

Abstract

There is a fundamental shift in the economic environment of developed nations away from tangible manufactured goods towards value added services. This has facilitated the emergence of knowledge management as a business discipline at the turn of the twentieth century.

A review of the literature developed the knowledge management process model. This model identified the processes of generation of knowledge, representation of knowledge, access to knowledge and transfer of knowledge as dependent variables. Further, the independent variables of organisational structure, organisational culture and technology infrastructure were identified as inhibitors or enablers of the knowledge management process.

A number of success factors related to organisational culture that inhibit or enable knowledge management were identified as being: responsibility for knowledge; knowledge resources; knowledge performance measures and staff development. Success factors related to organisational culture were identified as: expert authority; knowledge transfer; employee induction; innovation process; organisational focus; cost reduction focus; knowledge sharing; behaviour incentives for knowledge sharing; human networks; information value and the recognition of knowledge as a business asset. Finally the success factors associated with the technology infrastructure were identified as: corporate standards; information technology effectiveness; techno-centricity and user capabilities.

The application of the diagnostic tool presented in this paper provides a practical starting point for managers to discover the state of knowledge management in the organisation. Measurement and benchmarking of all success factors can provide invaluable insights into where to initiate action and allocate resources.