
Preface

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Biographical notes: Susumu ‘Sam’ Kurokawa (1956–2008) was an Assistant Professor of Management at the Bennett S. LeBow College of Business, Drexel University since 2001. He was also a Specially-Appointed Professor of Technology Management at Tokyo Institute of Technology since 2006. Before joining Drexel, he was a Research Associate Professor of Management of Technology at Vanderbilt University. He received BA and MBA from Kobe University, Japan, and PhD (1992) in Management of Technological Innovation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston. He conducted extensive research, education and consulting on technological innovation with a particular focus on small high tech firms in the USA and Japan.

Karol I. Pelc is Professor of Technology and Innovation Management, Emeritus, at the School of Business and Economics, Michigan Technological University. He received Doctoral Degrees in Economics and Management from the Wroclaw University of Technology, Wroclaw, Poland and in Electronics from the University of Uppsala, Sweden. He served as engineering management consultant and lectured in several countries – Europe, China, India, Japan and the USA. He has published over 120 papers, five books, and contributed chapters to 16 other books. His current research interest is in knowledge generating and innovation networks.

Dai Senoo, Doctor of Commerce, is an Associate Professor of Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Graduate School of Decision Science and Technology, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan. He authored over 40 papers and five books mainly in knowledge management area. His current research focuses on knowledge resource management, knowledge succession and knowledge creation support systems that include ‘creative office’ environment.

For the last decade, we have seen a significant contribution of knowledge management to managerial thinking. In theories, knowledge management has contributed not only to fundamental approaches to companies (e.g., knowledge-based view of the firms) but also to other areas such as management of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) or supply-chain management. In practice, knowledge management-related tools have also been used by many companies for their knowledge productivity increases. However, strategic aspects of knowledge management practices have not been fully investigated or reported.

This Special Issue is intended to fill that gap by presenting results of research conducted by authors of nine papers selected for publication. The papers reflect the state-of-the-art analysis of interface between strategic management and knowledge management in organisations from both theoretical and practical perspective. Several of them provide interesting case studies illustrating the main topic of interface between the two areas of management. Common conclusion may be derived from these materials that the impact and interaction is bi-directional. The authors observed that knowledge management processes and structures supporting this activity are becoming an important part of the overall strategic management in many companies. At the same time, depending on specific strategic approach, there may be different expectations and conditions established for effective knowledge management. It is also commonly accepted that knowledge management improves innovativeness and performance of a company, if this activity is integrated into strategic framework and plans.

With those common conclusions in mind we can distinguish two groups of papers in this Special Issue. One emphasises dependence of knowledge management on strategic approach prevailing in an organisation; another is focusing on the impact of knowledge management capability on organisation's strategy, performance, innovativeness and competitive status. The main ideas and conclusions of individual papers will follow in the order corresponding to those two groups.

In the first group, the paper authored by Schroeder et al. indicates that integration between knowledge management and objectives of an organisation may be facilitated by an appropriate governance of knowledge management program. The authors identified and explored the basic factors of that strategic alignment.

Practical aspects of linking business strategy and knowledge management are presented by Hamzah and Ismail through analysis of multiple cases taken from industrial environment. The study identifies categories of intellectual capital, the development of which is dependent on the organisation's strategy. The authors also suggest that the type of business strategy employed by an organisation affects its knowledge management practices.

In the next paper, authored by Inuzuka, the effect of corporate mergers on changes in knowledge structure is analysed and characterised by patent application data.

In the fourth paper, Senoo et al. analyse the influence of strategic diversity and present the university–industry team building process related to knowledge creation and performance of university technology licensing offices. The authors identified basic organisational factors that drive the performance of such organisations.

Papers of the second group present multiple advantages and benefits that knowledge management brings to an organisation. The authors are emphasising positive effects and potential performance gains resulting from implementation of knowledge management system and process.

Kannabiran developed a set of process and content variables of knowledge management strategy that leads to improvement of competitiveness.

Van Winkelen and Tovstiga formulated a framework for collaboration-based knowledge management leading to improvement, facilitation and effectiveness of innovation. The authors also suggest a methodology for application of a knowledge-based view of strategy and organisation's innovative capability.

A broad perspective on knowledge management initiatives is used by Riera and co-authors in their study on the effect of knowledge creating capabilities on corporate performance. They established empirical evidence that higher levels of financial performance are reached when the knowledge creating modes, based on SECI model, are balanced.

The next paper, authored by Kikuchi and Kamoshida, presents impact of the so-called 'knowledge ratio' on R&D productivity with a special focus on "brand power as an intangible asset". The authors derive their conclusion from analysis of financial performance data of selected companies.

Another specific aspect of knowledge management is presented in the paper authored by Kohlbacher. This author presents and explains the role of knowledge-based marketing and its strategic consequences. The framework is proposed for analysis of knowledge-based processes in marketing with the aim of gaining and sustaining competitive advantage.

We hope that contributions presented in this Special Issue open a new field of knowledge management studies and will encourage the readers to undertake new research initiatives. We also believe that the publication will stimulate empirical verification of models and methods in managerial practice, and it will contribute effectively to the interdisciplinary field emerging at the junction between knowledge management and strategic management.

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