Chapter V

Knowledge Management and Knowledge Management Systems

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Editors’ Notes

Deniz, Yeliz, and Gerald go a step further in this chapter. Given the contribution of the previous two chapters, the knowledge management pillar of our investigated intelligent learning infrastructure is further analysed. The authors provide a balanced theoretical discussion as well as a demonstration of several technologies. The key conclusion is the fact that knowledge management strategies are the critical “tool” for building competencies and performance based on KM theories and applications. As we stated in our preface, a book titled Knowledge Management Strategies: A Handbook of Applied Technologies has been scheduled for publication by Idea Group Reference.

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Abstract

Organizations are fast realizing that knowledge management (KM) is critical to achieve competitive sustainability. However, mere realization that KM is critical does not ensure a smooth road to success. Fifty to seventy percent of KM initiatives reportedly fail. One of the main reasons of this failure is the lack of understanding of effective dimensions of KM implementation. In this chapter, we propose an integrated framework for knowledge management. Special attention is given to how knowledge management systems should be positioned within organizations. Examples of successful integration are provided by three case studies from different organizations.

Introduction

In recent years, the importance of knowledge as a source of sustainable competitive advantage is well established in the management studies (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) and has been emphasized by a myriad of authors (Drucker, 1993; Leonard-Barton, 1992; Nelson, 1991; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Quinn, 1992; Sveiby, 1997; Toffler, 1990). Knowledge is an indispensable resource to create value for the next generation of society, industries, and companies.

This growing realization of knowledge as the source of sustainable competitive advantage quickly popularized knowledge management (KM). As early as 1997, 80% of large U.S. corporations reported having knowledge initiatives (KPMG Consulting, 2000). Technological innovation has been cited as the major reason for the current interest in KM in organizations (Covin & Stivers, 1997).

The mere realization that knowledge is critical does not ensure a smooth road to success. Ambrosio (2000) reports that at least half of all KM initiatives fail; some peg the failure rate as high as 70%. There are several reasons for this failure. For the most part, the implementation of knowledge management is a tough subject to pin down for organiza-
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