

# **The Future for Knowledge Management: a Rocky Road or Sunlit Green Meadows?**

## **A Discussion of Eastern European perspectives**

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# Introduction

- The underlying theme is the question as to whether post communist countries will, or want to, take up the idea of “westernised” KM or whether a new version will evolve in newly free countries.
- The aim of the session is explore new perspectives of knowledge management
- This aim will be achieved by
  - Defining knowledge management
  - Discussion of impact of societal changes
  - Presentation of research on KM and SME’s in Poland

# Defining knowledge management

- KM can be defined as
  - “the generation, representation, storage, transfer, transformation, application, embedding and protecting of organisational knowledge.”  
(Schultze & Leidner,2002)
  - The overall success of the organisation is dependent upon one aspect - that of sharing information.

# Discussion of impact of societal changes

- Concept of freely sharing information –
  - Knowledge Sharing – need trust, need ownership of goals
  - Depends on interpersonal relations
  - Effects of social relationships on teams.
  - Effects of types of societies (e.g Collectivism and individualism) on organisations

# Discussion of impact of societal changes

- Uncertainty in society affects organisations
- Organisations are also affected by
  - Relational Uncertainty
  - Informational Uncertainty
- All these issues impact on the ability and desire to share information which then affects KM.
- Need empirical evidence.....

# Presentation of research on KM and SME's in Poland

- Aim of study – To explore knowledge management in small and medium sized enterprises in Krakow
- Joint venture – University of Salford Information Systems and the Jagiellonian University Institute of Information Science
- Excellent support at all levels.

# Presentation of research on KM and SME's in Poland

## ■ Data Collection

- Company owners and staff were asked questions regarding views on use of KM in their organisations.
- Interviews collected over a short period of time.
- All sectors covered.

# Presentation of research on KM and SME's in Poland

## ■ Results

- The major variables which affect their use of KM were identified as:

- *Strong intuition of managers needed (5)*
- *Web is good (6)*
- *Local sources poor and not always available (11)*
- *Competition strong (12)*
- *Profit orientated (15)*
- *Harnessing intellectual capital (7)*
- *Keep abreast of current affairs (8)*
- *Too much information hinders (4)*
- *Age / Experiences of staff affect barriers to sharing (3)*
- *Some business very niche – difficult to get information (2)*
- *Confidentiality issues (17)*
- *Some markets unstable and undeveloped therefore even more*
- *Difficult to get information (18)*
- *Range of knowledge is important (19)*
- *Commercial software in use. ( 20)*

*(The number in the bracket is the total number of times similar comments were made)*



# Discussion of Results

- Most organisations enthusiastic re the research
- Most companies keen on KM
- Did attempt to use some kind of system
- Need for reliable technology
- Need for improved technological infrastructure
- Others results as listed in full paper

# Conclusion

- Session aimed to explore new perspectives of KM.
  - Impact of the Polish study – to provide sustainable way of evaluating the effectiveness of KM at regular intervals
  - Create new frameworks which incorporate changed societal and organisational cultures.

# Conclusion

- Will the future be a “rocky road” or a “sunlit green meadow” will depend on
  - Co-operation
  - Resources
  - Positive response to the needs of those who manage knowledge in the global economy!
- Ladies and Gentleman Thank you for listening!
- Any Questions?