

Special Issue on: "Knowledge Sharing within Knowledge Intensive Organizations"

Guest Editors:

Chris Kimble, Euromed Management, France

Isabelle Bourdon, Université Montpellier 2, France

Full description with references:

The role that knowledge plays in an organization became a focus of attention in the 1990s with the work of Alvesson (1993), who was among the first to discuss the concepts of knowledge-intensive work and knowledge-intensive firms, and Blackler (1995) who looked at the role of knowledge, knowledge workers and organizational competencies in knowledge-intensive firms.

Interest in the role of knowledge as a source of competitive advantage was spurred on by Nonaka (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) with his theory of knowledge creation and transformation, Grant (1996) and Spender (1996) with their work on the knowledge based theory of the firm and Zack (1999a; 1999b) with his discussion of the strategic implications of knowledge in knowledge-intensive firms.

After this, the notion of knowledge sharing and knowledge management in general became the focus of critical attention (Alvesson & Karreman, 2001; Wilson, 2002), particularly with regard to the role that information technology was able to play (McDermott, 1999; Walsham, 2001), the feasibility of sharing knowledge (Duguid, 2005; Marshall & Brady, 2001) and with the failure to take the political dimension of such activities into account (Patriotta, 2003).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, few would deny that knowledge-intensive organizations now exist or that knowledge sharing takes place within them. For example, more recently, Willem and Buelens (2007; 2009; 2006) have looked at the phenomenon of knowledge sharing in a variety of organizations, van den Hooff and Huysman (2009) have looked at problems of knowledge sharing from a KM perspective and Kimble et al have looked at the micro politics of knowledge sharing (Kimble, Grenier, & Goglio-Primard, 2010).

While some of the early pioneers have been prompted to revisit their earlier work (Nonaka & von Krogh, 2009) there has not yet been a systematic attempt to reassess the issue of knowledge sharing in knowledge-intensive organizations as a whole in the light of current technologies and organizational forms; it is this that this special issue of IJITM seeks to address.

Articles for this special issue might include articles that examine the problems associated with sharing knowledge (either face-to-face or technologically-mediated), the role that knowledge sharing plays in such organizations (through encouraging innovations, as part of a competitive strategy, etc) or the nature of the knowledge sharing itself. The common theme for all of the articles is that they should attempt to place insights gained from current theory and practice within the framework of previous work in the same area.

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