A Study on Best Practices in developing the organizational productivity and motivational level among employees –A study at IT units in Mysore

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Abstract:

To remain competitive, organizations must efficiently and effectively create, locate, capture, and share their organization's knowledge and expertise. This increasingly requires making the organization's knowledge explicit and recording it for easier distribution and reuse. This article provides a framework for configuring a firm's organizational and technical resources and capabilities to leverage its codified knowledge. It also speaks about the major best practices in increasing organisational productivity and how to improve the motivation among employees in three major IT sector in Mysore.Therefore creating, managing, sharing and utilizing knowledge effectively is vital for organisations to take full advantage of the value of knowledge. The paper also contributes that, in order for organisations to manage knowledge effectively, attention must be paid on three key components - people, processes and technology. In essence, to ensure organisation's success, the focus should be to connect people, processes, and technology for the purpose of leveraging knowledge.

Key words: Knowledge, management, productivity, motivation.

Introduction

If information is the currency of the knowledge economy, human expertise is the bank where it is kept, invested and exchanged.

"A firm's competitive advantage depends more than anything on its knowledge: on what it knows- how it,uses what it knows – and how fast it can know something new."

The concept of treating organizational knowledge as a valuable strategic asset has been popularized by leading management and organization theorists. Organizations are being advised that to remain competitive, they must efficiently and effectively create, locate, capture, and share their organization's knowledge and expertise, and have the ability to bring that knowledge to bear on problems and opportunities. Firms are showing a tremendous interest in implementing knowledge management processes and technologies, and are even beginning to adopt knowledge management as part of their overall business strategy.

Data and information are different from knowledge although still interrelated. On one hand, while data represents raw numbers or words about facts, observations, or perceptions; information is processed data of relevance and purpose. On the other hand, knowledge is roughly, useful or actionable information. Knowledge is information that's relevant to

a decision. It is good explanations, and it is solutions (even if partial) to problems people had.

Knowledge has become one of the most highly valued commodities in the modern economy. Further, knowledge is considered the principal tool of competitiveness and innovation in the composition of commodity chain to the broader processes of regional and national economic development

The new paradigm is that within the organization knowledge must be sharedin order for it to grow. Sharing knowledge among its management and staff grows stronger and becomes more competitive. Knowledge Management (KM) is an approach to achieving organizational objectives by making the best use of knowledge, or "doing what is needed to get the most out of knowledge resources"defines knowledge management as "the explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge–and its associated processes of creation, organization, diffusion, use and exploitation". In the modern economy, KM plays a key role and has been widely used by many firms as one of the most effective means ofachieving success in the information age.

Literature survey:
Introduction to best practices:
A best practice is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark. In addition, a "best" practice can evolve to become better as improvements are discovered. Best practice is considered by some as a business buzzword, used to describe the process of developing and following a standard way of doing things that multiple organizations can use.

Best practices are used to maintain quality as an alternative to mandatory legislated standards and can be based on self-assessment or benchmarking. Best practice is a feature of accredited management standards such as ISO 9000 and ISO 14001.

Source: Bogan, C.E. and English, M.J., 1994: Benchmarking for best practices: winning through innovative adaptation. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Projects, as a way to attain objectives, have been used since ancient times, generating important results to society and culture like The Great Wall of China, Ancient Roman roads, the first steam engine and many others. A project is a new, unique and temporary set of activities, with a defined beginning and end, which uses resources in a planed and organized way with the purpose of reaching certain objectives. The temporary nature of projects stands in contrast with repetitive or permanent activities.

Kaizen -Make Continuous Improvement
The Japanese term "kaizen" has contributed to this component. Kaizen believes that there are no limits to continuous improvement. This means that a TQM organisation will continuously strive to improve their product/service and increase the quality standards. A TQM organisation will also view change positively whether the change involves a process change or a change in customer needs and expectations. This is because

changes will enable the organisation to develop and explore quality.

Review related research papers :

Henry Kim and RajaniRamkaran[1]– authors of the research article "Best practices in e-business process management extending a re-engineering framework" states that in formulating e-business strategies enabled by the Internet and WWW, parallels can be drawn from the viewpoint on process enabled by desktop and centralized computing in the 1990s, and that of present day. In this paper, the cornerstone of 1990s thinking on process, Hammer and Champy's nine best practices, are analyzed to apply for e-business process management (e-process management). For instance, Hammer and Champy's first principle is re-stated as "{o}rganize around business rules (some combined tasks can be performed by stakeholders using interfaces accessed via the WWW)". One finding is that checks and controls may not need to be reduced – as Hammer and Champy espouse – if they are perceived as valuable and can be performed inexpensively using Internet technologies. This work evolves the traditional re-engineering framework to use in current e-business realities; it can be applied to formulate e-business strategies that are rooted in more traditional, and vetted, management thinking.

In this paper, an e-process management perspective is outlined as a translation of Hammer and Champy's nine best practices in the current age of ubiquitous Internet use and increased customer expectations. An e-process is executed using business rules and interfaces that transform recurrent requests, process them via a web of interactions involving the firm, its customers, and other stakeholders in its value chain, and deliver unique value to the stakeholders. Characteristics of these business rules and interfaces are the following:

• Inclusion of all participants in the value chain when designing an e-process;

• Optimizing process across the value chain to maximize value to the customer;

• Leveraging technology and design interfaces to maximize agility across the value chain;

• Designing processes that do not necessarily end when output is delivered and recognizing that a process may be a web of processes;

• Noting that checks and controls are easier to implement and utilizing them if and where value is added;

• Maximizing visibility to the process to all stakeholders and minimizing the use of a central point of contact for status information; and

• Leveraging the case-manager role to both service the customer for exception processing and the vendor in delivering value added services and generating additional revenue.

Selma LimamMansar and HajoReijers[2]– authors of the research article "Best practices in business process redesign: validation of a redesign framework" states that A fundamental challenge in any Business Process Redesign (BPR) project is to come up with a new process design that is in one or more ways superior to the existing plan. Based on earlier research, a framework to help the designer in selecting

the proper best practice(s) for this purpose is presented and validated in this paper. It is described how the framework is used in generating improved process designs for two Dutch organisations. Furthermore, the results from a survey are presented, which has been carried out among BPR practitioners in the UK and the Netherlands to test the framework. The overall conclusion is that the framework is indeed helpful in supporting process redesign and that its core elements are recognised and put in practice by the BPR practitioner community. The framework, therefore, may be of direct interest to both academics and practitioners active in the process improvement field.

They have explored in the literature several frameworks and business process analysis models that were potentially suitable for business process redesign. In our framework, six elements are linked (refer to Fig1):

• the internal or external customers of the business process;

• the products (or services) generated by the business process;

• the business process with two views:

a. the operation view: how is a business process implemented? (number of tasks in a job, relative size of tasks, nature of tasks, degree of customisation), and

b. the behaviour view: when is a business process executed?

LimamMansar and Reijers[3] – authors of the research article "Best Practices in Business Process Redesign: Survey Results Amongst Dutch and UK Consultants" states that this paper describes and discusses the results of a survey they have undertaken in 2003/2004 amongst Dutch and UK consultants in the field of Business Process Redesign (BPR). It describes a set of best practices in BPR they wanted to test. In the paper they explain how the survey was conducted and describe the participants' profiles. They also highlight the major survey's findings.

Table I. Most popular best practices in business process redesign.

Best practice	Definition
1. Task elimination	Eliminate unnecessary tasks from a business process.
2. Task composition	Combine small tasks into composite tasks and divide large tasks into workable smaller tasks
3. Integral Technology	Try to elevate physical constraints in a business process by applying new technology
4. Empower	Give workers most of the decision-making authority and reduce middle management
5. Order assignment	Let workers perform as many steps as possible for single orders
6. Resequencing	Move tasks to more appropriate places
7. Specialist-generalist	Consider to make resources more specialized

		or more generalist
8.	Integration	Consider the integration with a business process of the customer or a supplier
9.	Parallelism	Consider whether tasks may be executed in parallel
10.	Numerical involvement	Minimize the number of departments, groups and persons involved in a business process

In this paper they have discussed the results of a survey amongst practitioners in

BPR. The results provide a list of "top ten" best practices in BPR used and validated by experienced practitioners. In our survey, they have also analysed and discussed the impact of the top ten best practices on four dimensions: the flexibility, the cost, the time and the quality.

Subramanian Muthu, Larry Whitman, and Hossein Cheraghi[4] – authors of the research article "Best Practices in Business Process Redesign: Survey Results Amongst Dutch and UK Consultants" states that Business Process Reengineering is a discipline in which extensive research has been carried out and numerous methodologies churned out. But what seems to be lacking is a structured approach. In this paper they provide a review of BPR and present 'best of breed ' methodologies from contemporary literature and introduce a consolidated, systematic approach to the redesign of a business enterprise. The methodology includes the five activities: Prepare for reengineering, Map and Analyze As-Is process, Design To-be process, Implement reengineered process and Improve continuously.

An intense customer focus, superior process design and a strong and motivated leadership are vital ingredients to the recipe for the success of any business corporation. Reengineering is the key that every organization should possess to attain these prerequisites to success. BPR doesn't offer a miracle cure on a platter. Nor does it provide a painless quick fix. Rather it advocates strenuous hard work and instigates the people involved to not only to change what they do but targets at altering their basic way of thinking itself. LimamMansar and Reijers[5]– authors of the research article "Best practices in business process redesign: use and impact" states that - This paper seeks to provide business process redesign (BPR) practitioners and academics with insight into the most popular heuristics to derive improved process designs.An online survey was carried out in the years 2003-2004 among a wide range of experienced BPR practitioners in the UK and The Netherlands. Findings – The survey indicates that this "top ten" of best practices is indeed extensively used in practice. Moreover, indications for their business impact have been collected and classified.The authors' estimations of best

practices effectiveness differed from feedback obtained from respondents, possibly caused by the design of the survey instrument. This is food for further research.The presented framework can be used by practitioners to keep the various aspects of a redesign in perspective. The presented list of BPR best practices is directly applicable to derive new process designs.

Research methodology :

The research focus on the survey study of three IT units at Mysore. The survey is conducted on the team leaders and software engineers in the selected IT units from leading IT units at Mysore.The methodology also include besides this sample survey the secondary survey of Books, management journals, research organization records and research magazines, conference proceedings on Kaizen, TQM and BP and annual reports of the sample survey companies with additional information from web sources.

Research Interpretations, Findings And Conclusions :

a)	The study showed that the first hypothesis of the research is disproved and the study showd that the Kaizen and best practices implementation will bring better quality and power in HR practices in IT units.

b)	The study reveled that the second hypothesis is also disproved that the motivation and encouraging practicable kaizens implementations in IT units lead to better , useful best practices which are stored in KM based server as general ware available to build the total knowledge

power of the unit empower HR skill and speed of execution of software projects.

The major conclusions :

The usual kaizen which lead to best practices were identified as - design of general software – project management tips and generalized (OOP) software routines and the better software methods to speed up the software development , the standardized (menus , pop-up and pop-down options and software frontend designs and graphics) development frontend routines will prove enormously important and useful in reducing the following in software development life cycle :-

a)	software development time

b)	execution time of programmes

c)	software memory space occupation (constraint is also addressed properly)

d)	software execution time (constraint is also addressed properly)

e)	the object orientation and structuring time

	These above will reduce the monotony of re-development of routines which are already there in some corner of the same organisation and the duplication in software development work and projects in the It units.

The front-end routines such as

a)	major menus,

b)	popup and pop-down menus

c)	front page graphics and designs which need only marginal make-ups and small changes to suite to other software-projects and developmentand back-end routines like

a)	Standard sorts ,

b)	searches,

c) relational database management systems

d) supervisoroy and users -log-book management systems,

e) cloud connecting protocol management,

f) the internet embedding software routines to connect the software of any organisation online applicable

g) intranet (within units) protocol management software systems

h) encryption and decryption systems

i) communication protocol system based on TCPIP* and organisation specific non-TCPIP based (* transfer control protocol and internet protocol)

j) security system routines

These software routines which are developed as kaizen with object oriented and structured software segments will really help to reduce duplication in development cycle of the software development for all projects as these routines are common to all-most all projects like banking, multinational manufacturing corporate , multinational marketing companies and service sectors like internet enabled services in couriers, health care, hospitality sector, etc..

These confidential routines of each projects when put with standardised systems in the shared pool of KM server as KAIZEN then these lead to best practices for that particular IT organisation.

These kaizens and best practices which are encouraged, motivated by reward, award and increment based - HR policy the kaizen's of projects will come in general pool (as " money is power and money has become a major motivating parameter of IT remuneration and retention systems") and will become useful to bring real increase in productivity and augment the HR power and quality showing better time based project completion , lesser client objections and avoidance of duplication of similar documentation and routines developments in all projects of units and improve the overall development systems.

Major Suggestions :

A) The training addressing and aimed at sharing of best practices and kaizen is a must to empower the overall productivity in IT units.

B) All the units top-level management has understanding of kaizen and Bp and utility and usefulness in IT units ahould be converted to total commitment to bring change in systems.

C) There is need of better and effective training focussed developing good human relations between software engineers between themselves , which help in creating an organisational environment where "kaizens leading to best practices" are freely shared and stored voluntarily in KM-BP servers..

D) The Top-management should sincerely try to build an environment of mutual-trust and belief among employees to motivate knowledge sharing.

E) The kaizen's such as efficient routines and modules (both front-end and back-end) should be cross checked and standardised by experts and expert system software.

F) Awards, rewards, wage revision , promotions and increments needs to bring

better kaizen which are will be useful to development process .

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Final conclusions of the research :

The study conclude that kaizen will lead to useful and practicable best practices and the organisational environment quality and power will increase to bring world class HR based corporate in the IT units. The IT units by this implementation will be able to better understand the IT software engineers and change the organisational HR environment and bring a better working comfort zone for employees to augment the HR power and quality to build a world class IT units in India.

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