Chapter 7
Strategic Knowledge Management: A University Application

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ABSTRACT
The under-performance in the creation, diffusion, and utilization of new knowledge represents a specific weakness in knowledge transfer from science to technology in the European Union. The extent of this weakness is reflected in the relatively low numbers of citations and patents in scientific work in comparison to the United States. Comparing these numbers indicates to what extent the linkage between patented inventions and science in European Union countries is weak.

This chapter set several objectives. The initial aim of this chapter is to clarify to what extent the eclectic use of terms: “Knowledge Sharing,” “Knowledge Transfer,” “Technology Transfer,” and “Knowledge Management,” relate to knowledge era. As these terms do not form an organizing concept and thinking framework, the second goal of this chapter will be to analyze and clarify these concepts. This chapter will describe their place within the Knowledge cycle in order to map their role and interrelation between the terms.

Clarification of the roles and interrelationships will crystallize the contribution to Knowledge Management Strategy in university application have led to the conclusion that Knowledge Management is the appropriate organizing concept and framework for laying the foundations of the Knowledge Era Economy.

The European Union is at a crossroads where only decisive policy actions will ensure that the route towards increased long-term economic growth and prosperity is the one that is followed […] this probably reflects an under-performance in the creation, diffusion, and utilization of new knowledge over recent years (European Commission, 2007).

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INTRODUCTION: THE GAP

In Europe, as in other parts of the world, there is a deep understanding of the importance of knowledge and innovation in science. Policy-makers understand the need to bring knowledge to the forefront not only in words but also in decisive actions. In addition to policy-makers, others have also recognized the problem. According to Giligen (2007), European OECD economies are suffering from sclerosis: the therapy is expected from science, according to The European Union’s policy (Lisbon Agenda) and its Seventh Framework Program (FP7) for the funding of research and technological development in Europe.

This need for “therapy” is also reflected by the ministers of the OECD countries who have asked the OECD to develop “a broad-ranging innovation Strategy to build on existing work, address remaining knowledge gaps, and above all provide a cross-disciplinary mutually-reinforcing package of policy elements and recommendations to boost innovation performance” (OECD Innovation and Growth, 2007).

Furthermore, the European Cooperation in Science and Technology Research (COST) has established some targeted actions for “understanding investment in research, development, and innovation, which are a major driver of long-term economic performance.” There is also full understanding that policy-makers in Europe have “an urgent need for evidence-based policy recommendations to promote appropriate strategies for the governance, incentives, and conduct of scientific research and of knowledge transfer between public and private entities” (STRIKE, 2007). The main objective of this STRIKE action is “to improve and accelerate the understanding of the process of scientific and technological development and of importance of the transfer of scientific and technological developments to markets and into economic development” (STRIKE, 2007).

Once the challenge is crystal clear and well recognized, it would appear that we are half way towards the solution. The big question we are facing is: What would be the right steps, the right strategic program for enhancing and sustaining knowledge, innovation, global business, and growth?

One approach is to improve outcomes, to some extent, by enhancing application of well-known management strategies even though this would be “more of the same.” An alternative method would be to crystallize an appropriate strategy for a knowledge-based economy. Although not many policy makers and countries have adopted an innovative and more challenging approach, this would seem to be the right solution. Every new MBA graduate knows that the owner of a car factory should manage car components as the most important resource of the business. If one owns a bank or insurance company one should concentrate on managing money resources. Why then does the knowledge-based economy not deal with knowledge as its most important resource? Why do knowledge organizations (universities, research centers, governments, etc.) keep on managing “bricks and walls,” “car components,” budget, and manpower?

Is it feasible for science policy leaders to expect to build a knowledge-era without proper infrastructure, foundations, and in-depth understanding of the adequate culture, tools, and process for driving forward knowledge processes?

Is it reasonable to expect to pick ripe fruits of knowledge as a result of a large scale inter and intra-organizational cooperation (patents) while striving to advance new business and jobs (economic prosperity) out of thin air? We expect a willingness to cooperate and to collaborate among people and organizations without setting up a sharing culture.

To bridge the gap of using old management strategies in a knowledge era we should look for more adequate management tools. Over the last decade, fresh management approaches have been implemented in global organizations and technological companies worldwide. Policy makers and
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