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Interworking with other projects strategy (a plan on disseminating information on KNOWNET and integrating with other researchers working on similar projects during the duration of KNOWNET)

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Abstract

Social media has become an extremely powerful phenomenon with millions of users who post status updates, blog, links and pictures on social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. However, social networking has so far spread mainly among consumers. Businesses are only now beginning to acknowledge the benefits of using social media to enhance employee and supplier collaboration to support new ideas and innovation through knowledge sharing across functions and organizational boundaries. Many businesses are still trying to understand the various implications of integrating internal communication systems with social media tools and private collaboration and networking platforms. Indeed, a current issue in organizations today is to explore the value of social media mechanisms across a range of functions within their organizations and across their supply chains.

The KNOWNET project (an EC funded Marie Curie IAPP) seeks to assess the value of social networking for knowledge exchange across Insurance supply chains. A key objective of the project is to develop and build a web based interactive environment - a Supplier Social Network or SSN, to support and facilitate exchange of good ideas, insights, knowledge, innovations etc across a diverse group of suppliers within a multi level supply chain within the Insurance sector.

Introduction

The astronomical growth and evolution of platforms such as Linked In, Facebook and Twitter reflect the success of social media technologies; more importantly it illustrates how businesses and consumers will expect to interact with and use digital media in the future, for all sorts of reasons, including driving innovation from knowledge sharing and generation. The KNOWNET project sets out to explore the potential and value of current social networking technology to support sustained knowledge sharing and generation across a multi-level supply chain in the insurance sector both in the UK and Spain.

The aims and objectives of KNOWNET are to develop, build and test an interactive Supplier social network (SSN) framework, designed to support local innovation and leaning where explicit, implicit and tacit knowledge and experience of suppliers and their employees can be shared. The SSN will consist of a set of web based tools, such as forums, blogs, wikis, FAQs, public recommendations/suggestion pools, exercises and applications specially designed to utilise a range of learning processes (e.g. learning by doing, learning from others, and applications supporting the formation of communities of inquiry and promoting learning through social interaction. Specifically, the KNOWNET SSN platform will bring together supply chain members in a highly interactive real-time environment, who be able to communicate quickly and effectively with sound and image and will promote the sharing and adoption of good ideas, practices etc. Specifically, the combination of exercises, applications and social interaction tools, ensures a holistic knowledge sharing platform which

- encourages contact between supply chain partners
- encourages knowledge transfer across and between supply chain partners
- develops reciprocity and cooperation among supply chain partners
- uses active learning techniques
- gives prompt feedback
- reduces ‘misinterpretation’ of information
- communicates high expectations
- respects diverse talents and ways of learning and knowledge

Given that the idea of web based interactive SSN’s is relatively novel, and a comparatively unexplored area in the field of supply chain management, the project also explores participants attitudes and behaviours surrounding the concept of virtual supplier communities. Crucial to the research is the use of Social Networking Analysis techniques to map and measure the relationships and flows of information/knowledge between individuals and groups within the various supply chains, and gain insight into the roles they play within the network.

The concept of collaborative networking is particularly timely in the insurance industry as it looks to strengthen the inter-organizational ties between its suppliers and external agencies, for improving processes, accelerating innovation, fostering creativity, and sharing experiences and local knowledge amongst its supplier networks. The research outputs will enable the industrial participants to assess the inherent value and efficacy of social networking as a knowledge sharing tool within a large supplier base, as well as provide opportunities for rethinking core processes across a breadth of insurance categories.

To achieve these objectives, the collective expertise across interdisciplinary fields(SCM; KM, software engineering, SNA, e-learning and 3D web design) and the successful knowledge exchange between **Brunel University(BU)** and **Universitat Politecnica De Valencia (UPV),** and one private sector partner-**Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance PLC UK, (RSA),** was required. Collaborative inter-sectoral research is a critical success factor of the project as the conceptual models derived via the literature and pilot study, will be tested and modified across practitioners in the UK and Spain. As the framework will be developed via the inter-sectoral collaboration between industrial and academic partners, it will need to address the needs from both sectors and provide ongoing opportunity where both the sectors organizations can collaborate for the update of the model in the future. Furthermore, the finalised framework needs to be verified in different countries and organizations having different cultures. As a result the consortium consists of partners from different EU countries and differing organizational cultures to execute the field trials in the UK and Spain.

Knowledge Networking

Knowledge is the foundation of a firm's competitive advantage and ultimately the driver of a firm's value (Teece 2000). Organizations therefore need to recognise it as being a valuable asset and develop a mechanism for tapping into the collective intelligence and skills of employees and supplier partners in order to create a greater organizational knowledge base (Bollinger and Smith 2001).
Much of the information that companies share — data on inventory levels, sales, production schedules and prices — is easy to codify and transmit. But other types of knowledge are just as important to exchange and more difficult to codify: know-how, managerial and communication skills and organizational memory. Intercompany knowledge sharing should be a joint activity between supply chain partners; the parties share knowledge and then jointly interpret and integrate it into a relationship-domain-specific memory that influences relationship-specific behavior (Selnes and Sallis 2003). Myres and Chunge (2008) found typically three types of knowledge sharing within the supply chain, each offering distinct benefits to buyers and suppliers: information sharing, joint sense making and knowledge integration.

- *Information sharing* takes place when companies exchange important data about sales, customer needs, market structures and demand levels.
- *Joint sense making* occurs when supply chain partners work together to solve operational problems, analyze and discuss strategic issues and facilitate communication about the relationship. Since individual partners often interpret the same information differently, intercompany teams can help create a common understanding.
- *Knowledge integration* occurs when supply chain partners develop relationship-specific memories, providing everyone with a common understanding of idiosyncratic routines and procedures governing the relationship. This often results in collective problem solving that benefits both the companies and the relationship as a whole.

These knowledge-sharing activities constitute mechanisms that can make or break supply chain relationships.

In organizations, typically however vital corporate knowledge often gets trapped in information silos like email inboxes, functional silos, structured information systems like ERP, CRM and SRM systems, and more importantly within the minds of employees and supply partners who create, recognize, archive, access and apply knowledge in carrying out their daily tasks (Nonaka and Konno 1998).

Indeed, many companies' today, regardless of location, size or industry sector are struggling with interconnecting knowledge, talent, ideas and relationships both within their own organisational environment and across their supply chains.

With the development and evolution of social networking sites such as Facebook, Linked In, Twitter etc, whereby people connect and collaborate, share personal experiences, and subjective insights, the appeal of social networking for companies to achieve close communities with employees, customers, and suppliers is increasing (Khan & Khan 2012; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Mayer, 2009; Yang & Chen, 2008). Such virtual communities can provide similar benefits to traditional social networking methods that enhance innovation and collaborative activity, but with the added advantage of speed, and free from boundaries of time or space (Ganley &Lampe 2009). Indeed, recent evidence shows companies' are beginning to consider web based 'social networking' as a community-building platform to sharing knowledge, (Bredl et al 2012; Annabi et al 2012; Álvarez et al, 2009; Tsai, 2009. A recent special report in the *Economist* stated that social-networking technologies are creating considerable benefits for the businesses that embrace them. The openness and richness of social networks can foster a fertile environment for the creation of entirely new knowledge, while also accelerating the innovation rate (Majewski et al 2012; Seufert et al 1999), Tsai and Ghoshal 1998)

The social aspect of learning and acquiring knowledge (know how, know why, know who and know what), is recognised as significant in these innovations. As such knowledge networking and community building to leverage, create sustain and share knowledge in a collaborative way is strongly emphasised through tools that support dialogue, discussion, observation and participation (Chatti et al 2007).

Whilst the literature on social networking as a collaborative tool (for learning and generating new knowledge) across and within commercial enterprises and their supply chains is relatively new, there are some good examples of existing commercial social networking software that has been applied successfully, that specifically encourage effective collaboration e.g. Yammer**,** a cloud-based enterprise social networking (ESN) system; TSB's_connect portal, and Podio from Citrix. Asda's recent launch of 'Sustain and Save Exchange' (Procurement Leaders Staff 2012) and Caterpillar Inc's 'Knowledge Network' are good examples of systems where opportunities for information, knowledge and learning's can be shared, questions raised, key documents posted, and focused activities attended, to spur new ideas and solve problems amongst members of a supply network.

Research into Supply chain networking is a particularly salient area expected to deliver a significant contribution to the knowledge transfer (and productivity) debate, and indeed there is increasingly recognition that supply chains are beginning to prioritise knowledge creation and exchange (Wu 2008) as in the case of ASDA above. Successful management of a supplier network in particular can potentially enhance the productivity of the supply chain through diffusion of knowledge. There is however, a generally adopted view that the potential of SCM synergies for the creation and transfer of useful knowledge has not yet been materialised (Giannakis 2008), and extensive knowledge sharing across supply chain still appears to be the exception rather than the rule (Lin 2005). Indeed, the findings of a recent study for the creation of value in organizations for example suggest that although firms in the UK for example, assign great importance to their suppliers as sources of new knowledge creation, their involvement in the generation of knowledge is low (Edwards et al 2004). There are a number of reasons and challenges associated with this. A key challenge concerns motivating supply chain members to engage in knowledge sharing and generating activities in the first place (Grant 2013, Ardichvili et al 2003), and a second challenge is the difficulty in generating and transforming knowledge into organizational action, both internally as well as across supply chain partners (Capo Vicedo et al 2011). A further key issue concerns the reluctance of companies to share information and knowledge beyond their own internal boundaries. This has implications for generating systems based supply chains innovations, which can impact greatly on customer focus as well as on operational efficiencies.

Rationale for study

Conducting business in the financial services sector, requires collaboration across multiple parties within a supply chain. Indeed, for agile industries such as insurance and banking, which depend on complex processes of multiple individuals exchanging information, knowledge, ideas, and insights, interaction, via social networks for example, could potentially deliver a huge set of efficiencies and opportunities for rethinking core supply chain and internal processes.

Business in the financial services industry traditionally requires the input, participation and decisions of many stakeholders. For example, risk managers, actuaries, IT and marking/distribution staff often collaborate in product development. Lloyds of London uses collaborative technologies to cut claims costs for all the claims in the entire London Insurance market (Kontzer 2002). In motor vehicle claims processing, repairers, assessors claims staff, policy holders and legal representatives need to provide inputs and make decisions at different stages of the claims process. Despite this need, and some minor developments in collaborative knowledge sharing, up to now, firms in the financial services industry are not seen as conducive to fostering knowledge sharing and generating collaborations across their supply chains in a pro-active way (Dawson 2004).

Insurers are beginning to look to incorporate collaboration technologies into their operating models, to improve process efficiency and knowledge sharing (Josefowicz 2011, Kontzer 2002), and the use of social media to assist in the co-ordination of knowledge sharing and other business activities is only starting to be explored. This can allow companies to stay close to the changing desires of their customers and the changing trends in the market. However, the use of such approaches and technologies presents a new set of challenges to these organizations, who are not used to managing knowledge transfer in this way. Included in these challenges are monitoring appropriate content for sharing or archiving issues, measuring the benefits of these new tools, integrating these new tools into existing workflow, communication and archiving systems and understanding the motivations prompting people to share knowledge or participate in virtual communities, in an industry that has typically always used private communication channels.

The KNOWNET project seeks to build on these challenges by identifying and measuring the value of social networking across multiple groups and stakeholders in two insurance companies and their suppliers. Specifically, the project addresses the organizational contexts, and commitments, motivations of multiple groups and stakeholders prior to developing, building and trialling a bottom up, user designed web based interactive environment - a Supplier Social Network (SSN), to support and facilitate exchange of good ideas, insights, tacit and explicit knowledge, innovations etc. The project will also develop a tool for measuring accurate and effective knowledge transfer, as well as measuring participant engagement and motivation to sharing new ideas, insights and knowledge in a conservative sector such as insurance.

Social Network Analysis

In addition to building a socially interactive SSN framework, the project also uses social network analysis (SNA) techniques as a modelling tool to better understand knowledge management in a multi-level SC.

The SNA perspective views any system as a set of interrelated actors or nodes. Actors represent entities at various levels of collectivity, such as persons, companies, countries, and so on (Borgatti and Li, 2009). SNA is essentially the mapping and measuring of relationships and flows between people, groups, organizations, computers, or other information and knowledge processing entities (Hanenman 2002). A key output of SNA is the knowledge map which provides insight for improving business and organisational processes (Liebowictz 2005). Knowledge maps may help identify intellectual capital (Liebowitz 2003, socialise new members and enhance organizational learning (Wexler 2001). Several authors propose SNA techniques (Boschma and Ter Wal, 2007; Borgatti et al., 2009) as appropriate to model business networks. In fact, there have been many previous works from supply chain management using these techniques (Carter et al. 2007; Mueller et al., 2007; Ozkul and Barut, 2009; Borgatti and Li, 2009; Choi and Wu, 2009; Bernardes, 2010). The use of SNA techniques in this project is expected to provide useful insights into how RSA's SSN can reinforce their collaborative

behaviours and activities to not only enhance their relationships, but to also achieve competitive advantages for the SSN as a whole.

Strategy for Interworking with other projects (3 stages)

The KNOWNET consortium has developed a plan for all partners to follow with regards to developing the subject matter further via the interworking with other projects also working in the field. The plan will take effect in the first half of year one and conclude close to projection completion.

The aim of the 'interworking plan' is to gain as much knowledge as possible around the who, and what research is currently being undertaken in the field of social media (and social networking analysis) as a vehicle for knowledge transfer in business. Inevitably the strategy for collaborative working with other projects will involve as a first stage, the need to disseminate information about KNOWNET as widely as possible, and therefore a large part of the 'interworking plan' involves dissemination.

Stage 1: Dissemination and awareness raising of KNOWNET

All partners (but the focus will be on BU and UPDV) to:

1. Identify similar research in using social networks to generate knowledge sharing-across EU and other funders (e.g. Marie Curie IAPP's; Knowledge transfer partnerships KTP's –Technology Strategy Board-UK). The plan involves a focus on current research:
2. Methodology/approach
3. Implementation
4. Findings
5. Lessons learnt
6. Practical implications
7. Research implications
8. Complementing other research in the field
9. Developing further the concept via new research avenues
10. Developing research groupings of academics specialising in the field.

    This can be achieved in a number of ways:

    a) via a review of current publications in the area. As part of deliverables 2.1 (UPV) and 3. 1(Brunel), both universities will be carrying out an extensive review of the literature in the fields of SNA and knowledge networking using social media. Given the relative newness of the subject area and the application of social media tools in businesses for the exchange of knowledge, the literature will include primarily academic journal publications, but will also incorporate the latest information in trade journals. This will enable us to identify the research design, implementation processes and lessons learnt from previous research in the area, and identify the salient points/ avoid duplication of effort and utilise and identify key authors/researchers in the field. A review form has been designed to collect the salient data from relevant literature. The key areas include: context and objectives; Research methodology; software packages and networking tools; Benefits; disadvantages and critical points; Lessons learnt; practical and theoretical implications. A form is attached to the appendix of this paper.

b) Attending conferences in the field. A list of key conferences in the areas of knowledge management and supply chain management was drawn up. The partners agreed to attend key conference sessions to disseminate findings and raise awareness on the project, invite feedback, invite collaboration in future projects to develop the area further.

c) Abstracts have been submitted to a number of conferences. To date Brunel university has attended a conference at Cambridge Symposium (paper attached in appendix1).

Brunel will be chairing an invited session at SDM'2014 International Conference on Sustainable Design and Manufacturing, Cardiff, Wales, UK on the 28-30 April 2014. A number of papers from the project have been submitted and are accepted for conference publication.

Brunel have submitted a paper to the 21 st International Annual EurOMA Conference taking place in Palermo, Italy, June 20-25, 2014.

Dissemination of early stage results via non electronic and interactive means:

- **Non-electronic means:** this will include established means of knowledge transfer such as Articles in topic-specific journals (The international journal of knowledge Management, Supply chain Management: an international journal; Academy of Management Review) Brochures and Posters (distributed at conferences and workshops), Publications in various broadcast media (will be published at strategic times when major achievements have been made), promotional campaigns, business papers and monographs focus on the dissemination of project results. The non-electronic dissemination is proposed mainly for target groups such as experts and professionals.
- **Interactive means:** via Academic and socio-economic conferences such as: IPSERA 2014 EUROMA, EU organised events and conferences, Trade fairs and exhibitions. The interactive type of dissemination is proposed for groups with a high level of information need and involvement.

KNOWNET will seek non-traditional, methods to promote its results: via the KNOWNET website www.knownet.org.uk , 'In-Company' seminars and targeted workshops and industry forums and webinars. The website, targeted for early establishment, will form both a promotional tool and a reference point for the activities in this project.

The research papers from the project will be uploaded into research archives, for example BURA (Brunel University Research Archive), so that they are visible to more audiences.

- **The private sector dissemination strategy** will take a number of forms including the use of interactive face to face mediums at supplier away day workshops, regional and international management meetings and ultimately through staff training programs around the implementation and management of innovative knowledge interaction systems. Additionally, the private sector will use an internal company blog, and staff meetings and newsletters to disseminate the research internally. Externally, the private sector partner will utilize its relationships with industry trade groups such as the AIB in the UK and UNESPA in Spain to disseminate the results of the project.

Audiences that the KNOWNET consortium is looking to address and learn from include

- Academics and researchers in the field at universities and business schools
- Chief executives
- Managing directors
- Chief knowledge officers

- Information technology directors and managers
- Strategic development and planning managers
- Consultants
- Quality managers and directors
- Intellectual asset managers
- Benchmarking managers
- Libraries and information centres serving the needs of the above
- FMCG industries - especially food
- Manufacturing companies - especially automotive and electrical components
- Service industries - especially IT, transport and distribution
- The provision of public services - especially health care and defence

Stage 2 : Learning from others and modifications to KNOWNET

KNOWNET has developed a website with the project presentation and special sections for the targeted communities. The website will have a public and private area. The private area, (with codified access), will be accessible only to Consortium members and will include work papers, update of conclusions and templates of common use by partners. The public area of the project website will provide a first access point for interested business parties, organisations and individuals into the KNOWNET project. Key results and public project deliverables will be published on this website, but also added value services will be offered such as newsletters, RSS feeds, or synchronous and asynchronous communication with project partners. The long term objective of the website is to create a community of interested parties (e.g. stakeholders and end-users) around the project, to accelerate their involvement, and to create awareness of the research results. At the same time, the public aspect of the website invites interest and is open for comments from external bodies, and researchers who are interested in the research being carried out by the partners. This approach will enable us to learn from other studies and practitioners as well as implement ongoing modifications to the KNOWNET platform.

Stage 3 : Developing the Field

A) To make contact with the researchers involved in similar research areas to discuss research similarities/ challenges/ research results(BU and UPDV)

To date Brunel University has been working closely with the University of Westminster, and in particular Dr's Dotsika and Dr Keith Patrick on further developing the idea of social media impact on knowledge management in business.

B) To pursue opportunities to developing further research in the area.

Brunel University fellows are exploring possible avenues of research on the value of social media tools researchers from the University of Westminster, London, who have been specialising in this field. The University of Westminster have been engaged in a knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) with a London based legal services company Reynolds Porter Chamberlin on a collaborative project to implement a social media based intranet tool for knowledge transfer.

Both groups (BU and University of Westminster) are now in the process of exploring future directions in a collaborative project, with an application in a different industrial setting.

Brunel University has also been working with Panagiotis Tsimiklis, Sheng Feng Qin, Stephen Green, Sharon Baurley, Charalampos Makatsoris at the School of Engineering and Design, Brunel University London, UK, on OPEN INNOVATION MODELS FOR KNOWLEDGE DRIVEN FOOD AND PACKAGING MANUFACTURING, a Brunel /EPSRC funded project 2013.

UPV fellows have interworked with Dr. Guillermina Tormo, UPV Lecturer and a collaborator researcher of the Spanish National project entitled "Operations Design and Management in Global Supply Chains (GLOBOP) (Ref. DPI2012-38061-C02-01)". Dr. Tormo was in Brunel University London for August, 2013 working with the Brunel Team and Dr. Josefa Mula from the UPV team. During this working sessions were planned different research lines related to the study of knowledge networks for improving the decision making on internationalization of operations. Furthermore, further research related to the analysis of best practices of internationalization of operations in the KNOWNET framework were addressed.

The Spanish fellows have also interworked with Dr. Xavier Molina, Lecturer at the Universitat Jaume I, researcher of the Spanish National project entitled “The role of the creative industry on the innovation of the Valencian industrial clusters. An approach from a social network perspective”

C) Identify the practical challenges that exist in development and implementation of social networks to generate knowledge sharing. (All partners)
D) Learning from these projects (All partners) from the process of identifying business requirements ; software issues, implementation issues, etc

Some initial observations to engagement in an SSN from the Westminster RPC study include:

- a) Facilitators: impact of leadership; openness to a culture of sharing knowledge; a tangible business requirement
- b) Barriers: the technology itself; lack of a clear business requirement; lack of training
- c)Tensions: balancing open knowledge flows with regulatory requirements such as copyright and confidentiality- clear guidance as to the purpose of the system, and best practice in sharing external and client related content.
- d) Need for bottom up adoption driving use, as well as top down (leadership) providing the business requirements and permission to use the technologies.

E) Incorporating knowledge or modifying KNOWNET in the light of findings from the research (All partners).
F) Organize a workshop with different project researchers to exchange information and disseminate the results in order to publish a book in a prestigious editorial (Wiley, Iglobal, Kluwer, Springer) from the results of the workshop.

Finally, the KNOWNET consortium will be organizing a conference to exchange information on knowledge networking and the use of social media to achieve knowledge networking. The aim is to disseminate the results via conference papers, Journal articles and book chapters, and use the conference to network with other researchers working in the field. Brunel University has been invited to chair an invited session for **SDM'2014 International Conference on Sustainable Design and Manufacturing on the subject of knowledge management and the Learning organization.** http://sdm-14.kesinternational.org/

Some key benefits of conferencing in this way is to :

- Advance the consortium understanding of knowledge management as an organizational core competency.
- Learn how to put knowledge management to work to gain competitive advantages.
- Explore implementation techniques via case studies.
- Share knowledge through debate and information exchange.
- Find out how to overcome the main barriers to knowledge management and knowledge networking using social media tools.
- Benchmark our current knowledge management practices against best practice organizations.
- Develop a research agenda to inform policy making and management decisions.
- Assess new directions in knowledge management and knowledge networks.

G) Explore the possibilities of advancing beyond the state of the art/KNOWNET with potential co-partners-Future research collaborations (All partners).

H) Explore opportunities to work with other researchers in the field of knowledge networking on the Horizon 2020 calls. Horizon 2020's major goal is helping to bridge the gap between research and the market. Research remains essential but innovation plays now an important role. This market-driven approach includes the creation of public-private partnerships to bring together the needed resources, and will be an important source of funding for collaborative international research on knowledge networks in the future.

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Appendices:

Publications and dissemination activities

1. The Annual Cambridge International Manufacturing Symposium Disruptive supply network models in future industrial systems: configuring for resilience and sustainability, 19 and 20 September 2013: Moller Centre, Cambridge, UK 'Supply Chain Knowledge Networking' Grant S B and O Gustafson Pearce.

2. S B Grant (2013) 'KNOWNET: Exploring Interactive Knowledge Networking across Insurance Supply Chains'. In the International Journal of Production Management and Engineering.

3. SDM'2014 International Conference on Sustainable Design and Manufacturing; Cardiff, Wales, UK 28-30 April 2014. Conference details: invited session on Knowledge management and the learning organization. Sustainable Design and Manufacturing, 28-30 April 2014, Cardiff, UK http://sdm-14.kesinternational.org/

4. Literature Review (SNA analysis) UPV (external publication forthcoming)

5. Literature Review (Social networking tools) BU (external publication forthcoming.

6. **Grant S B '**KNOWNET: Exploring Interactive Knowledge Networking across Insurance Supply Chains', Invited paper for the International Journal of Production Management and Engineering Jan 2014 Vol 2 No1 pp7-14.

Supply Chain Knowledge Networking

Dr Susan Grant and Dr Olinkha Gustafson-Pearce
Dr Susan Grant is the Principal Investigator on the KNOWNET project,
Dr Olinkha Gustafson-Pearce is a fellow on the KNOWNET project

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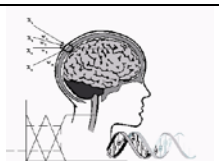
Abstract:
The astronomical growth and evolution of platforms such as Linked In, Facebook and Twitter reflect the success of Web 2.0 technologies; more importantly it illustrates how businesses and consumers will expect to interact with and use digital media in the future, for all sorts of reasons, including driving innovation. The KNOWNET project (An FP7 Marie Curie funded project) examines the potential of current social networking technology via an immersive 3D medium, to support sustained knowledge sharing and generation across a multi-level supply chain in the insurance market.

The aims and objectives of KNOWNET are to develop, build and test an interactive Supplier social network (SSN) framework, designed to support innovation and leaning where both explicit and tacit knowledge and experience of suppliers and their employees can be shared. The SSN will consist of a set of web based tools, applications and exercises supporting the formation of communities of inquiry and promoting learning through social interaction. Given that the idea of web based interactive SSN's is relatively novel, and a comparatively unexplored area in the field of SCM, the project seeks to measure participants attitudes and behaviours surrounding the concept of virtual supplier communities. It will explore the creation and sustainability of personal relationships, commitment and trust between parties, for the exchange of knowledge. Additionally, we seek to assess the value of social media tools to enhance supply chain knowledge collaborations and learning, and the use of SNA techniques to map and measure the relationships and flows of information/knowledge between individuals and groups within the various supply chains, and gain insight into the roles they play within the network.

The concept of collaborative networking is particularly timely in the insurance industry as it looks to strengthen the inter-organizational ties between its suppliers and external agencies, for improving processes, accelerating innovation, fostering creativity, and sharing experiences and local knowledge amongst its supplier networks. The research outputs will enable the industrial participants to assess the inherent value and efficacy of social networking as a knowledge sharing tool which can impact on a range of KPI's within a large supplier base, as well as provide opportunities for rethinking core processes across a breadth of insurance categories.
The KNOWNET academic industry collaboration will provide the type of expertise in learning via 'social networks currently not available within the European Insurance sector. The author believes KNOWNET's basic idea can be applied across a range of financial and manufacturing sectors.

Key words: Supply chains, Knowledge networking, Insurance.



INVITED SESSION SUMMARY

Title of Session: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Name, Title and Affiliation of Chair:
Dr Susan Grant, School of Engineering and Design, Brunel University, UK

Details of Session (including aim and scope):

If knowledge sharing and collaboration lie at the core of providing added-value to either products or services, and ultimately in building and sustaining competitive advantage, can we improve the knowledge sharing and generating process? The aim of this invited session is to contribute to the ongoing debate on how knowledge assets impact organizational performance, examine the characteristics of such value generating processes, assess factors which affect the process of building organizational capabilities and competencies and look at how organizations translate specific capabilities into competitive sustainable advantage.
The session invites papers from researchers who are examining the relationships between knowledge, learning, capabilities, innovation and competitive advantage in different forms of organization: clusters, networks, regions, as well as practitioners who are working towards designing knowledge management models and systems that are closer to the needs of the ultimate users and the organization needs and requirements.

Contributions from both industry and academia are solicited. The aim of the session is to raise the awareness of this type of work and to roadmap the future activities in this area. The initial results of EU projects in the area of knowledge management and the learning organization will be also presented.
Topics covered by the invited session include (but are not limited to):

- Knowledge management and the learning organization
- Linking knowledge management to performance initiatives
- Retaining knowledge - human and intellectual capital
- Using information technology to develop knowledge management
- Knowledge management and innovation
- Knowledge networks
- Measuring the value of knowledge already within an organization
- Knowledge sharing in open innovation

Main Contributing Researchers / Research Centres (tentative, if known at this stage):
Website URL of Call for Papers (if any): Submission of papers: 17 January 2014 Notification of Acceptance: 7 February 2014 Receipt of publication files: 26 February 2014 Inclusion of Papers in the Proceedings Every paper must have at least one author who has registered for the conference with payment by the Early Registration Deadline for the paper to appear in the proceedings.
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