Knowledge sharing as a source of competitive advantage:
Barriers and motives of employees` intention to share knowledge through enterprise social software
Submission to IACCM 2013, at Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Rotterdam, 20 – 22 June, 2013
5th CEMS/IACCM doctoral workshop

Purpose: After the post-crisis era in 2008 global operating companies are facing new challenges. In order to be successful companies have to be better than their competitors in areas of cost, quality, production processes, supply chain, management expertise and profitability. To be able to persist in such a fast changing and challenging environment knowledge becomes an important competitive factor and is fundamental to the ability to create and sustain advantage for an organization (Grant (1996)). Knowledge as the only resource within a company that grows when it is used and depreciates when it is not used becomes a strategic asset for an organization (Cabrera, Cabrera (2002)). Organizations were mostly focusing on the technological implications like capturing and storing knowledge, but this belief has changed. Nowadays knowledge is seen as something that is bound to people. The introduction of Web 2.0 technologies to create a better networked enterprise and connect internal efforts of employees' shows significantly improved performance by companies implementing these (Bughin, Chui (2010)). Social Software, using the principles of Web 2.0 in characteristics of participation, contributing content, collaboration and sharing information comes in different variations like e.g. blogs, wikis and social networks. The use of such Web 2.0 instruments in a corporate context is coined by the term "Enterprise 2.0", the associated instruments are summarized under the term "enterprise social software" (McAfee (2006), p. 1). The implementation of enterprise social software does not necessarily guarantee the success of a knowledge management system, given that a number of barriers prevent knowledge sharing (Cross, Baird (2000)). The use of enterprise social software by employees is particularly dependent on personal, organizational and technological factors (Riege (2005)). Bock et al. (2005) show that deliberate and conscious internal knowledge sharing is the exception rather than the rule due to the inherent human desire to hoard knowledge (Davenport, Prusak (1998)).

Design/methodology/approach: The aim of this research project is to identify the barriers and motives of knowledge sharing (based on comprehensive literature review), to justify those theoretically and to formulate hypotheses that can be tested empirically by means of interviews and questionnaires. By accomplishing fourteen interviews with initiators (management and project team) and potential users of enterprise social software from companies in Germany it was possible to gain a great insight.

Research results: The empirical analysis pointed out three barrier factors determined to be critical for implementing knowledge management successfully: "Perceived ease of use", "management support" and "self-efficacy". This study shows that these three factors are of significant impact for a knowledge management success. For implementing knowledge management successfully in companies technological, organizational and personal factors are very important.

Practical implications: From a scientific perspective the systematization of motives and barriers of knowledge sharing allows setting up a theoretical model, which has been tested by interviews. In order to contribute to quantitative research the findings will be the basis to establish a structural equation model to draw an inference from the intensity of motives and barriers.

The paper's original / value: Schewe and Nienaber (2011, p. 76) note that motives and barriers of knowledge sharing have been examined in a rather superficial and unstructured way so far. Numerous conceptual studies have explored the motives and barriers of knowledge sharing (Riege (2005)) compared with a small number of empirical studies (Bock et al. (2005)). Helm et al. (2007, p. 231) also identify a research gap concerning the hypotheses of some previously published research studies, which have not been subjected to careful theoretical investigation. The current research addresses these gaps.

Keywords: knowledge management, knowledge sharing, barriers and motives of knowledge sharing between individuals, enterprise social software, structural equation model

Paper type: Empirical research paper
Author: **STAJNKO, Nadin**
University of Paderborn, Faculty of Business Administration and Economics, Chair of Marketing, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Dr. h.c. Klaus Rosenthal

References

Bock, G.-W., Zmud, R. W., Kim, Y.-G., & Lee, J.-N. (2005). Behavior intention formation in knowledge sharing: Examining the roles of extrinsic motivators, social-psychological forces, and organizational climate. MIS Quarterly, 29 (1), 87–111.

Bughin, J., & Chui, M. (2010). The rise of the networked enterprise: Web 2.0 finds its payday. McKinsey Quarterly 1–9. Retrieved October 23, 2012.

Cabrera, E., & Cabrera, F. (2002). Knowledge-sharing dilemmas. Organization Studies (23), 687–710.

Cross, B., & Baird, L. (2000). Technology Is Not Enough: Improving Performance by Building Organizational Memory. Sloan Management Review, Spring, 69–78.

Davenport, T. H., & Prusak, L. (1998). Working knowledge: How organizations manage what they know. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Grant, R. M. (1996). Prospering in Dynamically-Competitive Environments: Organizational Capability as Knowledge Integration. Organization Science 7 (4), 375–387.

Helm, R., Meckl, R., & Sodeik, N. (2007). Systematisierung der Erfolgsfaktoren von Wissensmanagement auf Basis der bisherigen empirischen Forschung. Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft, 77 (2), 211–241.

Krogh, G., Ichijo, K., & Nonaka, I. (2000). Enabling Knowledge Creation : How to Unlock the Mystery of Tacit Knowledge and Release the Power of Innovation: How to Unlock the Mystery of Tacit Knowledge and Release the Power of Innovation. Oxford University Press, 2000.

McAfee, A. P. (2006). Enterprise 2.0: The dawn of emergent collaboration. MIT Sloan Management Review, 47 (3), 21–28.

Riege, A. (2005). Three-dozen knowledge-sharing barriers managers must consider. Journal of Knowledge Management, 9 (3), 18–35.

Schewe, G., & Nienaber, A.-M. (2011). Explikation von implizitem Wissen: Stand der Forschung zu Barrieren und Lösungsansätzen. Journal für Betriebswirtschaft, 61, 37–84.