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Barriers and facilitators to the generating activities of knowledge in R&D groups: a qualitative approach

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Abstract

Knowledge Management (KM), is a discipline that is gaining momentum as a result of the increasing importance of knowledge in all areas of the economy. Quantum leap developments in Information Technology, opens new ways for capturing, storing, sharing and reusing valuable knowledge. Nevertheless, the application of these technologies and the concepts associated to this discipline are providing inferior results (less than expected results). Social Science literature describes the existence of barriers that inhibit the management of this key resource, which is in the domain of the human being or knowledge worker (Barson *et al.*, 2000; Ross Armbrrecht *et al.* 2001; Gibbert y Krause, 2001; De Long y Fahey, 2000; McDermott y O'Dell, 2001).

As a result of this, seems appropriate the need to identify and diagnose the barriers and facilitators of an organization, as a first step in the design and application of effective strategies to manage knowledge. Oddly enough, there is little research or commercial tools dedicated to answer or help in this matter, only to find research or initiatives that pretend to give answers from a general, instead of more custom view of the issue. Also, the application of this concepts seem to be focused on large organizations, creating a vacuum on experiences related to R&D groups (Brown *et al.* 2002), which are extremely intensive in knowledge, highly dependent on this resource

and a great source for research in this matter. The flexible and changing character of these groups and the uncertainty surrounding its activities, apparently makes the management of its knowledge a difficult endeavor and could explain this vacuum.

The present study approached the study of the barriers and facilitators to KM in R&D groups by means of a discussion group formed by directors of groups of investigation of the University Polytechnic of Valencia, the University of València and the CSIC. The results that were obtained showed that the main barriers and facilitators to the KM find them in aspects related with the running and management of the groups, aspects these determinates culturally.

Keywords: Knowledge Management; R&D groups; Organizational Culture; Qualitative

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