

Information and knowledge management in the strategic context: a practical approach to professional development

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Abstract

Considering the efforts of organisations in information processing and competency development, in line with their strategic objectives, this article presents a practical approach to the professional development of information and knowledge management in the individuals participating in the business process. From the information science and administrative practice, a practical model for identifying the elements that make up the development of the associated topics and accompany the acquired knowledge is illustrated. Information and knowledge have become the decisive factors in the competitive environment of organisations and are considered the main strategic components in the business environment for much of today's business model.

Keywords: Information management; knowledge management; human resources; professional development.

The transformation of information and knowledge

From the transformations of society and its industrial revolutions, from the manual process, through the administration of data and now to knowledge — and of the new administrative models — participatory, democratic and mixed — companies come to realise the importance of documents and of the information, worrying about its management and seeking a greater organisation, guard and destination. Consequently, the treatment of information began to appear in the strategic planning of knowledge organisations in order to follow the changes of the current knowledge society. In this context, information and knowledge have become the most important factors in the competitive environment of organisations, being considered the main components to maintain the level of competitiveness involving production, exchange and sale of products and services (Peppard & Ward, 2016). According to Paré, Trudel, Jaana, & Kitsiou (2015), knowledge and information are increasingly embedded in all our everyday products. New jobs will be jobs of knowledge — just like old jobs. The importance of information to organisations is universally accepted, constituting one of the most important resources, whose management and use are directly related to the expected success. Information is also considered and used as a management tool (Schwalbe, 2015). Information management, in the context of information science, adopting management principles, is understood as a set of concepts, principles, methods and techniques used in administrative practice and management to achieve the mission and the predetermined objectives (Lai, Hsu, Lin, Chen, & Lin, 2014).

The development of competences in the professional context is continuous and must be consolidated from the research, understanding and experimentation, as shown in Figure 1, in the classical knowledge development model, as follows.

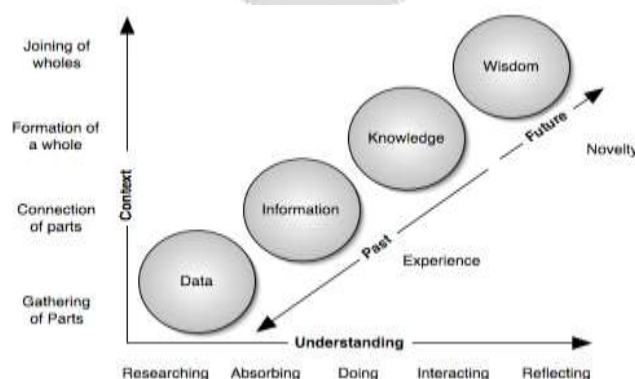


Figure 1: Knowledge development model

Source: Adapted from Cleveland, 1982; Clark, 2004; Cooper, 2014.

The tools of research, planning and a practical approach to develop competence of individuals in organisations are presented as important elements in the strategy of today’s organisations and permanent search for effectiveness and competitiveness.

Cycle of information and knowledge management in the strategic context

The management of information and knowledge when associated with management strategy presupposes a continuous integration for the development of the common objectives of the organisation, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Integration of information and knowledge management in the strategic context.

The catalyst for the guidelines is strategic management, which needs to assess all its processes and its real situation and develop constant corrective actions, focusing on its objectives and goals and developing its strategies in order to maintain its survival, growth and competitive differentiation of the organisation.

The management of information and knowledge when associated with strategy management presupposes full integration with a focus on actions that aim at the common interests of the organisation, previously planned, as shown in Figure 2.

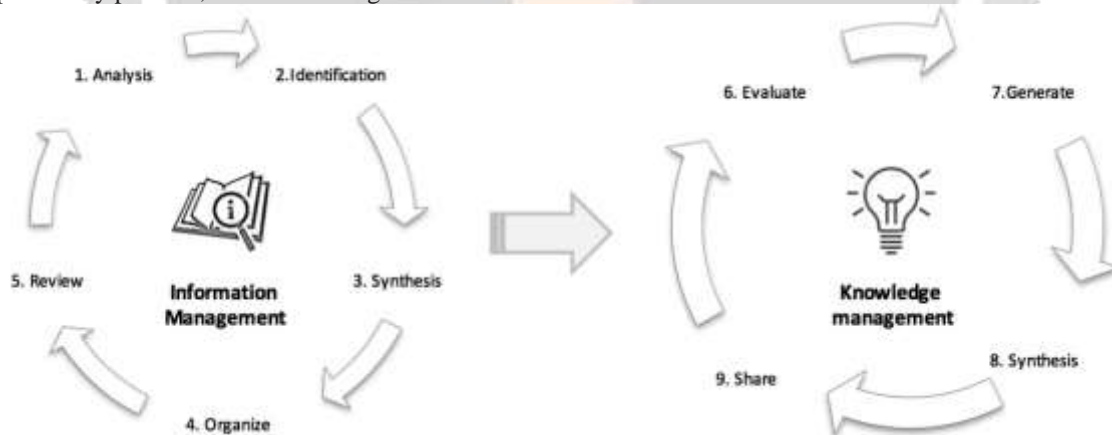


Figure 3: Cycles of information and knowledge management.

We can list the elements of information and knowledge management, when associated with strategic management, with different parameters and in a continuous way, organising the routine to reach the goal, through cycles.

The information management cycle is associated with the following factors: a) nNeeds analysis; b) Identify the available information; c) Synthesise criteria for information selection; d) Organise the form of knowledge generation; e) Review of the information available to feed back the cycle. The knowledge management cycle is a process that involves: a) Knowledge assessment; b) Knowledge generation; c) Synthesis of knowledge; d) Sharing knowledge.

Many of us practise knowledge management every day without realising it by providing or using a variety of knowledge management approaches. These include websites, databases, mobile applications, guidelines, abstracts, workshops, meetings, conferences, webinars and more.

Proposal for an approach to professional development

The proposal of professional development is based on the main topics of strategic management, involving the diagnosis, direction and surveillance and from there, it is associated to the parameters of information management and knowledge. All parameters are then adjusted to the managerial stages of: a) Analysis and planning; b) Studies and experimentation; c) Verification; d) Diffusion. Table 1 shows the associated steps and parameters, as follows:

Table 1. Managerial stages and their associated parameters of strategy, information and knowledge.

	Stages	Analysis & Plan	Research, Study & Experimentation	Check	Spread
Strategic Management	Diagnosis Objective Surveillance	x	x	x	
Information Management	Analysis Identification Synthesis Organise		x		
Knowledge Management	Evaluate Generate Share			x	x

Figure 4 below illustrates the proposed approach using a continuous cycle model to highlight the linkage of the strategy, information and knowledge management parameters and to represent the stage in which it is inserted. It begins in the first cycle (*strategy*), in the planning stage through the diagnostic parameter and progressively goes through the second cycle (*information*) in the parameters associated with research, study and experimentation, until the third cycle (*knowledge*). It has a continuous character, since it is necessary to feed back the cycle after the diffusion and results obtained, understanding that knowledge must always be adjusted to the professional needs, associated to the strategy of the organisation.



Figure 4: Continuous cycle of knowledge for professional development.

To follow the evolution in professional development in the context of strategy, information and knowledge, it is proposed to use a spiral chart on the continuous cycle of knowledge, as shown in Figure 5, below.

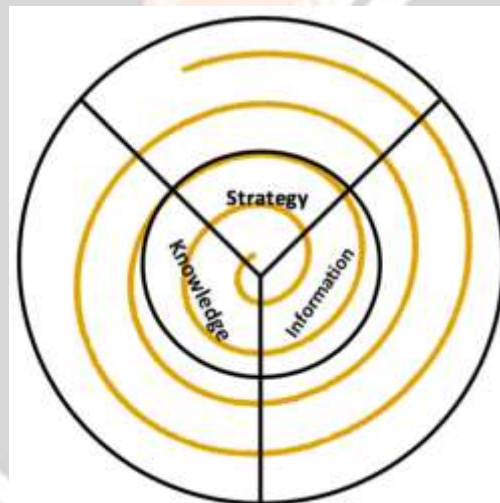


Figure 5: Spiral of evolution: professional development in the context of strategy, information and knowledge.

Through the continuous flow, the objectives are reached and the knowledge obtained is aligned with the organisation’s strategy, represented by the spiral, from outside to the centre of the circles, illustrating the evolution in professional development in the context of strategy, information and knowledge, since the intensities of actions are decreasing with the course of the steps and parameters reached according to the proposed goal.

Conclusions

Professional development requires a solid foundation of associated educational and technical foundations to enable an environment of generation and knowledge sharing aligned with business strategy. Planning, investment, training, supervision, and synergy are additional factors that are needed to achieve results. Information and knowledge in the strategic context have directly influenced organisations, with their complex and increasingly global and competitive environments. The decisions and practices adopted are based on the assimilation of information and its use in harmony with the organisational strategy.

A simplified approach emerges as a catalyst tool for actions and values that align and configure the organisation, minimising differences and enabling the generation and sharing of knowledge at all levels of the company, to achieve the informational autonomy of the organisation of knowledge.

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