The Role of the Information System’s Manager in the Organization

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Resumo

Na era do conhecimento, a importância do gestor de sistemas de informação (SI) e a necessidade da sua percepção prevalece. O capital intelectual de uma organização cresce com uma captação e gestão eficiente da informação e com o desenvolvimento das capacidades para mediar a formação de conhecimento a partir da tecnologia. Devido à sua grande quantidade, a informação deve ser depurada, formatada e sistematicamente organizada por forma a atender as necessidades do cliente mais selectivo. Gerir os fluxos de informação é gerir conhecimento através das tecnologias de informação (TI) como ferramenta de inovação e vantagem competitiva. O gestor do SI é responsável pela acumulação de conhecimento organizacional para a tomada de decisão.

Palavras-chave  
gestão do conhecimento, gestor do SI, inteligência organizacional, comunicação interpessoal
Abstract

In the era of knowledge, the importance of the manager of information systems (IS) and the need for his awareness of his role prevails. The intellectual capital of an organization begins to grow with an efficient capture and organization of information, and the skills to mediate knowledge, from the technology, are developed. Due to the large number, information is gold mined, formatted and systematically arranged, in order to attend the needs of a more selective consumer. To manage the flow of information is to manage knowledge as the information technology (IT) is a tool of innovation management and competitive differential. The manager of IS is responsible for the accumulation of organizational knowledge for decision-making.

Keywords
knowledge management, IS manager, organizational intelligence, interpersonal communication

1. Introduction

A search for doctorate, involving multiple areas of study, noticed the importance of using information systems within an organization and the need of awareness from the manager of IS himself, related to know and understand the goals of a company, talk in a clear way and maintain a transparent relationship with the manager.

What happened for a long time was the lack of comprehension from the society about the terms used by the manager of IS, who talked in an absolutely technical way and hardly explained the resources of technology which require an economic evaluation.

Moreover, the professionals of IT/IS believed, and some still do, that there was no clearness related to doubts or needs, that people or organizations did not expressed themselves objectively and, likelihood, would be unable to deal with the information that the IS could provide.
Under the effects of globalization, dialogue between areas is essential and an important step, in the organizational environment, is to prepare both IS and management professionals to work together, achieving a knowledge management approach and turning information into the intelligence of an organization.

2. Challenges for the IS Manager

This brief analysis intends to verify the support of evolutionary logic of organizational thinking, related with strategic actions (innovation and competitiveness), focusing the importance of the manager of information systems in knowledge management.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the need of collecting, organizing, storing and making available data (data processing) has began. Then, to contextualize and interpret such data, the information systems appeared.

Today, in the twenty-first century, the various informations, organized in systems, become the ground for important strategic attitudes and develop the organizational thinking (management/knowledge systems), which is the base of innovation and competitiveness of business. From then, intelligence is being developed (Cortes, 2008). There was a time when the IT professional was seen as someone without the slightest ability in interpersonal communication, like a villain who appeared to mess around. Something not much accessible, which was there to harass instead of helping.

The rise of technology, whose power was increased at the end of the twentieth century, has left people either scared or enchanted by the miracles of information technology, biotechnology, medicine and science of materials, which promised (and even promise) to transform the behavior, the environment and human beings themselves. The information technology flourishes in reason and intensifies on questions of the own technologists and on the doubts of humanists (Dertouzous, 2002).
Although companies know they needed it, the lack of skill, the ignorance and the few technological experience have splitted, for a while, the database from the human logic.

With the transformation of industrial society into information society, there was a need to organize and select data in the companies. This shift has raised new values, equal or even more important than the traditional resources (natural, capital and equipment), which are information and knowledge (Souza et al., 2008).

Inevitably, it is noticed that capital and labor are no longer sufficient factors as the information is becoming the difference for competitive advantage. And to increase this differential, whose sources are multiplying, the technology is the partner able to act on the circuit of data communication for articulation of actions, enhancing collaboration for an effective knowledge management.

The intellectual capital of an organization begins to take form with an efficient uptake and organization of the information, building up skills of knowledge transfer in the information society.

The technology helps in such an important way for noble efforts and for the comprehension of modern changes. Some dissociation or fragmentation of these two aspects has inhibited the development of human potential. The joint exploration of technological and human potential is the basis for organizational innovation.

Souza et al. (2008) stated that: “It is difficult to find a single sector, company or organization of any kind that has not passed to make an intense use of information - that has not become dependent of knowledge as a source of attraction to consumers and customers, and information technology as a tool in management”.

The possibility of gold-mining information requires sources that are able to attend the interests of a more selective and refined public, with appetite for information, but absolutely qualified. It is, therefore, necessary to format the large number of information and rethink how to present products and services.

Due to these imperatives, from a reflection on globalization, a company needs to organize the information in a systematic way, in order to take advantage of its potential and develop
new values (solutions and technology) to expand or maintain position in the global competitive market.

For Boar (2002), the information technology is the capacity in which a company builds its information systems. It involves the preparation, collecting, transport, retrieval, storage, access, processing and presenting the information in all its forms”.

In competitive organizations, according to Boar (2002), the resources of information technology:
- become the critical mechanisms to reduce costs, compress time to market, offer added value and interact with costumers and suppliers;
- offer the functionality (software) that is increasingly a real product for costumers to interact with;
- become the vehicle of satisfaction for costumers and of innovation and value adding for the firm;
- become the main vehicle of advantage to divert the benefits of competition.

Rezende (2007) considers that “any system, whether or not using the resources of information technology, which creates information, can be generally considered an information system”. It is effectively noticed that IT is the competitive advantage in the information age. And it is more specifically through IS professionals that the selections of information serve as tools for managers. Thus, the formation of intellectual capital depends on the joint of different skills oriented to the same goals.

3. Profile of an IS Professional

The technology is recognized as a differentiating tool for organizations and information management. Consequently, it is required that the profile of the IS professional in the ancient and unique area of computer science follows the evolution and adapts to the demand. Now, the technician must no longer be restrict to the technological unit in the
enterprise, but a multi-skilled professional who understands knowledge management, business and interpersonal relations.

The IS manager, in addition to mastering the technical part, must understand business’ needs and know company goals, having the role of a mediator. Thus, he needs the technology to collect and select information and the intellectual capacity to know how to turn it into useful knowledge for the organization.

Tidd et al. (2008) call the technological gatekeeper as the individual who collects information from various sources and then transfers it to relevant persons. He will not necessarily be in positions of information management, but should be well connected with the informal structure of an organization to find the right information for the right person, at the right moment.

Information systems play strategically through their important role in the field of knowledge management: an advanced alliance of IT, information management and capacity for interpersonal communication.

Gates (1999) has already indicated the expression knowledge management, expressed in the mid-80’s as managing the flow of information, starting in goals and business processes with the support of technology. For this author, the technology is a way, not an end in itself.

A japanese scientist (Yoneji Masuda), president of the Institute for the Information Society of Tokyo, used the name knowledge society instead of information society. Then, what is currently shown in the organizations as a differential for competitiveness and innovation was already discussed by some visionaries a decade ago.

To better understand the “evolution” of the information systems to the knowledge systems, it is interesting to point what Cortes (2008) considers information systems: “groups of inter-related components or modules that allow data entry or data collection, processing and generation of information necessary for decision-making aimed at planning and monitoring actions”.
Thus, this cycle of feeding and verifying feedback, features the system whose information provides the basis for knowledge. Rezende (2007) considers the planning of information systems as a strategic key of an organization for business intelligence.

In other words, to be strategic, the information is interpreted, contextualized and tested. In these situations, there is a risk of success or failure, which requires the accumulation of experience that generates new knowledge.

The information society and knowledge management are absolutely relevant and complementary in the current business scene. Collaboration, competences and skills are some of the key attributes for succeeding.

From the joint between people, technical and organizational resources “emerges different knowledge, as a product of demands that occur in various business environments to enhance the quality of products and services” (Polizelli, 2008).

Information, knowledge and creativity, in chronological sequence, form the process of innovation, a factor that generates profit and keeps the company competitive (Tidd et al., 2008).

In this way, considering that innovation is a matter of knowledge, Tidd et al. (2008) argue that opportunities are created by the combination of several sets of knowledge, under conditions of uncertainty. When the uncertainty becomes controlled and neutralized, appears knowledge and the knowledge system.

Here the point of excellence in an organization is clearly noticed, since the systems of knowledge are strong instruments of innovation management. The management of informational and cognitive processes can be decisive, both in training and developing a cohesive society. Tidd et al. (2008) say that “innovation can enhance competitiveness, but requires a set of skills and knowledge base different from that commonly used in commercial management”.

According to Rezende (2007): “as the concept of knowledge systems is recent, their planning is still a major challenge in organizations. On the other hand, the concept and planning of information and technological systems are often cited in related literature.”
Even recognizing that the way of approaching these concepts is not always very wide, as they have a different discussion, Rezende (2007) argues that the planning of information systems, knowledge systems and computer technology should be integrated with the strategic organizational planning for synergies between them.

The great challenge of innovation is to manage these same basic principles, but on an absurdly larger scale. The liberalization of trade and the opening of markets have created a huge demand of all activities, and for this globalized system works, it is necessary a global management that contemplates, besides the departmental or functional areas, some of cultural implicit characteristics (Tidd et al., 2008).

4. Conclusion

The real competitive advantage is a fully sustainable condition, where a company canalizes information to generate knowledge and intelligence, enabling itself to constantly rethink about its goals and work methods, for working in a creative way (Cortes, 2008).

The IS manager needs to have a specialist formation, with a generalist vision. He needs to explore technical knowledge to fulfill the function of collecting, organizing and interpreting information and, according to the context, analyzing each situation to give the right information to the right person, at the right moment. Even not necessarily being member of a management team, this professional is also responsible for the organizational knowledge accumulation that supports decision-making.

As some sciences had to reformulate their concepts in order to overcome the impasses of world complexity, the adoption of change requires new attitudes from organizations and their professionals, and new ways to manage intelligence on each stage of evolution, in order to face the many challenges ahead.
References


