KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: SOURCE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing sophistication and escalating complexities of information and communication technologies has, in various aspects, led to extensive changes in society, science and business. During this fascinating transformation, which has been characterized by both rapidity of ascent and decentralization of purpose, knowledge has played a paramount role. Part of this vital role derives from two key facets of knowledge – not only does it generate value, but it is unique and inimitable as well. These facets are crucial, but not exclusive, in supporting the premise that a company’s only enduring source of competitive advantage is knowledge.

Because researchers, marketers and pundits have come to recognize the importance of knowledge, they naturally look to acquire a knowledge advantage by specifically tending to focus on understanding and utilizing knowledge. McKinsey consultants agree, stating that knowledge has indeed become, “one of the trendiest topics in management circles.” These factors have led forward-thinking businesses to focus their endeavors on developing knowledge intensive products (product intelligence) and processes (process intelligence), as well as better management of marketing knowledge.

The purpose of this paper is to not only provide an introduction into the burgeoning field of knowledge management, but also to delve into how knowledge management particularly juxtaposes with marketing areas of business. This paper looks specifically at the marketing aspects of knowledge management by providing analysis of the abundance of quality research articles on knowledge management composed in either English or German. To begin, an observation of the importance of knowledge as basis for competitiveness is discussed. An important distinction between data, information, and knowledge is then made, followed by comprehensive typology of knowledge as it is to be found in business. Next, the terms “market knowledge” and “marketing knowledge,” along with its family of related terminology, are defined and their nuances clarified. A brief report on the development of the knowledge management research and its numerous facets is then made. The core of this paper, which follows, is structured around a comprehensive overview of the core concepts of knowledge management and their relevance for the marketing field. Key implications of knowledge management on marketing in profit and non-profit organizations are also briefly discussed within this core. To conclude, this paper proposes additional materials for further research.

Key words: knowledge management, typology of knowledge, marketing knowledge, market knowledge, knowledge management concepts

1. Introduction

Knowledge obviously plays an extremely important role in business in regards to obtaining and maintaining a competitive advantage. Perhaps not as obvious, however, is the direct correlation between knowledge and the bottom line. This financial correlation can be strongly linked by the fact that 80% to 90% of production costs of products and services can be attributed to knowledge intensive construction and development (Scherrer, 1999, p.131). About one third of the workforce is comprised of knowledge workers whose primary function is to transform data and information into valuable knowledge (Drucker, 1993, p.99; Oelsnitz/Hagmann, 2003, p.17). When the sheer numbers of this workforce are considered, along with the crucial role they carry out, it’s easy to perceive how this subsection directly influences their respective companies’ present and future income and market share potential.

In order to remain competitive in ongoing globalization, the companies that serve as the backbone in leading world economies are striving to utilize knowledge more efficiently (North, 2002, p.1) and learn from international markets (Doz et al., 2004, p.2). Although knowledge is all-important to powerhouse companies that are pillars of the world economy, knowledge is at least as important for businesses in developing countries (Thorow, 1997, p.96). In other words, for both stabilized and burgeoning businesses in all parts of the business world, the age of the knowledge society has truly come to fruition (Drucker, 1993).

In order to understand the age of the knowledge society that Drucker and other experts recognize, it’s useful to give some relevant historical context to how this society has come to be in existence. The term “knowledge company” was introduced by Sveiby in the mid 1980s, and since then it has been a permanently discussed topic in business and academic circles (Starbuck, 1992, p.717; Hansen et al., 1999, p.106; Birkinshaw, 2001, p.11). Here are just a few milestones:

- **Price Waterhouse Coopers** incorporated knowledge management into their strategic plans in 1989
- **Skania**, a prominent Swedish insurance com-
pany, blazed a new trail by being the first to include a knowledge balance in its yearly report


Once the historical context of knowledge is considered, there’s a logical segue into an important question: so just how important has knowledge become in business today? In fact, its importance cannot be overstated. Knowledge companies today regard knowledge as their most valuable resource (Starbuck, 1992, p.715; Edvinsson/Sullivan, 1996, p.361) and they are perfectly aware that knowledge requires the same careful treatment as all other company resources (Probst/Eppler, 1998, p.148).

More efficient and effective deployment of a company’s internal and external knowledge strives to improve organisational performance (Bürgel/Saubert, 1998; Almeida, 1996; Bierly/Chakrabarty, 1996), i.e. indirectly acquiring competitive advantage through novel or improved products and processes. The *raison d’etre* of the firm is no longer the saving of transactional cost, but rather the company is seen as a knowledge generation unit (Foss, 1996, p.471; Shin et al., 2001, p.335). The firm’s modern purpose, in stark contrast to the days of old, includes both building up of competences and staying flexible in order to be able to react quickly and cost efficiently to market signals (Leonard-Barton et al., 1994, p.121). Of course, the final objective of the firm hasn’t changed - to increase the company’s value, market share, and bottom line (North, 2002, p.3; Bach/Homp, 1998, p.139f.).

Up to now, the discussion has been broad, but it’s equally valuable to consider the firm on a more micro level - where there is marketing, there is of course a need for marketers. So what role do marketers play in knowledge and knowledge management? Marketers both demand and supply knowledge intensively. Marketing managers today are facing a tougher climate in which to make decisions, and this climate is characterized by increasing complexity and the continuously shortening of time intervals between decisions. Therefore, marketing managers today understand that their job requires careful market monitoring, which in turn facilitates both the acquisition and generation of new marketing knowledge, and also to significant trendsetting. This knowledge is utilized and transferred throughout the organisation, and thus adequately answers to the dynamically changing environment being conceived (Schlegelmilch/Penz, 2002, p.5).

2. Definitions

Because knowledge has a dynamic, subjective, and context-dependent nature, it simply cannot be uniformly defined (Krogh/Venzin, 1995, p.418). Knowledge, in fact, shouldn’t be thought of in terms of being an objective absolute, but rather its definition varies depending upon the specific theory (such as relative, constructive, or post-modern points of view) in which the prevailing context uses it (Blackler, 1993, p.854ff.).

This paper assumes the following classification of knowledge: data are raw materials of signs; information is data that gains meaning through preparation and embedding in certain context; knowledge arises through the connecting and interpretation of information and is used as a basis for further proceedings. Figure 1 below illustrates the pathway data follow from being a sign to an actual competitive advantage:

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**Figure 1. Knowledge Stages (North, 1991, p.41)**
Market knowledge focuses on customers and their individual and collective preferences and behaviour. Market knowledge, which marketers use in their decision making process, can be derived from customers through retailers, from consumer-based market research, or it can manifest into market knowledge supplied by third party providers (Shaw et al., 2001). Marketing knowledge comprises a set of instruments and concepts that is used to understand customers, and during the process, to persuade them. Therefore, this particular type of knowledge delivers strong foundations for a well-defined marketing strategy (Simonin, 1999).

Organisational knowledge is manifested among others in patents, processes, technologies, management skills, technical expertise and experience about customers, consumers, and suppliers (Jordan/Jones, 1997, p.322). This type of knowledge is value-generating, unique, difficult to imitate (Barney, 1986b; Reed/De Fillippi, 1990; Shoemaker, 1992; Amit/Schoemaker, 1993; Black/Boal, 1994; Teece, 1998) and transfer (Grant, 1991; Chi, 1994), and is distinctive in that it’s the only economic resource that doesn’t get exhausted after being shared (Riesenberger, 1998, p.96; Janig, 2004, p. 237f.). This makes organisational knowledge a crucial source for competitive advantage (Prahald/Hamel, 1990; Drucker, 1992; Quinn, 1992; Conner/Prahalad 1996; Grant 1996b; Prusak 1996; Roth, 1996; Spender/Grant, 1996; Grayson/O’Dell, 1998; Zack, 1999; Soo et al., 2002).

Kanevsky takes a creative and personified approach and figuratively compares organisational knowledge with the company’s genome: getting hold of it would enable cloning of the organisation, or reengineering and adjusting of the organisation to create a better version of it (Stewart, 1994, p.34). The organisational knowledge base comprises all cognitions, whether they are acquired through experience, imitation, value insights, communication, or deduction, and those which are gathered, organized, or embedded in a single context (Maier, 2002, p.66).

Knowledge Management (KM), which this paper focuses on in the greatest detail, is defined as an integrated, intervenient concept, which deals with the possibilities for design, handling, and developing of the organisational knowledge base (Raub/Romhardt, 1998, p.152) as well as the providing of a KM supportive environment, such as information and communication networks (Maier, 2002, p.48).

It’s important to note that there is a differentiation between strategic and operative KM (Rehæuser/Krcmar, 1996, p.17) as shown in the preceding Figure 1. The main difference between information and knowledge management is that the latter places higher value on utility for the user by means of careful synthesis, interpretation, and selection of the content, as well as constant feedback and users’ contributions. KM strives to innovate, whereas information management focuses on already existing processes. Therefore, KM holds a more pivotal role to a burgeoning business, while information management and KM are of more equal importance to a business that has achieved a level of growth stasis.

KM is strongly related to business processes, and marketing can be viewed as an interrelated group of highly complex, knowledge intensive, and dynamic business processes (Heisig, 2001). Thus, marketing appears to be a perfect implementation field of KM concepts.

3. Typology of Knowledge

As previously pointed out in the definitions section of this paper, knowledge is a complex concept that has multiple definitions, and consequentially, has multiple typologies that can be applied to it. Here are some typologies that some of the luminaries in the field of knowledge have authored:

- 1949 - Ryle divides knowledge into two categories: knowledge about the existence of something, and knowledge of how something functions
- 1983 - Based on Ryle’s division, Anderson uses the separation between declarative and procedural knowledge
- 1997 - McAulay et al. take a different approach and differentiate between distal and proximal knowledge
- 1997 - Nonaka/Tachauchi modify McAulay’s approach and define tacit and explicit knowledge, which is the most common differentiation today

Now that tacit and explicit knowledge have been pointed out as being the de facto standard in the labelling of knowledge, some clarification needs to be made between the two. Explicit knowledge can be presented in formal and systemized language, and can be saved in the form of information sheets, specifications, manuals, or formulas. Oppositely, tacit knowledge is very difficult to formalize and express. Mostly tacit knowledge can be gained through observation and it is contextually and culturally bound (Reed/DeFilippi, 1990, p. 89; Inkpen 1996, p. 126; Nonaka/Konno 1998, p. 42).

Examples of tacit knowledge are values, intuition, relation networks, skills, and abilities (Snowden 1999). Organisational knowledge, as well as marketing knowledge in particular, can be divided into two parts (Lyle/Schwenk, 1992): stable and long-term core (understanding of mission, vision and competition) and the periphery knowledge (interpreting signals from the surrounding environment).

Much of the prolific research during the past
15 years or so has led to a wide spectrum of knowledge types that partially overlap. A comprehensive overview of the typology of knowledge, as it applies to organisational science, is presented in Table 1 on the following page.

It’s interesting to note that Sveiby differentiates between two aspects of the knowledge capital: on one hand individual competences and internal structure predominantly researched by managers, and on the other hand the external structure, which is a research focus of marketers. To the external structure belong both market knowledge (Jaworski/Kohli, 1993; Moorman et al. 1993; Day, 1994), which is declarative in its nature, and marketing knowledge (Simonin, 1999), which is procedural in nature. Marketing knowledge is very important, because simply to have market knowledge is not enough to implement marketing strategies (Andreasen et al., 2005, p.50).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Author(s) (Year)</th>
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<td>event</td>
<td>Knowledge about events and trends</td>
<td>Krogh/Roos (1996)</td>
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4. Scientific Background

To better understand knowledge and how it juxtaposes with knowledge management, it’s useful to delve into the scientific background of both knowledge and KM. The breakthrough work of Porter (1983) dismissed the dominant industrial economics paradigm, and instead introduced the contemporary valid understanding that competitive advantage is to be explained by different product-market positioning. Furthermore, the resource-based theory states that competitive advantage is a result of different resource endowment and integrated approaches to use one’s critical resources (Wernerfelt, 1984; Dierickx/Cool, 1989; Prahalad/Hamel, 1990; Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991; Amit/Schoemaker, 1993; Bamberger/Wrona, 1996).

Companies that do not consider their stockpiled resources when making decisions are not able to achieve higher than average returns (Barney, 1986a, p.1232). Knowledge is acknowledged as the crucial source for competitive advantage from a plethora of researchers, and several (among others Nonaka, 1991; Thurow, 1997; Birkenshaw et al., 2000) claim that knowledge is the only resource that is able to provide sustainable competitive advantage.

Although KM is regarded as a relatively young field of science, its corresponding research work is characterized by very diverse disciplines that are used as a theoretical foundation (Maier, 2002, p.42). Published papers in the field of KM range widely from psychological research on learning, cognition and social structure, to the economic problems of competition and market structure (Argote et al., 2003, p.572). Figure 2 below shows just how diverse the field of KM has become in a relatively short amount of time.

![Figure 2. Research Areas Closely Connected to KM](image)

The development of the term “KM” can be seen as a movement from abstract to the concrete. This is similar to the research on organisational learning: to begin with general concepts are developed and afterwards the evolving processes within the organisational knowledge are monitored (Probst/Raub, 1998, p.132). Researchers focus mostly on efficiency and on management of knowledge, which originates within the company. However, in the long term it is much more important to succeed in importing and utilizing company external knowledge (Birkinshaw, 2001, p.16).

Part of what makes KM an interesting and stimulating field is that it is not fully established in its interpretation and is constantly undergoing metamorphosis. Since KM can be interpreted in such broad terms, naturally cultural borders further widen this interpretation. For example, although Japan and the United States share similar economic stability and growth, there is a significant difference between KM papers of Japanese and American researchers. In Japanese papers, the most discussed issues are the building up of a proper KM supporting environment, such as approaches that assure the employees’ commitment as well as building up supportive company culture. Special attention falls on knowledge creation and on transfer of tacit knowledge (socialisation), which is characterized by long-term perspective (Nonaka/Takeuchi, 1997). This line of thinking directly relates to the Japanese culture as a whole.
American researches, however, deal mostly with the distribution and reuse of explicit knowledge and focus on using technologies, knowledge projects, and markets. Americans regard efficient knowledge transfer as the main source of competitive advantage (Zander/Kogut, 1995; Schulz/Jobe, 2001). It can therefore be concluded that KM takes on a different shape depending upon the social and business culture in which it’s being applied.

Early research papers state that marketing knowledge is very difficult, or even impossible to transfer, because of its endogenous character (Pfeffer/Sutton, 1999). In today’s business climate, KM, along with e-business, customer relations, and branding, is acknowledged by marketers as a crucial area to work with. Marketing knowledge is just beginning to be successfully transferred from the commercial to the savvy realms of the non-profit sector (Andreasen et al., 2005, p.48).

5. KM Concepts and their Relevance to Marketing

Up to now, KM and marketing have been discussed in detail individually, but this section aims to put these two essentials of business in more of the same plane of thought. KM concepts are integrated management concepts that are supported by technical and non-technical systems, and they should assure the effective and efficient handling of knowledge (Achtenhagen/Wagner, 1998, p.79). Characteristically, for the importance of resource knowledge, there are a variety of perspectives that are used by the development of KM concepts, for example: strategic management (Morin, 1995; Probst et al., 1997), organisational learning (Schüppel 1996; Reinhardt/Pawloski, 1997), knowledge transformation processes (Nonaka/Takeuchi, 1997), system theory (Willke, 2001), internal markets (North, 2002), technocratic life cycle (Reháuser/Krcmar, 1996), as well as deploying concepts as foundation for diagnostics tools (APQC, 1999).

These integrated KM models have the advantage in that they illustrate relations and links between various management activities (Probst/Raub, 1998, p.133). KM processes, along the whole KM value chain (creation, storage, distribution and application), are integral parts of marketing tasks (Schlegelmilch/Penz, 2002, p.12ff.). Each of these models will now be discussed in detail, along with the years in which they came into prominence.

5.1. KM Phase Models

Krogh/Venzin (1995) develop an integrated activity model that comprises the following interdependent KM activities: knowledge identification and generation, along with competences development and innovation management. Central is the interrelation between organisational knowledge and competence development. The process from knowledge identification to implementation of the acquired competitive advantage is called knowledge transformation path. However, these activities only provide a potential to acquire competitive advantage. A priori, their contribution to the organisational success is unclear. If at all and to what extent those advantages will be realised depends on the quality of the KM itself (Krogh/Venzin, 1995, p.426).

Probst et al. (1997) develop the building blocks concept, anchored in strategic management. Knowledge identification, capturing, development, distribution, utilization, and storage serve as building blocks – all of which are attributed to a further block called knowledge objectives, which in turn are implicitly referred to by the company’s objectives. Because of this, the knowledge objectives block is a related means of a feedback channel to the final building block - knowledge evaluation. The general conditions are implicitly and judiciously considered in each single building block.

Reinhardt/Pawlowski (1997) present KM processes from organisational learning point of view. Their Model of Integrative KM includes various knowledge carriers (individual, group, and organisation), learning methods (single and double-loop learning), objectives (operative and strategic level), and learning levels (knowledge, culture, and behaviour). This model presents the cycle of organisational learning in four phases: identification and generation of relevant organisational knowledge, knowledge diffusion, integration, and modification of knowledge and action, all of which support KM effect measurement and scanning activities, such as climate analyses, learn barriers identification, etc.

Raub/Romhardt (1998) develop the concept of the Interventional Quadrates based on the concept of building blocks. The concept of Interventional Quadrates visualizes the areas of conflict in the different interventional dimensions of the KM activities. The authors state that there is not necessarily a right intervention, and KM is always living in conflicting areas.

Arthur Anderson and the American Productivity and Quality Centre (1999) construct a KM Framework Concept (APQC, 1999), which comprises seven KM processes: identification, creation, distribution, implementation, organisation, adjustment, and storage. Crucial for the effectiveness of these processes is the provision of favourable general conditions, such as knowledge supporting organisational culture and management, technology, and ongoing feedback on KM effects (APQC, 1999, p.8). The Framework Concept is merely a normative checklist and not an imple-
5.2. KM Life Cycle Model

The KM Life Cycle, developed by Rehbrüser/Krcmar (1996), is based on the technocratic understanding of knowledge and it is handling of mainly explicit knowledge. The model comprises five management phases: 1. management of knowledge and information sources; 2. management of knowledge and information carriers; 3. management of the knowledge supply; 4. demand and management of the infrastructure used for knowledge; and 5. information transfer and processing.

The KM Life Cycle Model presents a procedural, technically driven point of view and is problematic because the understanding of a self-controlling network conflicts with the idea that managers and marketers pursue a set of management objectives. Moreover, it is not clear how knowledge demand is to be derived out of changing general conditions. As this point is a very important one, marketing lives, in a manner of speaking, through interaction with the outer world, and of course this concept doesn’t have an implication in marketing.

5.3. Four Acts of KM

Schöppel (1996) focuses his research on the consumption of all principle achievable learning and knowledge potentials within an organisation. His conceptual frame for design of KM is based on four sequenced acts of KM. Firstly, an overview of the organisational base is delivered. Secondly, the knowledge process and the knowledge type are being analysed. Thirdly, learn and knowledge management barriers are identified. Lastly, company specific KM is designed based on the insights of the first three acts (Schöppel, 1996, p.192f.). These acts closely resemble the marketing planning process with situation analysis and action planning.

5.4. Knowledge Market Concept

Halal (1994) recognises that hierarchical and matrix organisational structures are not suitable for the contemporary business environment (Halal, 1994, p.69) and proposes a concept introducing the idea of a market within the organisation based on three principles. To begin with, departments are transformed into company units, which are strictly controlled regarding their business performance, however, they receive a considerable amount of acting freedom. Secondly, an economic structure is built up, which provides an environment for the decision making processes similar to the market environment, just with corrected market failures. The third principle is to guarantee a leadership style, which supports synergies through collective work.

North (1998) builds upon the Market Concept and introduces the Knowledge Market Concept. Its central issue is the scarcity of knowledge as an organisational resource. On one hand, the concept comprises design and governance of market conditions. On the other hand, there are processes and structures within it that belong to the operative KM, as well as to the creation of corporate identity, leadership approaches, and incentive systems (North, 2002, p.223). The Knowledge Market Concept is a holistic concept of the organisation and is especially useful in the handling of the resource knowledge from a business administration point of view.

5.5. Systematic KM

Willke (2001) applies the system theory to KM. Systematic KM describes a set of components of a systematic interrelation that have specific, system-relevant, and system-relative characteristics, such as system borders, resource development, structure design, process flow creation, organisational learning, and the materialisation of a shared vision.

This vision is defined as system-specific layout of the appearance of the future, in which the organisation sees itself as an active and strategic player. Vision is a relation between the organisation and its environment. Marketers are aware that marketing knowledge is highly complex and specific, and that various cultural contexts might require adjustments in the management of marketing and marketing knowledge. The expertise needed to master this
dynamic relation is mostly not available and therefore needs to be looked at from the ground floor.

5.6. The Knowledge Spiral

The Knowledge Spiral, created by Nonaka (1994), is a non-deterministic concept that depicts ongoing alternation between knowledge internalisation and externalisation along the various possible knowledge carriers (individual, group, organisation, alliance). This process is supported by communication, interaction and technical systems. Usually, the process begins with a socialising process among organisational members and customers, and it ends with the internalisation of the experience that was gained during the development and the production cycle (Nonaka et al. 1996). Thus, marketers can use this spiral process in all the elements of the marketing mix in order to better meet customers’ needs.

In the Knowledge Spiral, Nonaka states that new knowledge results by transforming tacit knowledge to tacit or explicit knowledge, and he introduces the SECI-Matrix. The SECI-Matrix demonstrates the dynamic connection between the different modes of knowledge transformation: socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation (Nonaka, 1994, p.18f.). Solely the transformation of explicit into explicit knowledge (combination) can result in knowledge that can exist isolated from the environment, therefore it can be treated similarly to the way information is handled (Nonaka, et al., 1994, p.341). This characteristic of knowledge leads to special attention to the environment and the role of the organisational members, their individual knowledge, and personal commitment.

Nonaka (1994) is the first who intensively researches on the transformation (articulation, later called externalisation) of tacit into explicit knowledge. This aspect of the SECI-Matrix is important, as a field study shows that 42% of the company’s knowledge is tacit and about 46% is explicit (n.k., 2001, p.31). Marketing knowledge is mostly tacit because of the socially complex nature of marketing (Schlegelmilch/ Penz, 2002, p.12). The socialization, i.e. the transformation of tacit to tacit knowledge has the same scientific domain as organisational culture. The transformation of explicit to tacit knowledge (internalisation) is to be found in the field of organisational learning.

Inkpen (1996) researches the KM processes in American-Japanese joint ventures, as depicted in the Knowledge Spiral and filters success determinants for the KM. Nonaka/Konno (1998) discuss different possibilities to generate KM supportive context (Ba). Ballantyne (2000) uses Nonaka’s SECI-Matrix as a foundation to develop a concept of knowledge renewal, whereas knowledge is being generated in a relationship network that is the result of internal marketing actions.

5.7. Management of Non-Financial Resources

The concept of the Management of Non-Financial Resources is a real life strategic management concept, which is based on the MRT model (mangement des resources technologiques) of Morin (1985) states that knowledge and capability should be managed just like any other organisational resource.

De Geus (1988), Stata (1989), Prahalad/Hamel (1990), Kim (1993), and Inkpen (1998) state that the careful handling of non-financial organisational resources in the organisation is the key to achieving and preserving of a market leader position. Bennett/Gabriel (1999) consider marketing knowledge as a non-financial resource that might be stored in form of brain-ware (personal experience), hardware (equipment incorporating knowledge), group-ware (stories), and document-ware (databases). An important skill of marketing management is to be able to unlearn knowledge that has become obsolete.

The MTO Model, developed by Ulrich (1998), builds the frame for the company’s overall analysis, based on the idea that working systems are to begin with socio-technical systems. People, technology, and organisation, along with their corresponding intersections, should be understood as interrelated, and their action should be seen as a whole, not as piecemeal. The MTO Model is used as a foundation for analysis of workflow on all levels (individual, group, organisational unit, and the whole organisation). It comprises both technical and social aspects of the organisation, and it is a nifty approach to deal with marketing as a social technique.

6. Conclusion

This paper discussed in pragmatic detail the dynamic potential of knowledge management for acquiring a sustainable competitive advantage, especially by deploying its approaches in the marketing field. KM tools and methodology can be applied in the knowledge intensive marketing processes, specifically marketing planning, organisation, and effect control. Knowledge lies behind relational concepts, as well.

KM is an essential marketers’ function in achieving competitive advantage, and it can be applied to the whole marketing mix, as well as internal marketing. Therefore, marketing market research is per se strongly bound to KM. As far as the implementation of KM concepts in the marketing area goes, however, there are still a few open questions that need further exploration and research.

In order for the reader to better understand the
concepts of KM and its proven juxtaposition with marketing, this paper has also aimed to pose a few questions in the reader’s mind:

- To what extent is marketing and market knowledge in tacit form?
- How does management deal with tacit knowledge that should be made available in multi-national companies?
- Does KM need to be modified to the corresponding cultural context, and if so, to what extent?
- In which marketing cases should a more formal and structured way of communication take precedence over more informal and looser communication?

A further interesting research point would be to analyse the transfer of market and marketing knowledge in non-profit organisations. Are there any differences in KM in the two types of organisations? Are there approaches that are more suitable for the non-profits?

Another further research point, this one quite large in scope would be to find a way to standardize the performance measurement of KM. How much impact does management of marketing knowledge have on overall business performance? Is it possible to isolate its effect? Which option is better: striving for quantitative or qualitative better market and marketing knowledge? Are success determinants of KM weighed differently in the various marketing processes?

At first glance, this paper may appear to pose more questions than answers, but that simply underscores the fact that KM is a growing and constantly changing field. While some profound research has been conducted in this relatively new and changing field, there is lots of interesting research that still remains. It will be interesting to see how new paradigms emerge in the field of KM, and what the future has in store for businesses worldwide.

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