



Chapter VI

Knowledge Management of E-Business Initiatives within Two Global Organizations: A Comparative Case Study Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Knowledge Management concerns the creation of structures that combine the most advanced elements of technological resources and the indispensable input of human response and decision making. This chapter addresses a very interesting topic—Knowledge Management

(KM) and e-business initiatives within global organizations. It compares and contrasts the experiences of two global corporations as they have conceived and implemented KM initiatives. After in-depth secondary research on the subject, both companies developed their own KM in e-business strategy. The two case studies discussed in this chapter highlight Business-to-Business (B2B), Business-to-Consumer (B2C), and Business-to-Employee (B2E) initiatives at these two global organizations. This provides concepts and viewpoints related to the drivers of KM, the hurdles to KM in an organization, the elements of KM philosophy and process, how KM can come to be understood as a critical part of a company's competitive strategy, and how to deploy a sustainable KM system that suits the business needs of an organization.

We now know that the source of wealth is something specifically human: knowledge. If we apply knowledge to tasks we already know how to do, we call it productivity. If we apply knowledge to tasks that are new and different, we call it innovation. Only knowledge allows us to achieve those two goals.

—Peter F. Drucker (2002)

INTRODUCTION

Many organizations approach Knowledge Management (KM) as a set of principles, practices, and technologies focused on innovation and optimization of their core internal Business-to-Employee (B2E) and Business-to-Business (B2B) processes. Most KM efforts are being delivered as enterprise portals, combining unstructured and structured information aggregation and contextual, personalized delivery within standards-based frameworks.

Knowledge or know-how is contextual and ranges in form from codified (explicit knowledge) to experiential (tacit knowledge). Examples of codified knowledge are information in databases, data warehouses/marts, previous work products, documents, and software code. Examples of experiential knowledge include techniques and insights gained from personal experiences and interactions. Although the discipline of Knowledge Management is only about a decade old, the definitions of Knowledge Management range from narrow, utilitarian views to much more conceptual and broad perceptions. One definition of KM is that it is “about connecting people to people and people to information to create competitive advantage” (Hoyt, 2001). Another definition of KM states that it caters to the critical issues of organizational adoption,

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