

From Tacit Knowledge to Organizational Knowledge for Successful KM

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Abstract. Certain organizational characteristics as well as Knowledge Management (KM) initiative characteristics are needed in order to have successful KM. These characteristics may affect each step in the KM process differently. One of the most difficult and interesting steps in the process is moving from tacit knowledge to organizational knowledge. This step is the focus of this chapter. Propositions concerning the effects of organizational characteristics (innovation and collaborative culture) and KM initiative characteristics (top management support, formal KM staff, incentive program based on quality, and communication about KM) are presented, as well as implications for future research in KM.

1 Introduction

Knowledge is considered a valuable asset to organizations (Plessis, 2005). Knowledge is the dominant, and probably the only, source of a company's competitive advantage (Srivastava, 2001). A paradigm shift has changed the way that knowledge is viewed. Employees use to stay at a company for their full career lives. Now, however, employees are switching jobs several times (Kim, 2005). When they leave, they take their knowledge with them. Therefore, knowledge hoarding among individuals can hurt the company; while knowledge sharing and collaboration can benefit the company by allowing the knowledge to stay within the company. Organizations must be able to capture the knowledge and experience of their employees to be able to change their tacit knowledge into organizational knowledge, so it can be used even after the employee is no longer with them.

Knowledge Management (KM) has been introduced into many companies. However, KM initiatives fail as much as they succeed (Malhotra, 2005). In order for organizations to have a successful implementation of KM, certain characteristics of both the organization and the KM initiative need to be present. Several articles in the KM literature have given characteristics needed for a successful implementation (Chong, 2006; Devi et al., 2007; Lee and Hong, 2002; Wong, 2005). Many of which have focused on either the characteristics of the company or the characteristics of the implementation itself. This article integrates both characteristics of the organization and characteristics of the KM initiative needed for success. Several steps are involved in a knowledge management process. One of the most difficult and most interesting steps in the KM process is capturing tacit knowledge and changing it to organizational knowledge (TK to OK). This step and the organizational and KM initiative characteristics' effect on this step are the focus of this paper.

The rest of the paper is laid out as follows. The next section provides an overview of KM concepts, followed by a discussion of tacit knowledge and organizational knowledge. The subsequent section presents the proposed model for a successful implementation of KM from TK to OK followed by a discussion of propositions suggested by the model. Finally, a conclusion offering future research directions is presented.

2 Knowledge Management Concepts

Knowledge is information that has been understood and embedded in the brain. It is difficult to transfer knowledge from one person to another because of knowledge’s personal nature (Osterloh and Frey, 2000). Knowledge is not data or information. Data is simply raw facts without context, where as information is data that comes with context. For example, the number 5,551,687 would be considered data. However, adding the context of a phone number turns the data into information. The continued use and understanding of this information will turn it into knowledge.

There is no universal definition of KM. An organization needs to “know what it knows,” but this cannot be the full extent of KM. The organization also needs to be able to put this knowledge in some format where employees can utilize it. In other words, the organization must be able to turn tacit knowledge into explicit information. In turn, employees need to be able to use the explicit information to turn it into their own knowledge and be able to create and share additional knowledge from it. From these aspects of KM, the following definition will be used in this paper: *Knowledge Management is the process of acquiring knowledge from the organization or another source and turning it into explicit information that the employees can use to transform into their own knowledge allowing them to create and increase organizational knowledge.* Figure 1 depicts this definition graphically. The focus of this paper will be on the move from tacit knowledge to organizational knowledge.

There are two types of knowledge, explicit and tacit. Explicit knowledge is the type of knowledge that is easy to disseminate. The knowledge of how to place a bid on eBay is an example of explicit knowledge. It can be turned into explicit *information* by codifying it by way of procedures, policies, rules, etc. (Stenmark, 2001). Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, is not easily articulated. This type of knowledge exists within a person’s mind and can be seen in his actions, but may be difficult to codify. The knowledge of knowing the right moment to increase your bid on eBay and

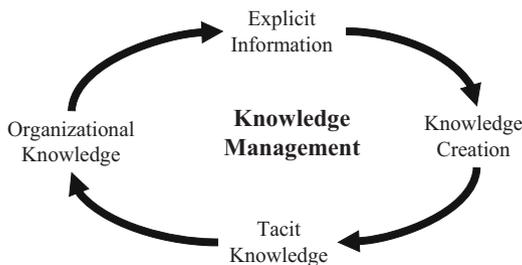


Fig. 1: Knowledge Management

by how much is an example of tacit knowledge. After repeated practice on eBay, this person *knows* this type of information. However, it may be difficult to codify it. This is the hardest of the two types of knowledge to capture and utilize, but may be the most valuable.

2.1 Tacit Knowledge and Organizational Knowledge

As stated earlier, the focus of this paper is to examine the move from tacit knowledge to organizational knowledge. Tacit knowledge exists in a person’s mind, but may be difficult to articulate. Polanyi (Polanyi, 1966) stated that tacit knowledge is the background knowledge a person uses when trying to understand anything that is presented to him. Therefore, tacit knowledge can be viewed as including emotional and cultural knowledge. It may be characterized by intuition and impressions which can create incomplete memories (Ein-Dor, 2006). However, those memories can be made complete with the appropriate help. Ein-Dor (2006) gives the example of “identikit” that the police use to help witnesses to describe how a perpetrator looks.

Organizational knowledge is the collection of knowledge which exists in the organization that has been derived from current and past employees. This knowledge is “owned” by the organization in that the organization can take this knowledge and codify it in some way to preserve it within the organization itself even when an employee has left the company. As stated earlier, when knowledge is explicit, it can easily be codified to remain with the organization. However, when that knowledge is tacit, not only is it difficult to codify, but it may be even more difficult to identify.

Information can exist in an organization even when an employee is unaware of its existence, or vice versa. Johnson (1996) defines ignorance as an individual’s state of unawareness about information regarding organizational life. This includes information about policies, procedures and organizational culture. Ignorance is present when the information exists somewhere in the organization, but the individual does not have it. In order for the individual to seek out that information, he must see some value or need for possessing the knowledge (Johnson, 1996).

This view of ignorance can be used in terms of an organization as well. By reversing the direction of the knowledge, the organization can be the one seeking the tacit knowledge that is present in the individual employees. Table 1 is a modified version of the mapping ignorance table (Johnson, 1996, p. 70). Each of the cells has been numbered for ease in discussion.

In cell 1, both the organization and the individual have possession of the knowledge. It is possible that either party is aware or unaware of this knowledge. In the case when one or both are unaware of the knowledge, they are still acting and reacting in a manner conducive to the knowledge. For example, an employee may turn in a project a week later than the deadline given.

Table 1: Mapping Organizational Ignorance (Adapted from Johnson, 1996.)

Organizational knowledge	Individual knowledge	
	Known	Unknown
Known	1. Aware and Unaware	2. Known unknowns
Unknown	3. Ignorance	4. Unknown unknowns
Error	5. Error	6. False truths
Proscribed knowledge	7. Denial	8. Taboos

The organization does not get concerned about the late project until it is over a week late. While it is not stated in any formal document that there is a week worth of “padding” for all projects, both parties are acting in a manner contributing to this knowledge.

In cell 2, the organization has knowledge that the individual does not. This may happen when an employee is new to the organization. This can be rectified by the step in KM going from organizational knowledge to explicit information (refer to Fig. 1). Putting the knowledge into some codified format provides the employee with the benefit of gaining the organization’s knowledge. This is often done in a type of employee handbook.

Cell 3 is where an individual has knowledge that the organization does not. This knowledge is present within the employee, but not necessarily codified in a document. In other words, this is the employee’s tacit knowledge. The organization recognizes the need to obtain this knowledge in order to increase the total organization’s knowledge. This is the move from tacit knowledge to organization knowledge (TK to OK).

In cell 4, neither the organization nor the individual employee realizes there is information that is unknown. The “unknown unknowns” can be reduced by increasing the sources of information that the employee and organization use. For example, organizations can interact with the external environment (including customers, suppliers, and competitors) to gather this type of information. Employees can attend conferences to hear about the new technologies and concepts surrounding the organization’s industry.

Cell 5 is when the organization thinks it knows what the individual knows but may be mistaken. This type of situation is easily fixed by communicating with the employee and asking that he review the information that the organization has crafted together. If it does not accurately represent the employee’s knowledge, he can then correct it.

In cell 6, the organization has tried to understand and explain the knowledge that even the individual does not know. For example, as in cell 5, say that the organization tries to codify a procedure an employee performs. If the employee does not know exactly how he is performing the procedure, he will not be able to refute the codification. Perhaps there is a step in the process that the employee has always done, but never gave it much thought. He may not even realize he is performing the step. However, that very step may make the difference in a perfect product and one with flaws. If the employee does not know the step is needed and is missing from the codified process, he will not be able to correct the document. In turn, the next employee may follow the codified procedure and not be able to replicate the outcome.

The last two cells involve condemning knowledge. Cell 7 represents when both the organization and the individual have knowledge they wish to deny. An example of this may be when something has been done unethically. Perhaps an employee creates a system that is very similar, maybe too similar, to a rival product. Even though both the organization and the individual know it could only have been created by reviewing the competitor’s proprietary code, they both choose to deny any knowledge of it.

Taboos are present in cell 8. Taboos are present when there is a penalty that can result from the search of information. For example, if some act were performed questionably, it would be considered a taboo for the organization to seek information regarding it. If they were to do so, they may risk losing the employee who performed the act. The organization may feel that keeping the employee is more important than gaining confirmation of the act.

While each of these cells can be discussed in terms of KM, it is cell 3 that is the focus of this paper. The move from TK to OK is one of the most difficult transfers of knowledge. Much of this knowledge may be difficult to capture because the individual may be unaware it even exists. It is important for the employee to be a willing participant in the organization's quest to obtain the tacit knowledge. There is much evidence to suggest that employees are not willing to share their information (Johnson, 1996). Certain characteristics may encourage this willingness and result in an easier and more successful implementation of KM from TK to OK. The next section presents the proposed model of the characteristics which can affect moving from TK to OK in KM implementation. Propositions are stated as well.

3 Proposed Model

When an organization does not fulfill the goals and objectives set for a technology, there tends to be a lean towards saying that the technology itself was the failure. However, it could actually be a failure of the implementation. An implementation fails when the employees do not use the technology as intended (Holsapple and Jones, 2007). With many organizations around the world practicing KM (Plessis, 2005), it would seem that "KM" as a concept could be considered a success. Therefore, if a KM implementation fails, it may be due to other factors.

As noted earlier, many KM articles have discussed characteristics that are needed for a successful KM implementation. Characteristics can be viewed in two dimensions: organizational and initiative. Companies with the right organizational characteristics can still fail at KM implementation if the needed initiative characteristics are not present. This can also be said in the reverse. Without the right organization environment, even the most thought out initiative can fail.

Hence, the proposed model for implementation includes both organizational and initiative characteristics. There are two organizational characteristics included: innovative and collaborative culture. Within the initiative characteristics there are four factors included: top management support, formal KM staff, incentives based on quality (not quantity), and communication about KM to employees. These characteristics can affect each of the steps in the KM process differently (Fig. 1). Here we discuss the effects on the step from TK to OK. Figure 2 presents the organizational and initiative characteristics and their relationship to the implementation of KM from TK to OK.

3.1 Organizational Characteristics

Characteristics of organizations can differ greatly. Because of this fact, it is important to consider these characteristics when trying to implement a technology that was not specifically created for the organization. Organizational characteristics can support or impede an implementation attempt. More specifically, whether or not an organization is innovative and has a collaborative culture can affect the implementation of KM.

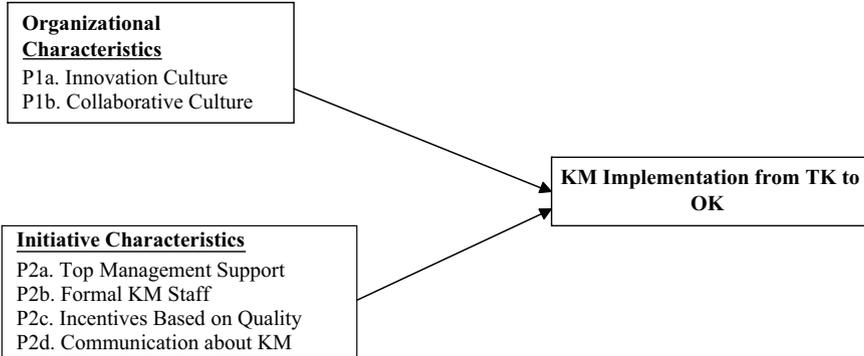


Fig. 2: Proposed Model for KM Implementation from TK to OK

3.1.1 Innovation Culture

Fidler and Johnson (1984) state that one of the factors that can mediate the success of an implementation is the organization’s cultural norm towards innovation. Innovation cultures are open to new innovations and are willing to give their full attention to helping the implementation succeed. Employees are encouraged and rewarded for creativity. Everyone’s job in an organization with an innovation culture is to become the teacher, coach and/or mentor (Kanter, 2000). This aspect of an innovation culture can particularly help in a KM implementation where the focus is on sharing knowledge. This can increase an employee’s willingness to help the organization gain access to his tacit knowledge. If the employees have the mind set that by sharing their knowledge they can help others, the move from TK to OK will be much smoother. In addition, employees may be more willing to continue helping the organization in correcting possible errors and false truths after the knowledge has been obtained and codified.

Damanpour (1991) did a meta-analysis of effects of determinants and moderators of organizational innovation. He found that organic organizations find it easier to implement innovations. An organic organization is one that finds ways to organize for creativity and innovation. Innovation cultures have a clear vision and communicate it well to their employees (Campbell and Collins, 2001). In an organization with an innovation culture, the introduction of an innovation is well communicated. This includes all aspects, from the value of the innovation to the organization to the employee rewards from use of the innovation. In other words, innovation cultures do a good job of setting the correct climate for implementation of the innovation. Klein and Sorra (1996) discuss the conceptualization of climate. Climate is employees’ “perceptions of the events, practices, and procedures and the kinds of behaviors that are rewarded, supported and expected in a setting” (Klein and Sorra, 1996, p. 1060). When this climate is set, all employees are on the same page and ready to begin the implementation process. This helps the employees understand and agree on the value of transferring their tacit knowledge to the organization. Because of these qualities, the following proposition is given:

P1a: Innovation cultures will have a more successful KM implementation from TK to OK.

3.1.2 Collaborative Culture

Culture can play a significant role in the KM process (Holsapple and Jones, 2005). An organization's culture in terms of collaboration can severely affect the KM implementation from TK to OK. The whole premise of moving from TK to OK is the sharing of knowledge. If an organization has not set that as the culture, it will have difficulty in implementing this move. Communication can create, maintain and change culture (Johnson, 1993). It is important for the organization to communicate the need and value of a collaborative culture. If not, employees may not wish to participate in the move from TK to OK. Greengard (1998a) states that there are pitfalls in an organization's culture that can cause problems when implementing KM. A couple of these pitfalls are relevant here: people don't like to share their best ideas; and people like to consider themselves as experts and prefer not to collaborate with others.

The first pitfall is due to employees feeling that "knowledge is power." In organizations where employees get promoted for knowledge that only they possess, the employees are more likely to hang on to their knowledge. The organization needs to be clear on what KM is about and what the goals of the implementation are. This pitfall has been present for so long that organizations will have to work hard to change the mindset. But once this is accomplished, the organization has made one step closer to a KM-conducive culture. Brown and Woodland (1999) found in their case study at Essvac, a vaccine manufacturing company, that employees were holding on to information as a means of control. They felt they needed to have "an ace up their sleeve." The willingness of the employees to share is the most critical factor for the success of KM (Holsapple and Jones, 2005). In order for the organization to resolve ignorance, the employees must be willing to share their tacit knowledge.

The second pitfall is a bit different. In this pitfall, the employee feels that the other employees have nothing to offer. This may reduce the organization's ability to gain that employee's tacit knowledge. Also, this employee may not feel the need to correct errors or false truths he identifies. In these cases, the organization needs to find ways to encourage teamwork. By having employees work in teams, the organization may be able to increase the employee's perception of the team members. Working closely with them will give the employees the opportunity to see how valuable their knowledge can be. This in turn may encourage the employee to want to help out his team members when he sees that there is an error or false truth present.

Once these pitfalls have been resolved, an organization can be considered as having a collaborative culture. A collaborative culture is more conducive to a move from TK to OK. The following proposition is given:

P1b: An organization with a collaborative culture will have a more successful KM implementation from TK to OK.

3.2 Initiative Characteristics

It is not enough to have the organizational characteristics presented in the previous section. There are certain characteristics of the KM initiative that are also needed for a successful KM implementation from TK to OK. Not considering these may lead an organization to make mistakes.

More specifically, top management support, a formal KM staff, incentives based on quality not quantity, and adequate communication to the employees about KM are necessary for success.

3.2.1 Top Management Support

Top management support is critical for any type of change effort (Ehie and Madsen, 2005). There can be other project leaders that actually initiate the project, but top management support is needed in order to get employees on board (Holsapple and Jones, 2005). Employees need to see that top management supports the KM effort, or they may not be convinced it is a valid innovation and not feel comfortable offering their tacit knowledge. Mark T. Stone, director of internal knowledge management for Arthur Andersen's Atlanta-based business consulting division, states that organizations that succeed with their KM initiative always have top management support (Greengard, 1998b).

KM leaders have the task of explaining to top management the value of KM (Quirke, 2001). Top management needs to fully understand the initiative for it to become a reality (Holsapple and Jones, 2007). Because KM will affect most (if not all) areas of the organization, it is important that top management be able to help in decision-making during the initiative. In order for them to do that, they will need to know every aspect of the KM initiative. Top management will also need to be visible in their support of the initiative. This includes speaking intelligently regarding the initiative to other managers and employees. Since these managers will be seen and heard from by the other managers and employees, it is important to have the right top manager's support. This manager needs to be one that is trusted and respected by the employees. If not, it may create or enhance the cynicism in the organization (Reichers et al., 1997). Employees are protective of their knowledge. With the wrong top manager supporting the KM effort, the employees may feel that it would be a mistake to relinquish their tacit knowledge. If the employees do not trust the manager, they may feel as if he is trying to gain their knowledge to make them dispensable. Because of the importance of management support, the following proposition is given:

P2a: An organization that has top management support of the KM initiative will have a more successful KM implementation from TK to OK.

3.2.2 Formal KM Staff

Because of the work involved in moving from TK to OK, it is important to have a formal KM staff in place. The staff needs to be in place before implementation begins. The KM staff is needed to find and describe the value of KM before implementation occurs (Wong, 2005). This will help to communicate and gain top management support. Essentially, the introduction of KM and the process of gaining knowledge is a new process to many organizations. The organizations have to change the way employees handle their knowledge. Al-Mashari and Zairi (1999) did an analysis of the literature surrounding the key success and failure factors of a business process re-engineering implementation process. They found that a critical component of success was a formal team devoted to the implementation.

In a survey conducted of information technology (IT) managers, 77% indicated that one of the top three reasons an IT related project fails is poor management of the project (followed by change in business goals during the project – 75% and lack of business management support – 73%) (Umble et al., 2003). Management of the project should be given to trusted individuals who are empowered to make critical decisions. This team will be responsible for the project plan, communicating it to the employees and assigning responsibilities, as needed (Umble et al., 2003).

In the case of KM, during and after the KM implementation, the KM staff will be in charge of determining where the organization's ignorance lies. They will need to target particular employees in order to decrease this ignorance. The KM staff will also be in charge of determining the value of each piece of tacit knowledge given to the KM system (Barth, 2000). They will monitor the use of the system (Ringle, 2001) and identify the pitfalls and try to address them (Smith, 2001). They will be in charge of determining what pieces of information led to the incorrect outcomes (sources of errors and false truths). Without a formal KM staff, the KM system would not get the attention needed for such an effort. Based on the workload involved in KM, the following proposition is given:

P2b: KM initiatives that have a formal KM staff will have a more successful KM implementation from TK to OK.

3.2.3 Incentives Based on Quality

It is important to provide incentives for participating in KM in order to overcome some of the pitfalls (Ardichvili et al., 2003; Desouza, 2003). Arthur Andersen has provided incentives (both monetary and other types) that can add up to several thousand dollars a year for those employees who regularly supply knowledge to their KM system (Greengard, 1998a). However, by providing incentives based on the amount contributed, the KM system may end up being overloaded with non-value adding contributions. This can lead to several errors and false truths.

It can be very easy for KM leaders to feel that volume equals value (Wong, 2005). KM leaders, especially in the beginning, are looking for evidence that the employees are participating in the KM initiative. When they see the amount of contributions, it can be a way to justify the value of the KM system. Arthur Andersen found it necessary to put some type of quality check program in place (Greengard, 1998a). They formed a group of knowledge managers who were responsible for reviewing each submission. Before information was posted to their KM system, it had to be certified as adding significant value to the organization. The consultants would receive bonuses not only on the quantity they submitted, but also by how often their contributions were used. The consulting company felt that while it wasn't a direct assessment of the quality, it at least showed where it could be of value to the organization (Greengard, 1998a).

Scott Smith, member of IBM's Global Knowledge Management Consulting and Solutions in Somers, NY, discovered that their KM repository soon became unwieldy (Barth, 2000). Smith stated that it never occurred to them that they needed to look at and manage the content of the intranet-based repository. The managers were offered incentives for contributing to the repository that were reflected in their performance evaluations and/or bonuses. One of the biggest problems with this was everyone submitted at the same time. Since the evaluations were based on a calendar

year, 90% of the submissions came in between December 15 and 31 and most of the submissions were long and unintelligible. Therefore, IBM changed the submission process. A network of experts on a rotating basis would review the contributions to the repository. In this way, each of the contributions submitted were checked for quality before being added to the knowledge base. This can help in cutting down the possibility of errors and false truths. Each expert refining the information until it accurately reflects what is true can reduce the errors. This will subsequently lead to less false truths. Based on these observations, the following proposition is given:

P2c: Organizations with incentive programs based on quality, rather than quantity, will have a more successful KM implementation from TK to OK.

3.2.4 Communication about KM

Communication plays a major role in any successful implementation. The extent to which communication can reduce uncertainty can influence the acceptance and use (Fidler and Johnson, 1984). Therefore, a communications strategy in the KM initiative is vital to a successful implementation (Smith, 2001). The employees need to understand how KM will affect their roles in the organization. The successful move from TK to OK depends on the employees' willingness to participate. If they are uninformed as to its value, they may be less likely to use it. They may also be less likely to participate if they feel that after their knowledge is transferred, they will no longer be needed. It is important for the organization to communicate how KM is a circle and that by employees providing their tacit knowledge, new knowledge can be created. This gives employees a continual opportunity to spawn new knowledge.

Communication regarding the KM system needs to be accurate and given from people the employees trust. Communicating about the innovation in an incorrect manner can hurt the implementation and create cynicism about KM. Reichers et al. (Reichers et al., 1997) give strategies for reducing cynicism from employees regarding organizational changes. One of the strategies is to keep people informed about changes in the organizations (when, why and how); this suggests that it is important to fully communicate the information about KM. The organization needs to discuss when the initiative is to be started, why it is important to the organization (and employee) to do this, and how it will be implemented. Mark Koskiniemi, vice president at Buckman Laboratories, stated that it was an enormous effort to communicate all of the information about KM to the employees (Greengard, 1998a). "We had to assist them in understanding what the system is, what it does and how it can benefit them personally...Managers had to learn they no longer can oversee the flow of information within the company; they have to help employees get the information they need" (Greengard, 1998a, p. 94). KM needs to be clearly defined in order for it to be understood and accepted as a normal working practice (Holsapple and Jones, 2006).

Reichers et al. (1997) also suggest enhancing credibility when communicating a change in the organization. Part of this is using a credible manager as a spokesperson. Ernst & Young Management Consulting Group chose what they call a "missionary" (Mullich, 2001). Gene Tyndall, the missionary, was a senior vice president who had a successful track record in persuading employees to get on board a project. One of his roles as missionary was to individually talk with employees who were noted as not participating in the KM project. Tyndall was able to show

the value of the KM initiative and why it is important to everyone. This role made the employees feel as if he took the time to personally explain the vision. Employees responded well and began participating in the project. Quirke (2001) stated that it is important for the organization to change their words when communicating to the employees about a change. It is important to use words that show the personal side to the change. This needs to be focused on the move from TK to OK. Employees need to understand that they will be gaining much more than they are giving.

Another strategy given by Reichers et al. (1997) suggests that there needs to be opportunities for the employees to express their feelings. The Arthur Andersen consulting group included seminars and workshops as a part of their KM initiative (Greengard, 1998a). This gave the employees a chance to learn about KM and voice their concerns. They also created cross-functional teams that included non-technologists to help in making decisions about the KM process. American Management Systems (AMS) also created teams in their KM initiative (Smith, 2001). The team representatives would meet monthly to discuss concerns from the different areas. This helped to provide input from several areas in the organization when developing the mission of the KM initiative. Based on these observations, the following proposition is given:

P2d: Organizations that provide adequate communication to the employees about the KM initiative will have more successful KM implementation from TK to OK.

4 Discussion

Much research has been conducted regarding KM, but little research has been devoted to the knowledge transfer from an employee's TK to OK. This paper provides a starting point for future studies in KM implementation and knowledge transfer. Our proposed model for KM implementation from TK to OK presents two types of characteristics which can affect the implementation – organizational and initiative – and propositions for each. The propositions give researchers a way to study the move from TK to OK in the KM implementation process.

Researchers can test one or all of these propositions in an organizational setting. Surveys can be conducted of organizations that have attempted to implement KM. In the survey, researchers can ask questions regarding the extent to which the organization possessed the proposed organizational and initiative characteristics. Results of the move from TK to OK can also be obtained in the survey. A comparison of the extent to which these characteristics were present and the resultant success/failure of the move from TK to OK can be tested to see if there is a relationship.

Further investigation of the KM implementation from TK to OK can be reviewed for additional characteristics required for success. Some of these characteristics appear as if they may interact with one another. For example, having a formal KM staff may interact with how much communication is given regarding the KM program. Perhaps some of the characteristics will be determined to be a moderator to the other propositions. For example, it may be that top management support leads to a more successful implementation only in cases where adequate communication has been provided.

While the move from TK to OK is very important, equally important is the transfer from OK to explicit information. If the organization is successful at getting employees to submit their tacit

knowledge, but unsuccessful at getting their employees to review and use the submitted knowledge from other employees, the cycle of KM is not complete. Essentially, the employee who originally possessed the knowledge is still the only one with that knowledge. Researchers will want to determine what factors affect this step and the other steps in the KM process.

Practitioners can also benefit from this paper. We have provided a framework for practitioners to use when preparing to implement KM from TK to OK. By following the propositions given, organizations can further enhance their KM implementation. Each of the constructs involved can be identified in an organization. The organization can try to improve the relationships suggested by the propositions with their intended outcomes.

5 Conclusion

The KM implementation from TK to OK is an important subject for both researchers and practitioners. While previous literature has given a partial prescriptive for the success of KM implementation, none have been complete. This paper seeks to include all areas for consideration when trying to implement from TK to OK. Researchers and practitioners can use the proposed model to further their understanding and practice of the move from TK to OK.

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