

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COACHING IN THE NETWORK COMPANY

Daria Holodnik
Opole Polytechnic University, Poland
dariaholidnik7@gmail.com

Kazimierz Perechuda
Wroclaw University of Economics, Poland

Abstract:

In the study is shown the importance of knowledge exchange coaching in the network company which respond on demands of postmodernist world. Firstly it is presented the stages of problem solution process within the data is transformed into wisdom. The growing importance of knowledge management has affected on searching for the tools of implementation it. In the paper the Author's proposition is establishing the community of coaches and creating the knowledge exchange system between their external and internal coaches. There is also analyzed the coaching structure in the international company and presented the model of knowledge flow in the community coaches. Finally there were described the particular phases of the establishing the community coaches based on computer aided knowledge exchange and behavioral determinants of the knowledge transfer.

Keywords: knowledge based coaching, knowledge exchange system, knowledge diffusion

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern economy we have big difficulties to obtain adequate information and knowledge, which is useful to accomplish our goals.

In the article is described the KEC (Knowledge Exchange Coaching) concept, which provides numerous instruments for the rapid exchange of the Knowledge and Information (KI) within the networking company.

There is high time to change the classical theory of the enterprise into theory based on the continuous flow of KI. In this sense the firm is like the brain with the very complicated net of the signals.

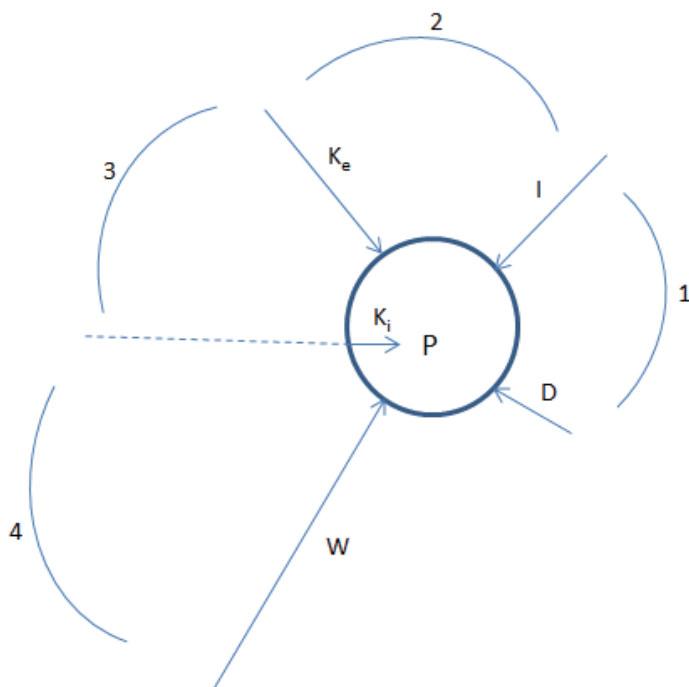
2. THE ROLE OF THE BASIC KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS IN THE PROCESS OF THE PROBLEM SOLVING

The process of problem solving is based on following stages (*fig. 1*):

- 1) D-I
- 2) I- K_e
- 3) $K_e - K_i$
- 4) $K_i - W$

The stages can be explained by the simply examples. The first stage (D-I) is based on the transformation between data and information. Such a transfer means sending the schedule of the day from an assistant to a main manager and it turned out that some meeting in the schedule are need to be changed or cancel (in the morning there were some calls of other managers). In the second stage (I- K_e) information are transformed into explicit knowledge. The changes in the schedule are conformed with the information by the main manger. In result he sees a few ways to create a new schedule. The next stage ($K_e - K_i$) is the phase where the manager analyzes each way of solution so he can use his experience, knowledge etc. It means that some cases can be solved through telephone and others are unnecessary. In the last but the most important stage ($K_i - W$) he uses his intelligence to take the final decisions. So he is able to create a new schedule without any losses like lost time or useless day.

Picture 1: The stages of the problem solution



Legend:
 D - data

I – information
K_e - explicit knowledge
K_i - implicit knowledge
W- wisdom
1,2,3,4- the phases of the transformation of the problem

Source: Author's own study

3. THE ADEQUACY OF THE NETWORKING COOPERATION

The growing complexity of the final products is the main barrier for small business to enter into high-tech industry.

One way to overcome this barrier is to be the business partner of the big international company. The leading multinational company enforce their cooperation companies to change:

- organizational culture,
- organizational structure,
- management system,
- production process and
- KI system.

The partners obtain from the leading company (integrator company) minimum know-how, which should be further developed in the networking coaching process (KEC).

4. THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM)

KM is now one of the main factors of the competitive advantage of the company. It is the result of the following trends:

- increasing competitiveness,
- business internationalization,
- integration process within European Union,
- important knowledge is distributed worldwide,
- emergence of the global market for new concepts, ideas, innovation and technology,
- the growing speed of the initiation processes.

If the company will continue the production based on the old technology, than in the long perspective will go bankruptcy.

Only the continuous process of preparing and utilization of the new products and production procedure will ensure stability and development of the company.

5. ANALYZES OF THE COACHING STRUCTURE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

To challenge the goal of innovation products and spreading creative ideas the network company needs to cooperate with many kinds of coaching companies on different levels of its structure (*fig.2*). In the knowledge management quick reactions and effective decision is based on well-organized knowledge transfers, especially implicit knowledge. That cause a lot of inter and external communication processes in the company. In different levels in network company there are two forms of coaching: external and internal.

The external coaching is defined here as the cooperation between coaching institutions and the particular company. The specific feature of this cooperation is drawing long-term contract and trust. Otherwise their cooperation is based on fears and suspicions. The external coaching institution can be:

- layers (chambers),
- insurances companies,
- financing companies (banks, credits),
- coaches (consulting firms),

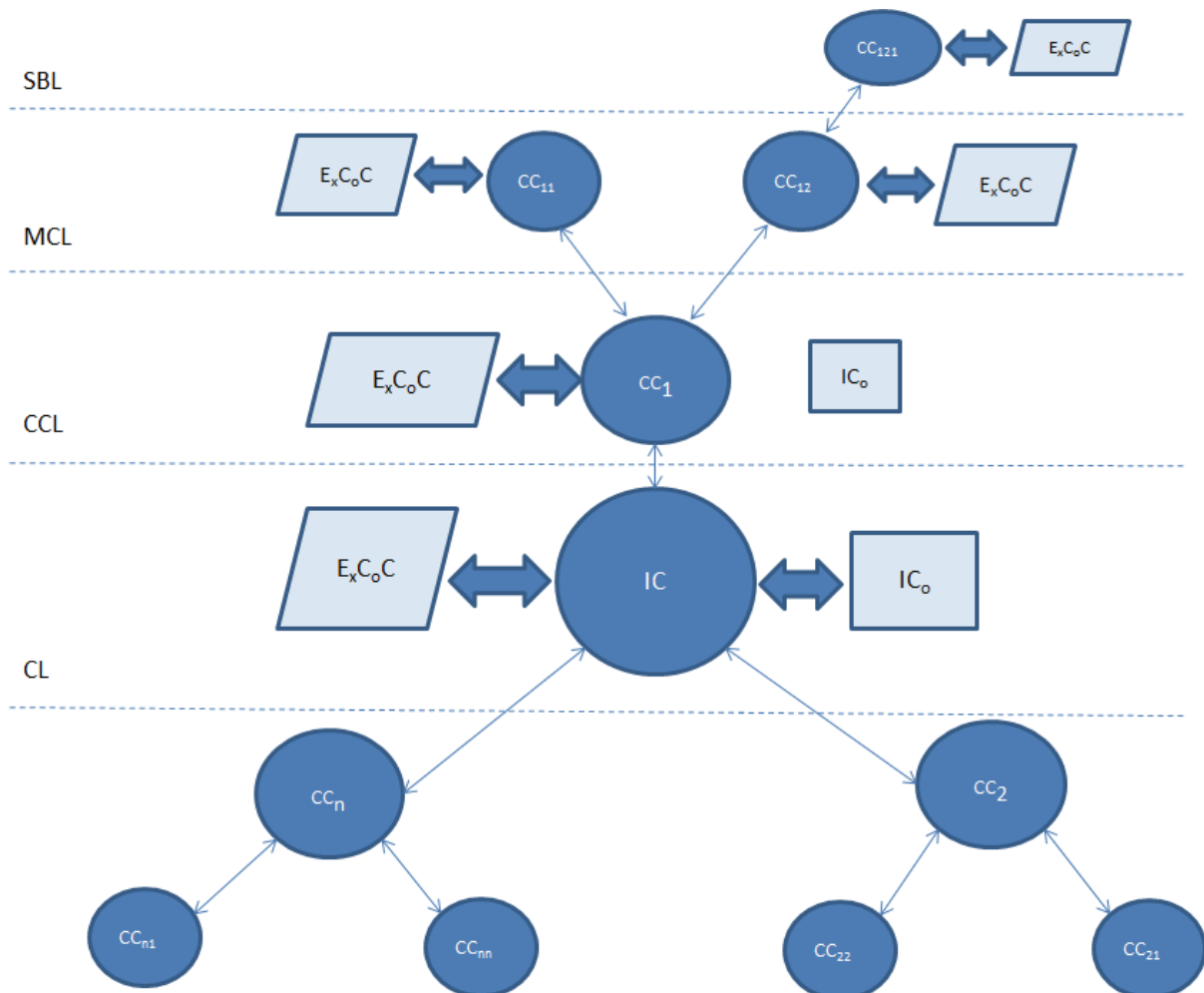
- logistic firms,
- ICT companies,
- personal coaching firms,
- departments, cathedrals of the universities and institutes of science and researches,
- parks of technology, industry, innovation and science.

Internal coaching usually is useful and needed in bigger companies (the level of integrator company and cooperating companies). Having internal coaches is too costly for the small or medium firms so it is more effective for them to cooperate with external coaching companies. In the bigger companies the internal coaching can have the form of:

- daughter companies,
- own training and coaching centers,
- HR center
- corporate banks,
- corporate universities (ex. Ford University etc.)

The knowledge transfer should cause the synergetic effect in both way. Thus the information system influence on effectiveness, innovation and creativeness in each company of the network.

Picture 2: Coaching levels in the international network company



- Legend:
- IC- integrator company
 - CC_{1,2-n}- cooperating companies (first level cooperation)
 - CC_{11,12,21,22-n}- cooperating companies (second level cooperation)
 - CC_{121-n}-cooperating companies (third level cooperation)
 - E_xC_oC- external coaching companies

IC_o- internal coaching
 SBL- small business level
 MCL- medium sized companies level
 CCL- corporate cooperating level
 CL- corporate level

Source: Author's own study

6. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COACHES COMMUNITY (CC)

KEC in the networking company takes the form of many faces, i.e. every specialist as the coach could and should communicate freely with another partner within the firm. There is the first step to establish the Community of Coaches, which is oriented to accomplish the following goals:

- increasing exchange of the KI,
- the rapid development of the new products,
- permanent modification of technology and production procedures,
- acceleration of the learning processes,
- integration of the new specialists into Community of coaches,
- reducing the duplication of the coaching processes,
- better coordination of the coaching roadmap,
- reducing redundancies of different locations.

Communication of the CC infiltrate in every way of that process: horizontal, vertical and asymmetrical (*tab. 1*). The first combination (horizontal) of knowledge based coaching between internal coaches and external coaches, where the CC advise to the integrator company, harmonize and dovetail the model of the cooperation. Both sides need to consult the methods of working suited to the whole network, the communication system, the organizational culture that provide solution problem in any area of functioning. The vertical knowledge based coaching refers to dose the basic corporate knowledge (core competences) to the lower levels of the network cooperates. Finally the asymmetric knowledge based coaching means that the companies from the higher level (the integrator company and cooperate companies level) support the medium and small companies (they cannot afford for the internal coaches) by the key knowledge they poses i.e. the polish network of 'Zabka'- food shops (the family local has jointed to Zabka network and got for free logistic, advertising, IT service, credits, personal consulting and informatics).

Table 1: Model of the coaches community (CC) in the network company based on knowledge flow

Level	Internal coaching	External coaching
CL	IC _o	E _x C _o C
CCL	IC _o	E _x C _o C
MCL		E _x C _o C
SBL		E _x C _o C

Legend:

- ↔ - K_bC_o – horizontal knowledge based coaching on the same level between coaches and external coaches
- ←-----→ - K_bC_o – vertical knowledge based coaching between external coaches
- ←.....→ - K_bC_o – asymmetrical (top to down) knowledge based coaching

Source: Author's own study

7. THE ROLES OF THE COACHES COMMUNITIES (CC)

The Community of Coaches could play the following roles in the Networking Company (NC):

- *integrator* of the specialists,
- *facilitator* of new ideas, concepts, methods etc.,
- *initiator* of the informal knowledge exchange,
- *support* of the initiatives generating by formal managers,
- *moderator* of the exchange and development of the knowledge,
- *sponsor* for the other knowledge agents, who are not the member of the CC.

The active coaches fulfill these roles in different extent.

In the modern enterprise we have mainly overcapacity of the corporate knowledge, which is not used in the correct way. CC playing different roles support quick utilization of the company knowledge.

8. THE PHASES OF THE ESTABLISHING OF THE COACH COMMUNITIES (CC)

In the process of the CC establishing we should follow the next phases:

- (1) Identification of the key knowledge islands in the networking company (NC).
- (2) Identification of the key specialists.
- (3) Coaching training of the key specialists.
- (4) Appointment key specialists as the knowledge coaches (KC).
- (5) Establishing of knowledge exchange system.
- (6) Definition of the roles and functions of the KC (Knowledge Coaches).
- (7) Definition of the motivation system for the CC.
- (8) Monitoring of the knowledge exchange system.

The above mentioned phases have linear and formal character, but in the praxis CC in the initial phase are established parallel and in informal way.

9. THE PHASE (1)

Very important is preparing of the knowledge map of the company (phase 1), which gives for the management the following advantages:

- exactly identification of the *knowledge islands* and *knowledge deserts*,
- the *global view* into corporate knowledge,
- precisely identification of the *knowledge barriers*, within the company and in environment,
- definition of the knowledge asymmetry.

The first phase stimulates CEO to take appropriate decisions in the management knowledge area, especially oriented to better structuring of the knowledge content widely dispersed in different part of networking company (NC).

10. THE PHASE (2)

In the modern society every kind of specialist should be viewed as the coach. The specialization process in the modern economy is so advanced, that nobody can effectively exist without the help of different specialist (coaches) in the following areas:

- finance,
- education,

- economy,
- law,
- security,
- insurance,
- medicine,
- religion,
- culture,
- politics.

The amount of highly skilled specialist is growing. It means also the growing time and cost to find adequate, professional person for the company.

Probably for the NC the best solution is to appoint the highly skilled and experienced specialist as the *chief of the coaches*, which cooperate or will cooperate with the company.

His main *roles* are:

- *monitoring* of the specialist market,
- *choosing* the best specialist for the future cooperation,
- *integration* of the key company specialist within CC,
- *coordination* of the knowledge exchange within CC and between CC and other company's departments,
- *harmonization* of the coaching process fulfilled in the parallel ongoing processes.

11. THE PHASE (3)

Not every specialist can obtain automatically the coach status. The *specialists* poses the *unique* knowledge and experience and the *coaches* know how to use them to provide the solutions for the company and staff and workers.

It means that every specialist, who is going to join the CC should undergo special coaching training oriented towards :

- *effective use* of their competencies, skills, knowledge and information resources,
- *acceleration* of the knowledge and information exchange,
- *delivering* expected solutions for other formal (departments) and informal (knowledge societies) groups within NC.

12. THE PHASE (4)

The transition process from specialist into coach takes more informal character. The specialist still maintain the previous position in the NC formal structure.

In the new role as the coaches they take additional position as the knowledge agents, who freely move across the company area. It means they communicate directly with every part (department, worker, manager) of the company and freely enter into different projects with the aim to support them with their unique knowledge and skills.

13. THE PHASE (5)

There are many knowledge support system created by the leading software companies like: SAP, Microsoft, IBM.

But in CC is very important the sociopsychological approach accelerating the diffusion of the knowledge.

Since the knowledge exchange system should be created on two *basis*:

- *computer aided* knowledge exchange,
- *behavioral* determinants of the knowledge transfer.

In the building process of the knowledge exchange system we should use situational approach, which is strictly connected with the existing level of the corporate knowledge within NC.

14. THE PHASE (6)

The process of the establishing the new role and functions of knowledge coaches should precise:

- knowledge identification,
- knowledge exchange mechanism,
- participation in the CC meetings,
- specialization of the KC,
- the way of presentation of the new experiences and lessons,
- communication language,
- construction of the common, specific knowledge platform,
- trajectory of the knowledge distribution and last findings,
- the form of the participation in the exchange of skills, best practices and experiences,
- barriers of losing valuable knowledge.

15. THE PHASE (7)

Incentive system is very important for the effective functioning and development of the CC.

The member of CC must spend more work time to fulfill additional tasks in the CC. Their extra effort should be support by special, extraordinary motivation system.

16. THE PHASE (8)

In multinational companies can be established many, non-competitive CC. This process can not be formally structured and controlled.

The best way for top management is carefully monitoring of the emergence and development of the local communities.

The special role given to board is to stimulate the process of voluntarily creation of the CC, which in increase stage should be financially supported for the innovations, research and knowledge diffusion in the NC.

SUMMARY

The rivalry of innovation products, production, services or its combination force network companies to acquire new knowledge transfers which allow to achieve competitive advantage. Under these conditions knowledge management is one of the key factors to spread and use knowledge in effective way within the network company. The modern tool of knowledge management is the coaches communities because its role grows on incredible importance in acceleration of creating knowledge exchange systems. Moreover the knowledge transfers between external and internal coaches on different levels in the network company intensify the collaboration, standardization of systems, agreement of methods and to harmonize the communication system. The knowledge based coaching may flow in many directions: horizontal, vertical and asymmetric so that all companies achieve benefits of using it. Therefore in the paper it was precisely described the methodology of establishing the coach communities. The process consists of eight phases and is based on creating the platform of knowledge diffusion.

REFERENCE LIST

1. Davenport T.H., Probst G. (2002). *Knowledge Management Case Book. Simens Best Practises*, Publicis Corporate Publishing J.Wiley & Sons, Second Edition.
2. Perechuda K. (2007) *Dyfuzja wiedzy w przedsiębiorstwie sieciowym. Wizualizacja i kompozycja*, second edition: extended, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2007.
3. Perechuda K. (2012), *Coaching agentów wiedzy w przedsiębiorstwach sieciowych* (in Russian), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław.

4. Perechuda K. (2005): *Discontinuity Management in Innovative Network Organizations*, [in]: Kubiak B.F., Korowicki A. (ed.): *Information Management*, Uniwersytet Gdański, Gdańsk 2005 (pp. 337-343).
5. Perechuda K. (2010). *Knowledge Diffusion Methods In a Networking Company. Knowledge Business Models*, Publishing House of Wrocław University of Economics, Wrocław.
6. Perechuda K. (2009). *Knowledge diffusion methods In a networking company* (referat), 16TH International Conference: Knowledge acquisition and management (KAM'09), May 22-23, Wrocław.
7. Perechuda K., Hołodnik D. (2012). Interferencja teorii organizacji i teorii sportu. Przypadek decyzyjny: coaching sportowy (tenis ziemny) a coaching biznesowy (przełożony – podwładny), [w:] *HISTORIA I PERSPEKTYWY NAUK O ZARZĄDZANIU*. Księga pamiątkowa dla uczczenia Jubileuszu 40-lecia pracy naukowo-dydaktycznej Prof. zw. dr hab. Arkadiusza Potockiego, Miłkuła B (red.), Wydawnictwo: Fundacja Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie, Kraków, (pp. 197-212).