

Chapter 4

Seeing Information Strategies

ABSTRACT

In the knowledge economy, we must manage information as a strategic business asset. Information must be an essential component of our business strategies, and the information strategy must speak to the business value of information. Information strategies are often formulated and issued only at the organization level. The authors stress the importance of developing information strategies that pertain to business units, teams, and individuals. The authors present an integrated view of information strategies to mirror and support business strategies. The integrated view is a high-level synthesis of the information science literature and practice.

WHY WE CARE ABOUT INFORMATION STRATEGIES

Information is a critical business asset—, particularly in the knowledge economy. In the knowledge economy, there is a complex information landscape. The opportunities for creating, access, discovering, and consuming information have multiplied. Information management has emerged as both a discipline and an essential tool of modern management. This notion should be at the heart of a university's information strategy.

In the knowledge economy, organizations, units, teams, and individuals must manage their information assets. Strategies are essential tools for managing any kind of asset. In order for information strategies to be effective, they must be aligned with business strategies and supported by both information and

Figure 1. Information strategies in the framework



business cultures. Information strategies are the critical points of leverage for aligning information in the knowledge economy.

Information strategies are the focal point for this book because there is a high rate of failure of practical operationalization. One of the most significant causes of failure is a lack of alignment of information strategies to (1) business strategies and to (2) information cultures. To address these points of failure, we need to know (1) what strategies we have, (2) how they align with the organization's business strategies, (3) how they align with the information culture.

To accomplish ties, we need to know what we mean by an information strategy, what kinds of information strategies exist across the organization, where to look for them, and how to see them regardless of whether they are explicit or implicit. In the end, we need to have an accurate accounting of the organization's information strategies.

INFORMATION STRATEGY – DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERIZATIONS

What is an information strategy? An information strategy tells us how the business uses, treats, and values information. The purpose of an information strategy is to highlight the extent to which a modern, complex organization depends on information, in all of its guises, and to consider how this strategic

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