

## **Minitrack Introduction**

### **Knowledge and Innovation Management in the Age of Complexity**

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Knowledge and innovation are inextricably linked. As the global economic environment continues to generate profound challenges through ever-increasing complexity, knowledge and innovation management (KIM) becomes fundamental to creating competitive advantage in a wide range of environments. This minitrack explores the role of KIM in the following ways: (1) the manner in which inflows and outflows of knowledge have expanded to accelerate internal innovation and expand the markets for external use of innovation, and (2) how KIM is used to support organizational agility, ambidexterity, knowledge sharing and collaboration to support innovation.

The focus of this minitrack supports alternative approaches to innovation and other organizational activities in complex environments involving multiple participants and stakeholders. These themes are open to exploring new methods and organizational structures for improving innovation, and raise important new issues about how knowledge is created and applied to derive business value, generate new ideas, and support innovation.

The fundamental role of knowledge in acquiring and maintaining competitive advantage emphasizes the need for effective and strategic KIM in organizations. When effective and reliable methods drive approaches to KIM, this in turn supports the integration of value-creating activities into organizational processes and increases an organization's potential to achieve innovation performance and business competitiveness.

The first paper, by Henkel et al, investigates the role of open innovation practices in modern libraries. The concept of open innovation involves the participation of an institution's stakeholders (customers, suppliers, competitors, etc.) in its innovation processes. With the advent of the knowledge society, the role of libraries is changing rapidly, with a shift towards digital libraries, special services, and the provision of space. A major question to be considered in this process concerns the manner in which libraries should realize such

knowledge and innovation projects. In the context of libraries, open innovation integrates the views of users (as customers), software houses or design companies (as suppliers) as well as other libraries (as competitors) into the development strategy of a library. Innovation processes include information inflows and information outflows. In this paper, a theoretical model of open innovation in the context of the library institution is presented. The authors describe results of a survey and introduce paradigmatic case studies of libraries in which open innovation and networked governance were deployed.

The second paper, by Reibenspiess et al. is concerned with the mechanisms for enabling innovation champions in organizations. As the authors suggest, many organizations invest a large share of their resources and effort into the development of innovations, yet these projects frequently fail. Championing innovation has been established as an important mechanism for organizations to successfully promote innovation projects. By acquiring, managing and utilizing knowledge, innovation champions control internal and external knowledge flows and influence organizational learning, thus contributing to KM, which has been linked to increasing organizational innovativeness. While their literature analysis illuminates a high variety of enablers that influence innovation champions, the descriptive findings of their study show a stronger focus on individual level enablers in studies of innovation champions.

The third paper, by Barry et al., examines how the roll-out of self-service Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) business processes to non-traditional ERP-users draws upon the boundary spanning capabilities of key relational contacts across different departments within organizations. The diffusion of self-service ERP processes represented an organizational shift towards greater agility in the distribution of functional tasks. The findings of their exploratory study reveal the importance of the co-location and embeddedness of peer-advice-tie roles which facilitate a boundary spanning role for new

ERP users. The study also highlights the growing prevalence of self-service business processes being adopted within organizations. With much of the existing research on ERP implementation and success focusing solely on the experiences of those working in functional, specialist and/or implementation roles, the experiences of infrequent, non-traditional users have received little attention. Their research indicates a need for ERP research to extend its focus and to consider the complexity of ERP usage across entire organizations.

Finally, the paper by Gloet and Samson examines the contribution of KM to supply chain management and its specific role in supply chain design. Following a review of relevant literature, a

conceptual model was developed to indicate the knowledge domains involved in an innovative approach to supply chain design. The contributions of KM are investigated and analyzed through a case study of supply chain design in the Australian beef industry. While KM supported supply chain design through various KM processes such as knowledge acquisition, sharing, dissemination and protection, the most significant contribution came from the process of knowledge integration. This indicates the significant potential of KM to play a major role in supporting the complex nature of global supply chain design.