

# ANALYSIS OF THE «MASTERBRAND» ACTIVITY WITH REGARDS TO THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

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As Francis Bacon has it «Knowledge is power». And every day we see that we are becoming more and more dependent on knowledge. It has been extensively identified that knowledge is an important aspect of different spheres of our life. The same is true for business. In today's information age era, with the technological advancements in communication, knowledge management has an intense effect on a company activity and decisions made by a business and all employees. An organization which can build excellent process to manage knowledge will certainly have a competitive edge over its competitors. Moreover, as the world is developing, more and more information is created in it. Therefore heads of companies and employees should identify the right specific knowledge for more effective decision making and use it at the right time, in the right way, in the right place. The ability to choose the concrete information from the mass of knowledge is a huge perspective for companies in general.

That is why the purpose of the research paper is to analyze a company activity in relation to the use of knowledge management tools (using the example of the «Masterbrand» company) and identify whether it benefits or not.

What is knowledge management? There are many special definitions of this term. In the paper the definition made by one of the most known experts of knowledge management, Ron Young is given: «*Knowledge Management (KM)* is the discipline to enable individuals, teams, organizations and communities to more collectively and systematically capture, store, share and apply their knowledge, to achieve their objectives» [2]. This discipline allows promoting an integrated strategy for identifying, recording, evaluating, getting and sharing of all enterprise assets.

Let us consider the *value and benefits* that can be gained in a company after the implementation of knowledge management:

- An effective KM is the key driver of new knowledge and new ideas to the innovation process, to new innovative products, services and solutions: increasingly, products and services are becoming «smarter» and more knowledge based;
- An effective KM should dramatically reduce company's costs and increase people's speed of response: a more systematic reuse of knowledge and a direct result of better knowledge access and application will show substantial cost benefits immediately;
- An effective KM helps to improve the intellectual labor efficiency: individuals and organizations are learning faster. It leads to more effective decision-making, solving the issues simultaneously;
- An effective knowledge management contributes to increase in workers' value: people are developing their competencies and confidence faster in organizations;
- Generation of innovative ideas allows one to increase sales and as a result facilitates a company's development.

In order to achieve these results companies should introduce KM tools and techniques that can be easily applied in their everyday work. There are 3 different KM categories that include a variety of tools (Table 1):

1. *Connecting people to information and knowledge*: new knowledge should be

acquired and stored appropriately for others to access and learn from. New work should always be built on the foundation of previous knowledge. These tools can enable people to find information and knowledge more effectively.

2. *Connecting people to people*: communicating with peers can be the most effective way to learn about others' experiences first-hand, and get the knowledge people need. Tools of this category help to connect people from different spheres of business and life. This creates an atmosphere when people feel confidence (cooperation) and are ready to share their ideas and future plans or even set up new businesses/organize new projects (co-creations).

3. *Organization improvement*: these tools can enable organizations to improve more effectively through impact assessments, evaluations and people management.

Table 1. – Knowledge management tools

Tool	Example/Definition	Effect
<b>Connecting people to information and knowledge</b>		
Case study	A written description of a project, business situation, or some problem. It has a clear structure that brings out key important features from the project.	Share knowledge and expertise with others; Get effective, unique techniques and methods that can be useful for your development and your project realization.
Rapid evidence review (RER)	A systematic review of research in a particular area.	Useful and quicker way of gathering and consolidating knowledge; A building block or baseline from which to start work on a new project.
Knowledge banks	Online services and resources which hold information and give people the power to improve something inside them.	Getting new knowledge in a specific area; self-education.
<b>Connecting people to people</b>		
Communities of practice (CoP), knowledge network/professional network	A group of people, who have a common interest and get together to explore ways of working, identify common solutions and share good practice and ideas.	An environment (virtual and or face-to-face) that connects people and encourages the development and sharing of new ideas and strategies; Faster problem solving, cuts down on duplication of effort, and provides potentially unlimited access to expertise.
Peer assist	Gaining input and insight from experts/other people outside the team.	First-hand knowledge transfer; Outside point of view of a problem or situation can help to solve it quickly or more effectively.
Knowledge cafe	A group of people having an open, creative conversation in an informal environment on a topic of mutual interest.	It allows people to share ideas, experiences and learn more from each other; Informal learning through dialogue; Each person has a responsibility to contribute to problem solving.
Knowledge marketplace	A dating service for knowledge that identifies what people know	It allows finding people with the knowledge, skills and experiences you

	and what they need to know on a particular subject that connects them appropriately.	need.
<b>Organization improvement</b>		
Gone well/ not gone well	Quick debrief at the end of an event/working day concentrating on good points and items for improvement (asking questions such as «What's the news?», «What was the most useful?»).	Gather information that will help to do better (events, projects and etc.) next time; Feedback about effectiveness of the event.
After action review (AAR)	Quick discussion at the end of a short project/event reflecting on the current position and future actions.	A quick way of making an informed decision about how to act in the future.
Retrospective review	A formal process to evaluate the event, project or an activity.	Capture lessons learnt for future activities; The information can be made available to others: publish on internet.
Knowledge exchange	Staff leaving should exchange unique knowledge to allow others to acquire it.	Recover unique and valuable information from people before they leave; Build the corporate memory [1].

The «Masterbrand» company was chosen as an example for the research. «Masterbrand» specializes in the development of business and marketing strategies for organizations, their implementation in companies` activity, teaching and coaching companies` staff in the sphere of marketing, sales, and business development.

As knowledge management is a contemporary and upcoming trend in the modern world and «Masterbrand» is a self-developing company that prefers to be in the trend, it uses KM tools for improving its activity efficiency.

The analysis of «Masterbrand» activity showed that the company holds the following events and applies KM tools to share, acquire and create knowledge:

- *Business Breakfast* (combines features of 2 tools: case study and knowledge cafe)

It allows people to share ideas and experiences through networking, get new knowledge from experts, discuss business problems and try to solve them with case studies, find partners, clients or employees in a friendly atmosphere. But the most valuable mission of this event is that knowledge sharing among specialists and business people from different spheres leads to collaborations. Common goals and strategies spur people into action: creating a new unique and original activity or business based on other businesses.

- *«Business Case Study» Club* (combines features of 4 tools: communities of practice, case study, peer assist and knowledge cafe)

It is a closed community of specialists (sales managers, marketing experts, development directors) that acquire new sales and promotion techniques, then apply them in case studies. Moreover, people consider work situations and tasks, meet smart and useful persons.

- *Open flashpoint* (combines features of 2 tools: case study, peer assist)

It is a kind of a business simulator that helps participants to form their views with regards to the situations, practice the skill, get modern knowledge, find creative solutions

to a problem and create professional networking.

- *Business development school «mCloud»* (combines features of 2 tools: knowledge marketplace, case study)

This technique allows development of people's competences in the field of marketing, sales and business development. The purpose of such education is to get to know modern and useful tools, solidify this knowledge through case study solving.

- *«Smart holiday»* (combines features of 2 tools: case study and knowledge cafe)

It is a travelling club that includes education and fun. The casual atmosphere supports new ideas creation and a more effective knowledge sharing. Participants can look at their business from the outside and find a good solution to a problem. It is equally important for businesses that such an event creates a confidential atmosphere for knowledge sharing. And if you trust a person, you can expect the most productive work between participants.

Moreover, «Masterbrand» is a permanent organizer and participant of different workshops, master-classes and special events. The company not only develops itself and acquires knowledge that can be useful for it, but also helps other specialists to be in progress.

Also «Masterbrand» supports KM development among its employees; they are always sent to workshops, meetings with the world experts. So employees are developing constantly. Thus «Masterbrand» engages in knowledge techniques development, one of them is knowledge management. KM tools application supports human potential growth.

To sum up, it is necessary to identify what benefits the company gets from the use of knowledge management and how KM can be useful for others:

- new knowledge, new ideas, up-to-date information and techniques that can be applied in their own business;

- to find new clients and useful partners;

- new acquaintances, co-operations and co-projects;

- The group of smart people is always better than one person. It means that you can find a unique decision for your business quicker.

- An owner (specialist) can look at his business from the outside in a new light.

- KM tools application allows doing the work better. It is some kind of a push in order to move on.

- Helping to solve business problems, the company can find unexpected decisions in its activity.

- Every organization needs to invest in creating and implementing the best knowledge networks, processes, methods, tools and technologies. This will enable them to learn, create new knowledge, and apply the best knowledge much faster.

The effective and extraordinary knowledge management at all levels (employees, teams, companies, partners and so on) being a unique technique will become the mainstream for the company to develop and grow successfully in the future. «Masterbrand» understands it and applies knowledge management tools effectively. And this makes it more productive. But every company wants to develop; therefore the following advice should be taken into account:

- «Masterbrand» pays more attention to applying knowledge management in the whole business society, but it will be a good point to give an eye to its employees: face-to-face-interaction, storytelling or creation of «Masterbrand»'s corporate social network/blog.

- It can be effective to organize KM events for students as well. There are many young guys who have interesting business ideas and want to realize them, but don't not in what way. Special meetings support the creation of a trust-based atmosphere for knowledge and ideas sharing; students can find useful partners or methods to put their ideas into practice.

- Since employees who are involved in knowledge management have become more useful and valuable workers, some directors might want to tempt them away from the company. Therefore «Masterbrand» should always think about its staff motivation (corporate reward scheme).

- It is not always the right decision to create one's own knowledge, it is necessary to be able to use people's expertise and ideas. And «Masterbrand's activity facilitates this process.

#### References:

1. Leask M., Caren Lee C., Milner T., Norton M., Rathod D. Knowledge management tools and techniques. - London: LGA, 2008. - P. 52.
2. Young R. What is Knowledge Management [Electronic resource] // Knowledge Management Online Open Source KM. - Access mode: <http://www.knowledge-management-online.com/what-is-Knowledge-Management.html> [accessed 30/11/14].

## **ПРОБЛЕМЫ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ПОЛИГРАФА В ОТБОРЕ ПЕРСОНАЛА**

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Эффективность деятельности предприятия связана с отбором качественного персонала. Важны не только профессиональные умения, но и морально-этические качества (честность, лояльность, совестливость, ответственность). Профессиональные умения выявляются довольно ясно в интервью, специальных тестах, упражнениях, а также подтверждаются документально (сертификаты, категории). Испытательный срок стал практически неотъемлемым инструментом выявления профессиональных умений и качеств. Честность и лояльность при этом определить намного сложнее.

Тесты, выявляющие склонность к лживости, основаны на выявлении противоречий в ответах или подтверждении ханжеских утверждений. Подобные тесты привлекательны, поскольку не требуют специально подготовленного персонала, стандартизированы, дешевы. Однако, в силу широкой доступности этих тестов в интернете, испытуемые при желании заранее подготавливаются и легко справляются с тестированием, сознательно искажая результаты в свою пользу. Альтернативным видом определения честности является психофизиологическое исследование – полиграф («детектор лжи»).

Несмотря на столетнюю историю, полиграф окружен тайнами и мифами. Распространены домыслы о полиграфе, что он «читает» все мысли. Необоснованный страх полиграфа может препятствовать исследованию персонала. Руководство