Chapter XIII

The Culture of the Knowledge Advantage (K-Adv): A Holistic Strategic Approach to the Management of Knowledge

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Abstract

This chapter introduces a concept ‘the knowledge advantage’ (K-Adv) that describes a model in which knowledge leadership provides the setting in which an organisation’s knowledge vision can be developed and activated. This is supported by a people infrastructure that allows people to effectively create and share knowledge. This infrastructure is further supported by an information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure. This chapter also provides examples of how the K-Adv can be developed, and several tools are illustrated for this purpose. These include using a soft systems methodology (SSM) approach as part of developing the knowledge leadership
vision and how the K-Adv can be used for benchmarking at both a course and fine-grained level. The contribution that this chapter makes is to provide some strategic and practical tactical tools that companies can use to develop their competitive advantage.

## Introduction

Mobilising the necessary intellect for developing and maintaining a firm’s core competences requires high levels of sensitivity to the needs, motivation, and power (in terms of available energy) of humans to unleash their creative energies. This demands a change in perception of the way that firm’s maximise their capacity to deliver outcomes from that embedded in an extractive resource-based view of the firm.

Sound business strategy for organisational sustainability is inextricably linked to knowledge management, innovation diffusion, change management, leadership, and building organisational competencies. This chapter presents a well-supported framework for achieving a knowledge advantage that could be of pivotal value to organisations that presently lack an understanding of how leadership, ICT, and workplace culture underpinned by supportive organisational processes can have a major impact upon their becoming a learning organisation that effectively manages its knowledge assets. For those organisations with high-level strategic foresight that enhances their competitiveness from a knowledge perspective, this model provides a useful checklist for application as a benchmarking model.

The approach proposed in this chapter is to concentrate on the concept of a knowledge culture as delivering competitive advantage and examine how a knowledge advantage can be culturally achieved through holistic management of knowledge. The chapter is structured as follows. First we explain the knowledge advantage (K-Adv) concept and then provide an overview of the model to be explored. This is followed by a brief discussion of the implications of commitment on deploying the K-Adv. We then discuss how the K-Adv model can be deployed, and we discuss soft systems methodology (SSM) as a tool for identifying stakeholders and thence knowledge that they can contribute. We follow this with discussion of a second tool, how benchmarking can be used with the K-Adv model, and we continue with a discussion of a generalised maturity model that can be used to provide a course-grained benchmark of the maturity stage of an organisation in deploying its K-Adv. We summarise the chapter with conclusions and recap the chapter’s content.

## Learning Objectives

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