




STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY ICT
CONFERENCE 2008


**Knowledge Management, the Untapped
Potential in Institutions of Higher
Education**
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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Knowledge processing
- Knowledge management life cycle
- Managing knowledge at universities
- Organisational learning
- Conclusion


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Introduction

- Universities have **potential** to become more competitive, improve on their service delivery, **BUT** have to effectively **manage their knowledge** supported by appropriate **strategy and ICTs**
- Transition from Business Process Re-engineering to Knowledge Management
 - Focus away from single objectives to multi-objectives in organizational strategy saw a paradigm shift from BPR to (KM)


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Defining KM

- **Data** is un-interpreted material or raw facts on which a decision is to be based - [Patel et al \(2000\)](#)
- **Information** is **data** interpreted in a given context i.e. data whose form content and time of transmission/reception are appropriate for a particular use. This is data that is organized, patterned, grouped and or categorized such that it increases depth of meaning - [Maponya \(2004\)](#)


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Defining KM

- **Knowledge** is a body of **information**, coupled with understanding and reasoning why it is correct. It is a cognitive ability to generate insight based on **data** and **information** - [Patel et al \(2000\)](#).
- It may also be defined as the expertise, experience and capability of staff integrated with processes and corporate memory; - [Maponya \(2004\)](#)

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Sample

DATA	INFORMATION	KNOWLEDGE
No of applicants	% of total by course	Increase in no of classrooms in next two years
No admitted	% of total by school or districts	Schools/districts to concentrate on when marketing
Schools or origin	% sponsored	

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Defining KM.....

- KM is getting the **right information** to the right people at the right time - [McElroy \(2000\)](#)
 - OR
- A process through which organizations create, store and utilize their collective knowledge - [Piccoli et al \(2000\)](#)

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Processing Knowledge

- Knowledge is either documented (**explicit**) or embedded in minds of employees (**tacit**)
- In-order for one person's knowledge to be useful to another individual, it must be communicated in such a manner as to be interpretable and accessible to the other individual - [Alavi \(1999\)](#)

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Knowledge Management Lifecycle

- **Knowledge Procurement**
- Either externally such as research institutes, partnerships, funding or internally such as staff research, operational and student projects.
- **Knowledge Presentation**
- Involves documentation and structuring of knowledge for easy access - search indexing or knowledge maps
- **Knowledge Transfer**
- Ensuring that collected or stored information gets to potential users through ICTs. More difficult to transfer tacit knowledge since it needs direct interaction between members of the affected communities.

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Knowledge Management Lifecycle

- **Knowledge Utilization**
- Reason for processing knowledge, e.g. to improve value adding activities such as innovation or organizational learning.
- **Knowledge Removal**
- Removal or archival of outdated information to ensure only useful information is retained

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Knowledge Management Lifecycle


Adapted from Allweyer - 1997

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Managing Knowledge at Universities

- Universities are organized anarchies that use the garbage can decision making process, characterized by goal ambiguity, problematic technology, fragmented professional staff and environmental vulnerability – [Moses 1988](#)
- Universities are faced with many challenges such as financial pressures, increasing public scrutiny and accountability, rapidly evolving technologies, changing staff roles, diverse staff/student demographics, competing values and a rapidly changing world


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Managing Knowledge at Universities

- Universities tend to lose knowledge, fail to exploit it, they duplicate it, do not always share it, do not always know what they know and do not recognize knowledge as an asset - [Maponya \(2004\)](#)
- Universities need to attain KM skills such as IT literacy, sharp and analytical minds, innovation and inquiry, ability to enable knowledge creation, flow and communication


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Organisational Learning

- Process of performing activities that make people within an organisation learn and do things better
- A learning organisation continually expands its capacity to create its future
- The ability to learn and translate learning into action and the capacity for learning will influence the organisational ability to change and adapt in their environment


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Organisational Learning

- An organisation learns when its individual members learn and disseminate what is learned to others
- To tap into this potential, universities will need to improve their ability to manage their knowledge since any organisation's ability to learn is interwoven with the effectiveness with which it manages its knowledge base

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Measure Learning

- Set specific objectives for each functional unit
- Develop performance indicators consistent with the achievement of set objectives
- Measure the improvement trends.
- Rate of learning can be measured by measuring time taken to achieve improvement in a specified performance indicator

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Conclusion

- The potential for universities to transform into more competitive institutions exists.
- Potential will only be exploited through proper knowledge processing and management where organizations use ICTs to capture, process, transfer and share knowledge for learning
- Learning provide better services to the customers and generate innovations most needed in universities today

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