the promotion and development of oneness through diffusion of transcultural ideas and technologies from diverse philosophies within the one environment while respecting and embracing diversity in thinking. The chapter presents the case of a large charitable non-profit sector firm and then offers specific discussion on the knowledge management culture and the role of internal marketing in implementation. This chapter advances understanding of the relationships of knowledge management, the role of internal marketing in generating, sustaining, and strengthening transcultural diffusion of knowledge in nonprofit firms and offers a basic framework of “Must Have” and “Nice to Have” for Knowledge Management implementation in not for profit organizations. Trans-cultural diffusion is the dissemination and exchange of cultural rudiments including ideas, styles, and technologies, and is deeply embedded in the success and philosophy of knowledge management.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the enabling role of internal marketing in the adoption of knowledge management (KM) in the non-profit sector (NFP). It considers the novel concept of transcultural marketing which strengthens transcultural diffusion and the cultural complexities of the NFP sector and the cultural barriers requiring consideration in the adoption of KM. Transcultural marketing encompasses the promotion and development of oneness through diffusion of transcultural ideas and technologies from diverse philosophies within the one environment, while respecting and embracing the diversity in thinking. Previous authors have suggested oneness and the promotion of oneness as vital fundamentals of internal marketing which is an essential element of performance and quality delivery for any firm. This chapter will advance understanding of the relationship between KM and the role of internal marketing in generating, sustaining, and strengthening transcultural diffusion of knowledge in nonprofit firms. Transcultural diffusion is the dissemination and exchange of cultural rudiments including ideas, styles, and technologies and deeply embedded in the success and philosophy of KM.

The scope of this chapter is to examine the key enablers of KM in NFPs, including the cultural barriers of KM and reinforce and clarify the key role of internal marketing in its implementation (IM) using a single-case methodology. Several interviews were conducted within the case ensuring the capture of rich and reflective data (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1999). The single case was chosen as it offered the following: 1) a good mix of volunteer, part-time, and full-time staff reflecting a diverse workforce; 2) offered regional, national, and international representation; and 3) maintained a very strong clear social mission. Collectively, these factors aid in clearly examining culture and the elements of KM and internal marketing.

The classification of NFPs has encountered definitive difficulties with much of this related to the many differing practices, goals and cultures (Crossan & Hulland, 2002; Corssan, Lane & White 1999, Salamon & Anheier, 1992, 1996), highlighting the diversity of these firms. Depending on the research discipline, the NFP classification has differed, including dimensions such as size, employees, turnover, funds raised, tax exemption status, and social mission (Salamon & Anheier, 1996). Interestingly, in the NFP literature firms have distinct operating practices which creates differing challenges, cultures and practices (Raymond, 1985). As NFP firms attempt to provide services to all that need them, factors such as geographical spread and regional coverage creates different challenges for communication channel management, service delivery, staff management, and dissemination of information. Operationally, national, state and local legislative, taxation, and legal requirements differ across state and international boundaries with these complexities further contributing to culture and practice.

KM implementation in an NFP aims to capture and embrace the diverse volunteer and employed workforce as knowledge workers and create an innovative process of KM. This chapter will examine the role of internal marketing in developing this cohesive and untied approach to knowledge capture, storage, renewal, and retrieval. This chapter develops transcultural marketing using internal marketing principles applied to the diverse workforce of NFPs and discloses ways to target and engage the differing cultures and perspectives of each worker segment.

The chapter will proceed with discussing IM, KM, and culture, and will present the case of a large charitable NFP and subsequently offer specific discussion on the KM culture and the role of IM in implementation. The chapter will conclude with an implementation framework that considers culture and IM in KM implementation.
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