Background of Focus Group Study

- Profile of participants:
  - CIOs, senior IS executives, consultants, lecturers, etc.
  - 20 representatives from 18 organisations in Singapore.

Objectives of Focus Group Study

- To study empirical perceptions and issues of KM from an IS perspective, within the IS community in Singapore.
- To make preliminary assessment of the awareness and practices among senior IS professionals.
  (CIOs and IS managers expected to play important roles in formulating IS-based KM initiatives)
- To analyse possible implications of focus group results on future IS-based decision support research and practice.

Motivations

- Complexity and multidisciplinary nature of KM
- Wide range of different views, perceptions, definitions and issues related to the topic of KM.
- Diversity of implementation approaches
- In Singapore, KM is still in its infancy. Some organisations are struggling with the underlying concepts, while a few others have begun initiating some KM projects.

Research Approach

- Grounding empirical insights from focus group data (unbiased from literature).
- Key steps: raw data (audio/video taped of focus group sessions); tables summarising/categorising key issues; from which theoretical frameworks and propositions are induced.
- Results will be further analysed, from an interpretive, critical and reflective perspective.
Proposition 1: Characteristics of Knowledge

- Degree of Summarisation
- Degree of Relevance
- Degree of Internalisation

Information vs Knowledge

Proposition 2: Usefulness of Knowledge and the Value of KM

- Applicability of Knowledge
- Ability to Support Task at Hand
- Obsolescence of Knowledge

Value of KM Effort

Proposition 3: Diffusion and Adoption of KM

- KM Champion (push factor)
- Solution Provider (pull factor)
- Organisational Culture and Mindset
- Organisational Structure

Diffusion and Adoption of KM

Resources and Infrastructure

Proposition 4: Knowledge Sharing

- Clarity in Expression
- Correctness
- Completeness
- Culture
- Passion
- Motivators
- Supporting Practices and Technologies

Willingness to Share

Sharing Mechanisms

Proposition 5: Knowledge Acquisition and Capture

- Existing Procedures and Practices
- Scope of Knowledge
- Knowledge Gathering Techniques

Knowledge Acquisition and Capture

Motivators

Proposition 6: Effectiveness of KM Technologies

- Ability to Match/Map Tools to KM Activity
- Ability to Prevent Information Overload
- Ability to Personalise Knowledge and Related Processes

Effectiveness of KM Technologies

Effectiveness of Retrieval Mechanisms
Proposition 7: Requirements / Attributes of a KM Practitioner

- Possess IT Knowledge
- Diverse or Cross-Functional Training
- Possess Business or Domain Knowledge
- Basic Skill Sets
- Basic Understanding of Psychological and Educational Aspects in People
- Teamworking Skills
- Communication Skills
- Specialised KM Skills

Discussion ... general state of awareness

- Issues may be broadly divided into:
  - Humanistic: KM (NKMI) issues - organisational and managerial factors, practices
  - Technological: KM (AKMI) issues - technology-based factors
- Distinction between "information" and "knowledge":
  - No: in terms of forms and structure
  - Yes: in terms of summary, relevance and internalisation
- Better comprehension of KM processes and issues than the abstract concept of "knowledge" itself.
- Recognise that KM initiatives should be:
  - driven/championed by business managers/CEOs,
  - IT supported/advised by CIOs/IS managers.
- Recognise the difficulties in sharing and contextualising knowledge, and in establishing a pro-KM culture.

Discussion ... general state of practices

- Most organisations have not formulated or adopted a formal KM agenda.
- Existing practices serve as good foundations for NKM:
  - Staff suggestion schemes,
  - Group discussion sessions and feedback,
  - Human resource (rewards, appraisals, define new KM functions and roles),
- Common AKM solutions and infrastructures are in place:
  - Eg. Groupware such as LotusNotes.
  - Eg. Internet, web, intranets, servers, networks, etc.
  - Eg. Databases, data warehouses.

Discussion ... perception gaps ...

- 2 key KM challenges:
  - To establish right culture, mindsets, etc.
  - Difficulty in extracting and retaining tacit knowledge.
- Some KM solutions "do not seem to work"?
  - Eg. intranets/KM systems in place, but under-utilised
  - Eg. too much time required to find the document files or pieces of knowledge required.
  - Eg. not efficiently stored? or search/retrieval mechanisms not powerful?

Discussion ... perception gaps ...

- AI / intelligent technologies not commonly discussed, why?
  - Ignorance of state-of-the-art intelligent technologies / capabilities?
  - Resistance from IS practitioners: Past experiences of undeclared promises by AI systems?
  - Maturity of AI / intelligent technologies: Are they there yet?
  - Acute shortage of AI/KE skills and expertise in the job market?

Acknowledgement

This work is jointly collaborated between National University of Singapore and Information Technology Management Association, Singapore.

The project is partially supported by:

- Knowledge Management Research Programme of the Dept of Decision Sciences, NUS Business School. This is a preliminary research initiative which aims to establish the scope and foundation of future KM research in NUS.
- Singapore International Foundation.
- Recently completed Enterprise Modelling Research Programme, jointly collaborated between National University of Singapore and Kent Ridge Digital Labs, funded by National Science and Technology Board.