



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

HOW DOES KNOWLEDGE MATTER?

CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS

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In today's "Post-Industrial Era", economic growth is mainly driven by the accumulation and application of knowledge. Knowledge is widely recognized as a resource that is critical for explaining performance differences, innovation, market dynamics, and governance issues. As economies have become more knowledge-intensive, interest in knowledge management has significantly increased. The abilities to create, acquire, disseminate, and apply knowledge within the firm and across firms are increasingly recognized as essential for gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage.

The management of knowledge is not only of practical concern for firms; it is also an important research topic in strategic management. Knowledge-related processes such as knowledge creation, transfer and retention require appropriate organizational structures (e.g., market or hierarchy) and coordination mechanisms (e.g., formal contracts, incentives, social networks, information and communication technologies). The relationship between specific organizational structures and coordination mechanisms and knowledge-related processes, however, remains an under-researched topic. In addition, the choices of structure and coordination mechanisms are associated with significant costs that must be weighed by managers, yet research on the costs and benefits of knowledge management remains scarce. Both of these issues are further impacted by the difficulties of measuring organizational knowledge due to its tacit and intangible nature. Without progress on this issue, however, research on knowledge management within and between organizations will remain limited.

In light of these issues, the purpose of the SMS 28th Annual International Conference in Cologne is to advance the current understanding of how knowledge matters. In particular, the following three topics will be the focus of this year's SMS conference: (1) Managing knowledge, i.e., the links between organizational structures, coordination mechanisms, and knowledge management processes; (2) Measuring knowledge, i.e., innovative methodologies and approaches to measure knowledge, knowledge management, and knowledge-related processes; and, (3) Evaluating knowledge management, i.e., the costs and benefits of knowledge management.

The SMS Annual International Conference invites contributions that represent original, interesting, and theoretically bold research, as well as innovative empirical studies. As reflected in the themes of the conference tracks below, there are numerous potential questions that can be addressed. The outlined ideas are meant to bridge the gap between theory, methodology, and the practice of knowledge management. Study results should offer practical solutions for managers with an interest in managing and governing knowledge.

CONFERENCE THEME TRACKS

(A) MANAGING KNOWLEDGE: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Research on knowledge management focuses on a fundamental set of processes associated with knowledge resources. These processes predominantly refer to knowledge creation, the transfer of knowledge within and across organizational boundaries, and knowledge retention. Possible questions associated with these issues include: Which structures and mechanisms are likely to promote the creation of knowledge? How is knowledge transferred within and between organizations and what factors facilitate (or inhibit) its transfer? When and what types of knowledge are worth retaining? Under what conditions is knowledge a public or a private good, and how can knowledge be protected? Which modern technologies and methods are available and appropriate for managing knowledge?

(B) MEASURING KNOWLEDGE: INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGIES AND APPROACHES

An area of critical importance is the development of better methods for measuring knowledge and evaluating the impact of knowledge-related processes on firms and their performance. Process, content and context of knowledge management are important research topics. More efforts are needed which apply complementary measurement approaches within single studies, use comprehensive datasets, and replicate and validate results across studies. All empirical methods are welcome. Open questions include: How might knowledge and knowledge-related processes be measured? How does the conceptualization of knowledge in a study correspond with the measure chosen (including its limitations)? Which longitudinal and dynamic methodologies are best suited to overcome the problems associated with the measurement of knowledge and knowledge-related processes?

(C) EVALUATING KNOWLEDGE: COSTS AND BENEFITS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Though knowledge-related processes and their governance are not costless, less than six percent of publications in this research field refer to the benefits and costs of knowledge management (Foss, 2007). Open questions are, e.g.: What are the benefits and costs of knowledge management? Is the value of knowledge overstated in some industries and businesses in the post-industrial economy? Under what circumstances does knowledge improve economic performance? What are the benefits and pitfalls of not managing knowledge systematically? How do financial analysts deal with the problem of adequately assessing the value of knowledge-based enterprises?

(D) GENERAL

Many exciting sets of ideas and knowledge-based assertions have been offered. Interesting questions include: What theoretical and practical perspectives can be associated with the conference theme "How Does Knowledge Matter"? Which theories are especially suitable in explaining how knowledge matters? What do we know and how should we proceed? What opportunities are there for cross-disciplinary research, and what can strategic management learn from other disciplines?

INTEREST GROUP TRACKS

The SMS has formed Interest Groups around some important sub-fields in strategic management. These seven groups each invite interested participants to engage with them in pre-conference activities. In addition, through this Call, each Interest Group invites submissions for the main body of the conference in which the authors address aspects of "how knowledge matters" along with other topics relevant to the Interest Group domain. The conference program will include papers and panels that Interest Groups select in their topical areas, along with the selections from the above conference tracks. Submissions to the Interest Group tracks are open to any interested parties.

(E) COMPETITIVE STRATEGY

How, why, and under what circumstances do knowledge-related processes such as knowledge creation, organizational learning, knowledge sharing, and knowledge retention contribute to the emergence and sustainability of competitive advantage? What special skills and capabilities does the governance of those processes require? How can one assess the benefits and costs of managing knowledge and its competitive impacts?

(F) CORPORATE STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

Which governance mechanisms are beneficial in promoting knowledge sharing among business units? How can the success of knowledge sharing in multibusiness firms be assessed? How does the knowledge intensity of a firm influence its portfolio decisions? Under what conditions and how do the possession and/or acquisition of knowledge give rise to questions of how a corporate portfolio should be restructured/diversified?

(G) GLOBAL STRATEGY

How does an extension of operations across national boundaries affect a firm's opportunities to create and/or acquire new knowledge? Which benefits and pitfalls are associated with knowledge acquisition across national boundaries? How can the risks that those strategies bear be mitigated? How might the role of different types of knowledge and knowledge management processes vary between manufacturing MNCs and service MNCs?

(H) STRATEGY PROCESS

How can top management teams communicate and promote the necessity of knowledge sharing among organizational subunits? How can knowledge-related processes such as knowledge creation, sharing and retention be sponsored or supported by management? What roles do managers at all levels and employees play in fostering those processes? Which factors may impede knowledge transfer between subunits? How can the risk of opportunistic behavior be mitigated?

(I) KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

Where does knowledge reside? How can it be made visible and accessible? Where and how does organizational learning take place and result in innovation? Under what circumstances is it best to forget organizational knowledge? What drives managers to hang on to obsolete knowledge? How can those "competency traps" successfully be overcome? How can knowledge, learning, and innovation be managed in an efficient way?

(J) THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGY

How and by whom are knowledge-related issues identified and conceptualized? Referring to the governance of knowledge-related processes in firms, how are potential solutions generated, evaluated, and decided on? What tools and methodologies are available and best suited for those processes?

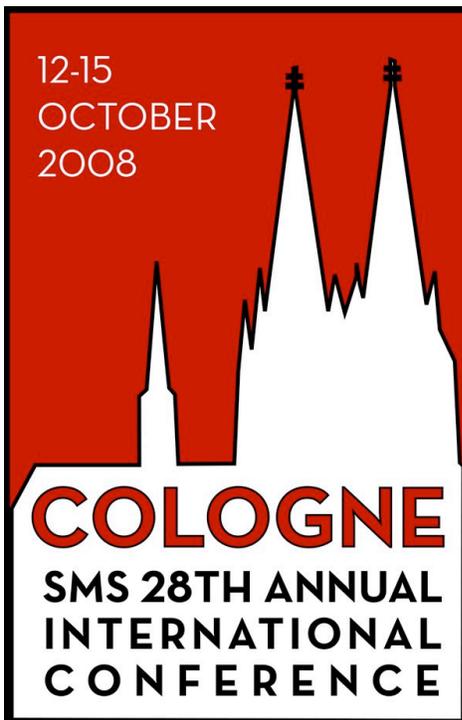
(K) ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STRATEGY

Individuals in existing organizations that possess knowledge (e.g., scientists, employees) often create entrepreneurial new ventures. What strategies enable or impede new venture formation? How do strategies undertaken by parent organizations and entrepreneurial new ventures enable or impede value appropriation from knowledge? How does the role of knowledge in an entrepreneurial firm differ from that in an established firm? How can the knowledge-creating capabilities of new ventures be assessed? How do knowledge-governance capabilities drive a new venture's competitive advantage?

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: February 4, 2008

**To learn more about the
SMS 28th Annual International Conference
and for instructions on how to submit proposal(s), please go to:**

<http://COLOGNE.STRATEGICMANAGEMENT.NET>



Timeline:

February 4, 2008	Submission Deadline for Proposals
February 15, 2008	Co-Author Confirmation Deadline
April, 2008	Notification of Review Program Committee Decisions
May 15, 2008	Presenter Registration Deadline
July, 2008	Conference Program Available on SMS Web site
Oct 12–15, 2008	SMS 28th Annual International Conference

a professional society for the
advancement of strategic management

The Strategic Management Society (SMS) is unique in bringing together the worlds of reflective practice and thoughtful scholarship. The Society consists of more than 2,000 members representing over 50 different countries. Membership, composed of academics, business practitioners, and consultants, focuses its attention on the development and dissemination of insights on the strategic management process, as well as fostering contacts and interchange around the world.

The Society is probably best known through the Strategic Management Journal (SMJ) published by John Wiley & Sons. The SMJ has become the leading scholarly publication in the field of Strategic Management. Since its inception it has sought to promote the development of advances in the field by maintaining the highest standards of intellectual thought combined with practical relevance.



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