
Editorial

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1 Introduction

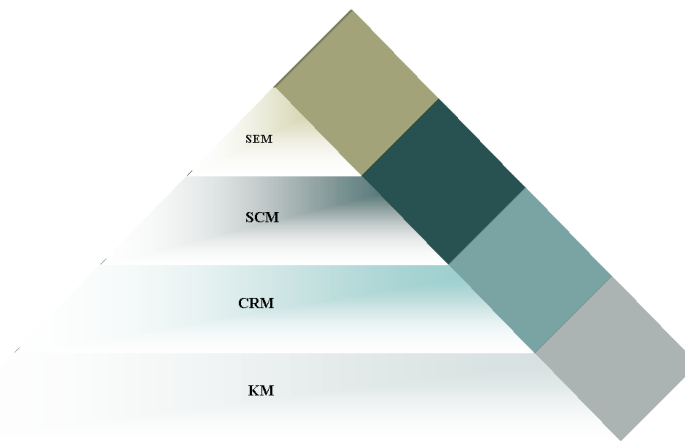
The ability of firms to effectively and efficiently manage information and knowledge has become a critical source of strategic competence and competitiveness in today's business world (Boisot, 1998; Dalkir, 2005; Ichijo and Nonaka, 2006; Rao, 2004). Factors such as information technology change and revolution, knowledge management and sharing, global competition and cooperation, and increased customer focus have all contributed to a recognition of the importance of successfully managing information and knowledge in today's business world.

Following these changes and trends, previous organisational research has extensively focused on the relationship between information and knowledge, (Choo and Johnston, 2004; Choo, 1998; Jablin et al., 1987) and its implications for organisational structure, strategy and management process, and performance outcomes (Boisot and Li, 2005; Davenport, 1999; Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2003; Marques and Simon, 2006). Consequently, the fields of Knowledge Management (KM) has developed quickly over the last decade.

KM has been defined as "the formal management of knowledge for facilitating and creation, access, and reuse of knowledge, typically using advanced technology" (O'Leary, 1998, p.34). Against the back drop of the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996), anecdotal evidence indicates that knowledge management applications have been integrated in Supply Chain Management (SCM) (Burt et al., 2002), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Peppers and Rogers, 2004), and Strategic Enterprise Management (SEM) (Fahy, 2002).

Figure 1 shows the relationship between KM, CRM, SCM and SEM.

Figure 1 Relationship between KM, CRM, SCM and SEM



Although there is a vast body of literature in knowledge management, there is little research on the application lens for knowledge management as it relates to SCM, CRM and SEM. This special issue aims at filling this lacuna in research and enhances our understanding of knowledge management.

In the first paper, 'Managing knowledge sharing networks in global supply chains', Cheung and Myers integrate the findings in the knowledge management and SCM literature with a multiple-case research design and describes potential opportunities,

motivations as well as dilemmas that exist in a global strategic networks. They propose a framework suggesting several factors, such as management fit, market fit, resource fit, shared identity, relational capital, and flexibility that could contribute to the sustainability of a knowledge sharing network in global supply chains.

In 'Leveraging knowledge in buyer-supplier alliances: a theoretical integration', drawing on the social exchange framework, Muthusamy, Hur, and Palanisamy provide a theoretical framework to better understand the inter-organisational processes that drive the successful learning and knowledge transfer in buyer-supplier alliances, and identify the organisational and behavioural routines required for effective knowledge exchanges. They argue that the process of learning and knowledge transfer does not take place in a vacuum, instead, it takes place in a social context. That is, reciprocal commitment, inter-organisational trust, power sharing, and socialisation are essential to facilitate collaborative behaviours as well as learning and knowledge transfer between alliance partners.

Scholars and practitioners have identified the capability of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) to create and efficiently combine and transfer knowledge from different locations worldwide as an increasingly important determinant of competitive advantage, corporate success and survival. In Kohlbacher's 'Knowledge-based marketing: building and sustaining competitive advantage through knowledge co-creation', the author uses a marketing lens to investigate the issue. Based on a review and evaluation of the literature on knowledge management, organisational learning, and marketing, Kohlbacher introduces a conceptual framework of knowledge-based marketing and analyses the processes of marketing knowledge co-creation with the main actors in the business ecosystem of global firms.

The paper by Assudani 'What does it mean to manage 'knowledge': implications for the strategic management of knowledge in firms' examines the conceptual discourses on knowledge and its implications for strategic knowledge management. The author examines the various perspectives on knowledge – knowledge 'of' the firm, knowledge 'from' the firm, and knowledge as a 'process'. Assudani then discusses the implications of these three perspectives for firms and how they could manage such knowledge.

In 'The effects of performance, environmental uncertainty and relational norms on customer commitments to suppliers over the duration of customer-supplier relationships', Fink, James and Hatten investigates the topic of customer commitment to suppliers. They focused on factors such as customer performance outcomes, supplier quality and delivery performance, the presence of relational norms and customer perspectives of environmental uncertainty over the duration of the customer-supplier relationship. They provide guidance on how suppliers could influence customer commitment over time.

In 'A dynamic view of knowledge and information: a stock and flow based methodology', Cricelli and Grimaldi argue that traditional accounting systems focus on the evaluation of tangible assets and neglect the contribution to business performance by intangibles. They introduce the intangible evaluation concept and suggest a methodology that utilises a stock and flow based analysis. Such an analysis, they argue, would provide evidence for the importance of both the static and dynamic aspects, and their mutual impact on business performance.

Finally, in 'On the application of wavelets in supply chain data management', Srinivasan argue that hierarchical decision making in modern supply chains uses models and data with varying granularity for different levels. These models require formal methods of high-fidelity data management. 'Wavelets' are mathematical transforms that

can be used to decompose a function or data sequence into two subsequences: approximation and detail. Srinivasan introduces wavelets as a mathematical lens to extract supply chain data at different scales.

The guest editors would like to thank all the authors for submitting and revising papers for the special issue. All selected manuscripts provide us with better understanding of the relationship between knowledge management and other business areas (as depicted in Figure 1). Our thanks also go to the referees for offering valuable comments and suggestions to the papers, which is essential for maintaining and improving the quality of the journal. Finally, the guest editors would like to express their sincere appreciation to Dr. Mohammed Dorgham, the Editor-in-Chief, and Ms. Jane Lunnon, the Journal Manager, for their help and assistance.

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