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AN OVERVIEW OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

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Abstract

Knowledge management (KM), both as a practice and as a discipline, is struggling with definitional and foundational issues. Investigation into several Knowledge management frameworks, many developed by corporations, indicates that a new, comprehensive framework may be necessary for knowledge management initiatives to forge ahead in an orderly fashion. A robust framework would benefit practitioners as well as academics on multiple fronts. It would provide practitioners with a checklist for implementing KM projects and clear some confusion regarding the interrelationships between various facets of KM, viz. technology, culture, people, content, processes, and structure. On the academic front, in the absence of a robust framework, all contemplation about the field of KM may be nothing more than mythology. In the coming years, practitioners and academia alike may be faced with the ultimate knowledge irony: that their efforts to manage knowledge are themselves based upon faulty knowledge principles.

The paper discusses twelve KM frameworks that provide a glimpse of the breadth of KM concept. These include nine academic and three corporate frameworks. Synthesizing these frameworks, and infusing information found in the literature, a dynamic framework is proposed, which incorporates the following facets of KM:

- *Knowledge generation, both from within the organization and external to the organization.*
- *Barriers that hinder the management of generated knowledge, which may be cultural, behavioral, structural, and strategic.*
- *KM processes, such as knowledge conversion, its storage and retrieval, its transfer, and its subsequent application, are discussed in light of KM enablers such as organization's critical relations (with employees, customers, competitors, and partners), its IT architecture and its KM infrastructure.*
- *Benefits and outcomes of implementing KM systems.*

This research represents a step toward developing a comprehensive knowledge management framework that may be adopted by practitioners and academics as a foundation for future research.