THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN eBUSINESS AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Marina du Plessis

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The role of knowledge management in eBusiness and customer relationship management

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: The role of knowledge management in eBusiness and customer relationship management

CANDIDATE: Marina du Plessis

DEGREE: D.Phil (Information Science)

PROMOTER: Prof. JA Boon

Knowledge management is a prerequisite for eBusiness and its increasing client centric focus. To operate in an eBusiness environment, an organisation has to have a good command of knowledge on its markets, customers, products and services, methods and processes, competitors, employee skills and its regulatory environment. This is due to the fact that organisations can, with the advent of eBusiness, do business electronically, seamlessly across the globe, via the Internet and via intranets, which has caused an explosion of the richness and reach of information and knowledge. Knowledge management systems are now essential to ensure that value is extracted from knowledge internal and external to the organisation. eBusiness also broadens an organisation's customer base due to the possibility of operating globally through electronic means. Customer relationship management in the global and digital economy has therefore forced organisations to rethink the ways in which they build relationships with a broadened customer base. Customer relationships cannot take place without knowledge management. To enable organisations to become more efficient and effective in delivering products and services to customers, knowledge on customers will have to be managed to ensure that the services organisations provide are those that will address customer needs.

To date the role of knowledge management in eBusiness and customer relationship management has not been formally defined. It is critical for organisations to understand the role of knowledge management in eBusiness and customer relationship management to enable them to manage and leverage knowledge as a corporate asset that supports the organisation's business strategy and operating model, and therefore the execution of the strategic intent of the business.

This study defines the nature of the role of knowledge management in eBusiness and customer relationship management and secondly the value that knowledge management can add to eBusiness and customer relationship management. It tests the validity of this role and value proposition of knowledge management in eBusiness and customer relationship management, as defined by the researcher, in the South African context. Questionnaires were sent to large South African corporates where knowledge management has been implemented. The Diagnostic Management Application Profile (DMAP) tool was customized

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for this purpose. Respondents of the questionnaires cover a variety of South African industries, including insurance, banking, telecommunications and professional services.

This study makes a contribution to the understanding of the inherent nature of knowledge management, as concept in its own right, or as concept within an eBusiness or customer relationship environment. This study also contributes in understanding how knowledge management is perceived and applied in the South African market, given the advent of eBusiness and customer relationship management. The final contribution that this study makes is in understanding that knowledge management in South Africa has its own unique challenges, e.g. with reference to literacy levels and level of technology application, and that knowledge management programmes cannot be carbon copied from systems and programmes in Europe and the USA.

Keywords: knowledge management, intellectual capital, KM, knowledge, innovation management, KM, knowledge, knowledge base, knowledge flow, innovation, intellectual assets; eBusiness, e-business, e-commerce, virtual communities, collaboration, customer relationship management, CRM, eCRM, customer service, DMAP

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OORSIG

TITEL: Die rol van kennisbestuur in elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur.

KANDIDAAT: Marina du Plessis

GRAAD: D.Phil (Information Science)

PROMOTOR: JA Boon

Kennisbestuur is 'n voorvereiste vir elektroniese handel en die gepaardgaande kliënt-sentriese fokus. Om suksesvol handel te dryf in 'n elektroniese handel omgewing, moet 'n organisasie 'n goeie begrip hê van relevante market, kliënte, produkte en dienste, metodes en prosesse, konkurrente, werknemer vaardighede en wetlike aspekte. Dit is noodsaaklik aangesien, met die ontstaan van elektroniese handel, organisasies elektronies sake kan doen regoor die wêreld, via intrenette en die Internet, wat 'n ontploffing in die reikwydte en diepte van inligting en kennis meebring. Kennisbestuurstelsels raak dus al meer noodsaaklik om te verseker dat waarde uit interne en eksterne kennis ontsluit word. Elektroniese handel verbreed ook organisasies se kliënte basisse aangesien organisasies makliker wêreldwyd elektronies handel kan dryf. Kliënte verhoudingsbestuur in die digitale era forseer organisasies om te herbesin oor die manier waarop verhoudings met kliënte gebou word binne die konteks van 'n vergrootte kliënte basis. Die navorser meen dat kliënte verhoudings nie bestuur kan word sonder kennisbestuur nie. Kennisbestuur is noodsaaklik vir meer effektiewe lewering van dienste en produkte wat kliënte behoeftes aanspreek.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om die role van kennisbestuur in elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur te definieer. Hierdie rol is tans nêrens duidelik omskryf nie. Dit is krities dat organisasies die rol van kennisbestuur in elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur verstaan om te verseker dat hulle kennis kan bestuur en benut as 'n korporatiewe bate wat die organisasie se besigheidstrategie en bedryfsmodel ondersteun, en derhalwe ook die uitvoering van die strategiese doelwitte van die organisasie.

Eerstens definieer die studie die aard van die rol van kennisbestuur in elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur in die digitale ekonomie, en tweedens die waarde wat kennisbestuur kan toevoeg tot elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur. Die studie toets ook die geldigheid van die rol en die waardeproposisie van kennisbestuur in elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur, soos gedefinieer deur die navorser, binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks. Vraelyste is uitgestuur na Suid-Afrikaanse organisasies waar kennisbestuur reeds geïmplementeer is. Die Diagnostic Management Application Profile (DMAP) hulpmiddel is doelgemaak en benut vir hierdie doeleinde. Respondente dek 'n aantal

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industrieë in Suid-Afrika, onder andere telekommunikasie, bankwese, versekeringswese, en professionele dienste.

Hierdie studie lewer 'n bydrae in die begrip van die inherente aard van kennisbestuur as 'n alleenstaande konsep of as konsep binne elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur. Die studie lewer ook 'n bydrae om te verstaan hoe kennisbestuur gesien en toegepas word in Suid-Afrika, gegewe die ontstaan van elektroniese handel en kliënte verhoudingsbestuur. Die studie lewer ook 'n bydrae om kennisbestuur in Suid-Afrika en die unieke uitdagings wat daarmee gepaard gaan, bv. geletterdheid en implmentering van gesofistikeerde tegnologie , te omskryf.

Trefwoorde: kennisbestuur, intellektuele kapitaal, kennis, innovasie bestuur, kennisbasis, kennisvloei, innovasie, intellektuele bates, elektroniese handel, e-handel, virtuele gemeenskappe, kliënte verhoudingsbestuur, kliëntediens, DMAP

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