ORGANISATIONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENTS SYSTEMS: EVIDENCE FROM SUPPORTING (E-)BANKING ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

This papers attempts to describe in organisational terms the constituents of a Knowledge Management intervention endeavour. Managing knowledge, as a socially constructed phenomenon, presumes the explication of knowledge as an individual and organizational asset. Our assertion attributes this endeavour to the specificities of the organisational situation to be supported with regards to its working assumptions as conceptualised through its activities, knowledge content, and social interactions. We ground our propositions on experiences deriving from our engagement in the implementation of a KM solution in a Bank organisation aiming at the support of a newly employed and strategically important (e-)banking role, the "Front-line Customer Service".

1. INTRODUCTION

Business organisations strive for new socio-technical interventions that would yield sustainable and long-term competitive advantage. To this end, several organizations consider seriously of the benefits of knowledge management (KM) (Drucker, 1993; Lunvall and Johnson, 1994). KM comprises the most recent reflection of contemporary strategic and organisational theories on the management and working arrangements of firms. As in most business re-propositions i.e. re-engineering, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) enjoy a great salience at the time of KM actualisation in organisations (Davenport, 1993). However, due to the limitations of current technological solutions to capture the underlying social and situated character of knowledge, KM has not yet exhibited clear evidence of how it can support the organisations. In McDermott's words "the great trap in knowledge management is using information management tools and concepts to design knowledge management systems" (McDermott, 1999).

Beyond the technological path, KM is also instantiated in organisations under the prism of a more strategic actualisation. This path involves the formulation of a knowledge strategy for the whole organisation that is grounded on the perception of the firm as a unique bundle of idiosyncratic resources, among which knowledge is the most strategically significant (Grant, 1996), and capabilities upon which the firm resides its rent-generating mechanisms (Rumelt, 1984; Wernerfelt, 1984). This view of KM capitalizes on the ideas originating from the strategic management field and more specifically the resource-based view of the firm (Foss, 1996; Spender and Grant, 1996; Grant, 1991).

The particular strategic theory attempts to explain the factors affecting the achievement and sustainability of competitive position of firm within its market(s).

While the strategic aspects of exploiting a firm's knowledge resources have received ample attention, the implications regarding operational and managerial arrangements on the level of everyday work practice are far less elaborated thus far. The discussion that is unfolding in this paper concerns a KM *strategy-less* project situation, in which a KM platform is being introduced in the organisation under study to support certain work activities. In particular, empirical work described in this paper is based on a longitudinal case study concerning the introduction of a new KM technological platform in the e-banking operations of one of the largest retail banks in Greece. Based on the cumulative experiences derived from the involvement of two of the authors in this KM project, this paper attempts to surface in a generalisable level the organisational conditions and implications of introducing this type of technological systems. Analysis is based on a collection of theoretical constructs that, in our view, constitute the requisite elements every KM intervention should be aware of. Within the paper we try to accommodate some preliminary interpretative observations dealing with the situation beforehand, meaning the time the decision for the project to launch was made, but also with the on-going affairs that followed the system introduction. Data collection is based on individuals and collective perceptions of the main stakeholder groups, who where involved in the process of the system formulation and introduction. The empirical evidence elicited from this research site reinforced the paper's claims.

The paper unfolds its ideas through two main thematic sections, a theoretical and an empirical. The fist section elaborates on the basic theoretical constructs that were used for the interpretation of our case study. Among these, we identify an agenda of issues relevant to knowledge management and organizational learning phenomena, i.e. communities of practice, work-based learning, and knowledge classification. The second section describes in an evolutionary way the empirical experience of the research team through their involvement in the introduction of a KM system in a Bank. The authors, following an interpretivist approach, come up with some valuable considerations for the essential elements of the organisational embracement of KM systems.

2. ISSUES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Managing knowledge is a very complex process. Scholars have tried to deal with the complexity of KM in several ways and from different angles. The emergent challenge is how to address knowledge in individuals and in organizations. The concept of knowledge implies more than an accumulation of information, rather it is an *organized* collection that reflects the intentions of the humans who create it and interpret it (Laudon et al., 1996). Managing this socially constructed phenomenon calls upon an organisational endeavour that will look into the constitution of knowledge as an individual and as an organizational asset. Our assertion attributes this endeavour to the specificities of the organisational situation to be supported with regards to its working assumptions as conceptualised through its activities, knowledge content, and social interactions.

The aim of current discussion is to present our view of the theoretically valuable contributions in terms of the aforementioned characteristics for the application of KM and its organisational actualisation through IT.

2.1 Knowledge Perceptions

When thinking about management of knowledge, we primarily think of knowledge codification as the most prominent knowledge strategy for an organisation (Hansen, et al., 1999). Attempts to 'organize' knowledge reveal a variety of aspects and categories identified in the organisational literature. Aspects of knowledge such as its nature (knowledge as an object, or as a process), its context (i.e. social, organisational, group, individual) and its location (i.e. routines, intellectual capital, symbols etc) have

been discussed by a variety of scholars. The distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge has a prominent position in this discussion (Leonard, 1995; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

Explicit knowledge is the knowledge, which can be codified in certain form (e.g. written documents and reports, data base etc.). Tacit knowledge is what we know but cannot say, and comes usually in the form of rules of thumb, incorporated into individuals' experiences or inherent in organisational practices (Senker, 1993; Polanyi, 1966; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Cook and Brown, 1999). Recently there has been a distinction between the actual knowledge and knowing skills (Cook and Brown, 1999). Knowledge is abstract and static concept and principles which are necessary to action but they are quite distinctive from the skills required for putting this knowledge into practice. Knowing are the skills associated with the ability to enact knowledge and are embodied in action. Although knowledge and knowing are linked they are conceptually distinctive things. Knowing has a much stronger tacit dimension than actual knowledge.

Prompted by the idea of practice, several scholars have attempted to reflect this notion on their distinction of knowledge. Consistent to Polanyi's (1966) distinction of tacit and explicit, Garud (1997) proposes the distinction between "know how" (procedural knowledge based on experience and often embedded in practice) and "know that" (theoretical, declarative knowledge which can be codified and transmitted without loss of meaning) correspondingly. Ryle sustains also that none of the above types of knowledge is independent. To make "know that" useful requires appropriate "know how" and similarly "know how" usually derives from precepts and rules.

Through the above knowledge perceptions it is evident that we can only understand knowledge in relationship to the context in which it is generated. Only in the realm of action, can knowledge obtain an articulate representation and thus become transferable. This point is emphasized in the case of codifying task experiences, which can only be transferred and understood among people that share the same operational context.

2.2   Context Mediation

Up to now, codification strategies for KM were manifested through content-based applications, known as knowledge repositories (Davenport and Prusak, 1998). While this approach is still considered as fundamental for KM and beneficiary for the company's information management challenges, the absence of *context* deters such systems from yielding benefits for the actual performance of employees. KM should constitute an organizational capability and an organizational practice that is strongly attached to the environment where knowledge resides. Introduced by organizational learning theorists, context and specifically the workplace context is what organizations dictate as the battlefield for managing knowledge, and what influences and affects the formal and informal processes of knowledge management and organizational learning (Billett, 1995).

Thereafter, it is evident that knowledge needs not to be studied in a vacuum, but rather within the context it is being enacted. In our perspective the workplace through the manifestation of its activities and the roles of its practitioners constitute the context of managing knowledge. The notion of activity system, as an abstraction of the workplace context, has already been applied to understand organisational learning (Virkkunen and Kuutti, 2000). This view also suggests shifting the locus of knowledge generation from tacit-explicit and individual-collective interplay (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) to problem identification, solution generation and application, and the generalisation of the solution in practical activity. Activity and practice theory enables the analysis of the workplace context as it is reflected through the individual actions performed daily emphasizing the interdependent and collaborative nature of work as well as the meaning practitioners give to their interactions (Engeström et al., 1998; Bourdieu, 1990).

Our proposition for the management of knowledge mediates the workplace context by putting in place tools for capturing knowledge of the work practices employed by practitioners to deal with a situation, while allowing informal learning to occur. By work practice we mean the conceptualisation of work – the way in which work gets done. Schõn thinks of practice as the process by which individuals acquire and practice artistry (Schõn, 1983). Usually the concept of practice implies repeated actions that follow certain rules and principles to achieve a specific goal (Turner, 1994). Practices comprise recognizable patterned actions in which both individuals and groups are engaged (Schultze, 2000). They do not necessarily adhere to specific rules and norms, but emerge through the daily improvisations of actors involved in working situations (Bourdieu, 1973). Workplace context and specifically work practices exhibit both explicit and tacit forms of knowledge.

2.3 Learning

Socio-cultural traditions of knowledge have been strongly underlying the relationship between knowledge and learning. Learning is inevitably implicated in the acquisition of knowledge and vice versa (Kim, 1993). Similarly to knowledge accounts, literature is not offering sufficient detail on how work practices could be conceptually organized in a sufficiently generic fashion that is relevant for organizational learning action. Based on Kim's distinction of operational and conceptual learning (Kim, 1993), we sustain that the learning processes should utilize the tacit knowledge embedded in work practices as they are being routinized. Learning associated with practice-oriented knowledge leads eventually to higher levels of understanding of the work arrangements in the organization (conceptual learning). As put forth by Raelin, there are two dimensions that are fundamental to the process of work-based learning: theory and practice modes of learning and explicit and tacit forms of knowledge (Raelin, 1997). Theory allows practitioners to explicitly reflect upon and actively experiment with their practice interventions, whilst experience reinforces the tacit knowledge acquired in practice.

In our view, learning in the workplace context is achieved through collective actions and mobilisation of competences. In the organisational learning theory collective and social interactions are manifested through the Communities-of-Practice (CoP). The notion of CoP returns knowledge back into its context. CoP are supposed to embody tacit social knowledge through the interactions of individuals upon a common practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Their success lies upon the intentions of individuals to act in a collective manner within the context of work. The employees inside the organization as social units interact and communicate with each other and build relationships that strengthen the workforce integrity. Individuals with the same interests and common recognized targets may form a community where they will share experiences and knowledge while they will work towards the benefit of the collective. Especially, employees participating in a same business process (our manifestation of work practice) may form a community that will place high interest in experience share or exchange and in the common effort to find solution. Within these CoP, the knowledge creation and sharing among the members is an ongoing continuous process.

A common characteristic of CoP is that their members share the same practices and that's why they share knowledge collectively (Hutchins, 1991). Its members may be located on the same place and/or time, or they may be geographically dispread, while they may come with different intellectual backgrounds and interests, ethics and cultures. In a knowledge rich environment like a CoP, people learn to construct shared understanding amidst confusing and conflicting data (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Raelin, 1997). Personal relationships between the members are created and hence mutual respect and trust is established. These are essential in communication and share of tacit knowledge and are catalysts in community's knowledge enrichment. Perhaps the most attractive part of CoP is its capacity to assimilate unexpected environmental stimulus and in return to produce strong feedback loops. Each CoP encompasses a collective knowledge repository that is the organization's intellectual capital or collective expertise of the workforce (Banks, 1999). This is considered to be the most valuable resource for the organization.

Enactment of learning is also accomplished through competences approaches. Competences are prominent in the literature of the knowledge-based theory of the firm dealing with the strategic exploration and exploitation of knowledge (March, 1991). Strategic thinking and the quest for growth are seen to require organisations to develop firm-specific patterns of behavior, i.e. difficult to imitate combinations of organisational, functional and technological skills (Teece et al., 1997). These unique combinations create *competencies* and are being manifested through the exploitation of the firm's intangible knowledge resources in its business behavior and more specifically in its value-adding work practices. Boisot defines competences as the organizational and technical skills involved in achieving a certain level of performance in the production (Boisot, 1998). Competences comprise knowledge reflections in action and thus are socially embedded within the context of work (Granovetter, 1985).

3. ACCOUNT OF A KM PROJECT SITUATION

3.1 Background

In this paper we utilise findings from a longitudinal case study of the introduction of a KM system in a retail bank in Greece (Walsham, 1993). Over the past 2 years, the research team in cooperation with the bank were actively involved in the implementation of a KM project, which entailed designing the technical system but also introducing it in the bank's operations. Specifically, the research members acting mainly as participant observers and at times as action researchers provided appropriate facilitation and support throughout the specification, and (most importantly) deployment of the KM system with special emphasis given to work-context-sensitive adoption guidance and on alignment of this effort with organisational and business imperatives. Whilst the conceptual system design ideas were being shaped we were negotiating with the bank the particulars of the system's pilot introduction. To this end and due to the innovative character of the project, it was judged by the bank's top management that its profile would better fit the operations of the newly established e-Banking department due to the novelty of its products and services and the speed of change in their operational and strategic context.

3.2 System Conception

The design of the technical system was driven by imperatives emerging from theory as presented in the previous sections. Specifically, we sought to define a system that could support *on-the-job experience capturing and sharing* through the capture and structuring of tacit and explicit forms of knowledge. To this end, we needed a descriptive structure for work practices, which would host the material and would be sufficiently generic to be "understood" by various actors and adequately focused on the "business rationale" of work practices. As such, we considered business processes as the organizational manifestations of work practices and routines that take place within the organisations. In order for it to serve our knowledge oriented analysis purposes, a business process comprises *activities and tasks* carried out by organisational *actors* and *resources* (information and other) involved in the execution of these activities and tasks. The designer's intention was not to structure work according to business process principles but to utilise constructs from this stream of work design literature as an organizing structure for material in the system. In addition to the core material organising construct, the system featured experiences capturing mechanisms in the form of annotations that the users would be allowed to make on the initial work descriptions. The knowledge material, stored and organised in the system, comprises a common reference point for all practitioners, upon which they are able to reflect their work experiences. On this basis, the system offers various sharing and collaboration practices through appropriate facilities such as e-mail, chat, and discussion fora, thus enabling community structures to emerge.

The design period resulted in a prototype system. During the design negotiations with the Bank, it became evident that an appropriate KM solution requires a multidimensional approach, incorporating aspects of knowledge and learning that are grounded on the specificities of the organisational situation, which was selected to support. The system encompasses in a technically viable way those context-specific concerns in terms of activities, knowledge content and social interactions, as constitutive elements of the targeted workplace context.

The KM system is characterized by several distinguishing features. These are its ability to:

- ❏ store and diffuse information resources,
- ❏ describe the work practices in terms of business process elements,
- ❏ enable communication and collaboration,
- ❏ have the information resources attached to specific in the actor's work context descriptions,
- ❏ accommodate user comments through annotations, and
- ❏ trace information exchanges among practitioners and anchor on the elements of the business process description from which they were initiated.

3.3 System Contextualisation

Our initial cooperation with the Bank could have been characterized as visionless, due to the lack of an expressed KM strategy; part of it could have been the new system. The envisaged KM intervention, in the initial phases at least, was aiming at the support of the newly introduced business operation, e-Banking. When presented with the initial system concept (which we describe below) the e-Banking department proposed a performance sensitive part of its operation as the targeted work practice. The practice included tasks related to promoting and selling the new e-products and services, as it was being undertaken by employees identified as "e-banking agents" located in the bank's branches.

As the KM intervention was unfolding and our involvement was becoming more intense, changes taking place at the organisational landscape resulted in a series of new facts for the project. Very soon the situation changed radically and we found ourselves not only working with various bank actors but also in the middle of a generic strategic initiative. The initiative called "The Bank's Learning Strategy" (in their own words), and the KM system was embedded in it. The new strategy was complemented by other initiatives, like the formulation of role descriptions and the organisation-wide competence-mapping project led by HRD department. As a result of the new developments, our negotiations for the introduction of the KM system involved also, in addition to the e-banking informants, informants from the Human Resource department and peripheral departments dealing primarily with content provision (intranet content manager). At this time we started re-thinking the tasks that could be supported by the system. The revised intention of the Bank was the KM system to support a *newly introduced role* dealing with the front-line customer service*,* which activities entailed a spectrum of tasks calling from informing about the traditional and electronic banking products and services to selling them. The role comprises an upgrade of the e-banking agent role and entailed more generic customer-centric activities related to traditional and e-banking services and products.

The rationale for this shift of support locus is ascribed to the organisational necessity, as declared by HRD department and accepted by the Bank as the appropriate orientation for the KM project, to move from supporting *activities to fulfill a business operation* to *activities delineating a role*. Nevertheless, despite some organisational mobilisation regarding our project, the actual KM system adoption was restricted to a very particular organisational situation. In fact, the involvement of new organisational informants in the KM project, and at this point we are referring to the HRD people who became active, if not leading, members of the project, influenced the conceptualisation of the capabilities of the KM system for the targeted business operation (*customer service*). The currently undertaken by HRD

department skills and roles initiative shifted the scope of the KM intervention from that of the "business operation performance", as initially planned by the e-Banking department, to that of the "shaping of organisational roles", which comprised the instantiation of the HRD's strategy for the targeted business operation. However and in total compliance with the HRD's objectives, the role of the e-Banking department became more meaningful as the main contributor of action material regarding the content of work of the targeted business operation.

3.4   Organisational Interpretations of the KM project

The KM project development process resulted in engaging the Bank (the participating organisational members) in a productive debate on how to exploit the prescribed system capabilities prior to its actual application and use. Whilst the system's functionalities development was being finalized, the bank with the support of the research team was formulating the system's seed knowledge material comprising the description of the targeted business operation in terms of its business process constituents. On that basis, so much the HRD as the e-Banking department provided their own interpretations related to the underlying and probably hidden offerings of the KM system. These interpretations were reflected upon 3 emergent organisational elements, the *targeted Business Operations,* the *Roles* and the *Competences* that according to the bank's participants constitute the regulatory factors for the KM system intervention. In other words, participating organisational members grasped the opportunity of system feature formulation to pursue further organisational goals regarding:

- Skills and competences monitoring (the HRD department)
- Role shaping (the HRD department)
- Documentation and fast diffusion of new business practices (the business development unit)

In fact, HRD saw real value in the proposed KM system for their strategy. It comprised for them a comprehensive tool for modeling role descriptions through the specific business processes and tasks that the role was consisted of. The introduction of the KM system coincided with the bank's intention to launch the operation of the new "customer service" role as the targeted business operation. The KM project served as an internal consulting tool that was utilized for the development and configuration of the new role. To this end, the bank's participating members worked collaboratively with the research team to work out an operational but also system viable definition of the new role.

Moreover, the KM system materialized HRD department's vision for a competence-driven role operation. This would be achieved through a number of system-enabled features as the continuous appropriation of the workplace situations delivered to the practitioners in the form of process descriptions and the participation in community acts. It is envisaged that the system could be used as a community-building tool, based on the need of people to communicate and collaborate upon common work practices. The tools offered for that purpose may seem trivial (chat, e-mail, discussion forum) but their anticipated use, anchored on the context of a particular work practice allows multiple affordances in the workplace context (table 1). More specifically, the utilization of these functionalities from the practitioners is being captured in a technical fashion that allows its contextualisation and reflection on the work descriptions, as being expressed in the system through the business processes.

In addition to the interpretation given by the HRD department, the e-banking department put forth very clearly its intentions of exploiting the system capabilities. The KM system comprised for the e-Banking department a communication proxy through which products and services' information was transmitted to the practitioners of the targeted business operation. Besides the behavioral part, which resides in the responsibility of the HRD department, the "customer service" role implements the business needs of the e-Banking department through the selling and promotion of its products and services. To this end, the KM system allows the documentation of the department's business practices, while ensuring the immediate and continuous diffusion of possible changes.

The last but not least informants are the business practitioners that will impersonate the new role and thus use the KM system in their everyday life. The system offers a lot of interpretations for their work; some of them not still visible to them. However, the system anticipations depend upon its efficacy to support the employee's daily work practices. This would only happen if the system offers the opportunity for an easy and focused mapping of the activities taking place in the specific workplace context along with the resources necessary for its operation.

3.5 From System to Intervention: Constituencies of Informants and Intervention Affordances

Our engagement in the carrying out of a KM intervention in the Bank organisation, though limited at the moment to the experiences gained during the design of the system and its introduction negotiations, has revealed meaningful aspects of the adoption of IT artifacts regarding so much the design principles that systems aiming at the workplace support should feature, as also the organisational fermentations enacted by their introduction. Our preliminary findings concentrate on the role and type of organisational members that ought to become involved in the formulation a KM intervention. We finalise this discussion by shortly referring to a general framework of constituents for KM projects.

Specifically, it is obvious from our experience in the case setting that three generic constituencies of informants need to contribute in the negotiations shaping up particular KM systems design as well as the conditions and rationale of its introduction (table 1). In an attempt to integrate the views of multiple constituencies of informants for the KM project, we have come up with the following generic constituencies:

Constituency 1: Focal Business Operation unit (in our case the e-Banking department). Participants in this constituency are people, like decision makers and business designers that design targets for business behaviours (e.g. flow of activities, performance metrics, material informing on the content of activities). In a KM project they act as initial content providers.

Constituency 2: Human resource support unit (in our case the HRD & training department). Participants in this constituency are people that interpret elements of business operation into roles and requirements for skills and competences. They also plan action for monitoring and support (e.g. training) to roles, skills and competences.

Constituency 3: The targeted practitioners. Participants in this constituency are expected to systematize the reflections of their work experiences through the system capabilities, so as to allow the enactment of sharing and community practices. In addition, the system offers a comprehensive manner for the familiarization of the practitioner with the content of its work, whilst allowing the development of their competences.

	Focal Business Operation Unit (e-Banking department)	Human Resource Support Unit (HRD & training department)	Targeted Practitioners (e-banking agent)
Targeted Business Operations	Structuring generic descriptions of work	Enacting required employee skills	Experiences sharing in the Community of Practice
Roles	Exploring the adequacy of prescribed activities	Creating definitions for competence-driven role operation	Comprehend
Competences	Enabling strategy realisation	Identify gaps inhibiting performance improvement	Realise and Develop

Table 1: KM Intervention Affordances

We have tried to present the interpretations of the basic organisational stakeholders involved in the introduction of a technological proposition for KM in a Bank organisation, the HRD, the e-banking department and the practitioners with regards to the anticipated but also partly unanticipated organisational consequences addressed by the proposed system (Table 1). The aforementioned perceptions have obvious and most valuable implications for the design of KM interventions. We still have to explore how these arguments are applied during the actual use of the system, something that will occur shortly.

4. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSSIONS

The experience gained from the introduction of a KM system in a Bank organization, along with the need to provide a new perspective for the development of such systems drove the research of this paper. The ultimate aim of this paper would be to create an impact on the future stream of new socio-technical solutions for knowledge management. The contemporary knowledge environment of firms and the characteristics of its evolution comprise the drivers for describing the arrangements taking place in the work context. We propose a technological intervention, and we are primarily guided by this to explain the need and thereupon the phenomena, meaning the conditions and factors related to the organizational adoption of the knowledge-oriented ICT offerings. Further research will elaborate more on the need of a work related knowledge management system from a social, organizational and certainly technological perspective.

To this aim, we tried to investigate the opportunities offered by research accounts referring to the understanding of the workplace phenomena on technology deployment with regards to the specific empirical setting. The need to manage knowledge across people and processes imposes certain imperatives for the development, introduction, adoption and use of any information technology. To this end, we use the activity and practice theories to guide the technological intervention in its integration with existing work practices and forms of informal learning occurring among people in workplace contexts.

The practice and situated orientation that we sustain is necessary for KM, is reflected through several technological characteristics. Work practices and activities comprise the codified description of the business processes in terms of tasks and its accompanying elements, i.e. actors, events, resources, etc. Tacit knowledge is captured through 'annotations' that the user is attaching on specific process elements. Also, the tracing of any type of communication or collaboration, i.e. e-mail, chat, on the basis of finding a solution to a problem can be considered as tacit knowledge. Finally, the system

allows the development of communities of practice through their synchronous and asynchronous participation in shared problem solving and idea exchanges over the system.

We view our case as indicative of the situation facing KM practitioners in the implementation of KM projects. Clearly a technology-oriented strategy does serve the purpose of KM as envisaged in the literature. Our first hand experience reveals a complex web of interests and issues that probably inevitably will emerge even in the most limited KM intervention exercises. In fact our proposition is shaped as follows. KM systems driven organisational interventions involve 3 main elements:

- ❑ The envisaged *system intervention* as this is reflected in the system's designed elements (i.e services to users)

- ❑ The moderation of the above by *business operants' aspirations* (usually performance driven)

- ❑ The *contextualisation* of the above within human activity systems driven by human resource management.

Our final comment on this level is that KM should be treated as project for the support of certain organisational situations. Lack of knowledge of the application context may compromise efforts to manage knowledge effectively. Stakeholders need to be identified and then turned into practitioners of the KM project. It is certain that each of the stakeholders has a specific role both in the organisational landscape, which in turn affects its involvement and its role in the project. Finally, it should noted that any KM technology does not in itself store and retrieve knowledge, but merely manipulates codified representations (Sutton, 2001).

The interpretation of the organizational situation described in this paper, is evolving in parallel with the actual deployment of the knowledge management initiative in which we are actively involved. The outcome of this process will provide useful indications of how the firm can approach knowledge enactment and how it should evolve to cope with the knowledge requirements of its organizational routines and vice versa. Knowledge as a resource is difficult to grasp; this research aims at revealing the methods that can be deployed to best utilize this resource within the business processes of the organization.

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