# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

Today, knowledge is increasingly recognized as an important, strategic resource by all types of organizations and institutions, whether private or public, service oriented or production oriented. Regardless of the importance ostensibly attached to it, public sector organizations have often been less inclined to fully explore the benefits of knowledge management than the private sector. But now many organizations in the public sectors have started to realize the importance of knowledge management in streamlining their operations This paper will focus on knowledge management in the public sector. Common challenges and concerns that affect public sectors worldwide are identified as: driving efficiencies across all public services; improving accountability; making informed decisions; enhancing partnerships with stakeholders; capturing the knowledge of an ageing workforce, and; improving overall performance. To deal with these challenges public sectors often introduce several reforms including knowledge management and most recently, e-government. The success of e-government depends on knowledge management. Knowledge management provides the overall strategy and techniques to manage e-government content eloquently in order to make knowledge more usable and accessible and to keep it updated. This paper will discuss how knowledge management can be put into practice as a reform instrument and an integral part of e-government to address some of the above challenges and lead the public sector to increased effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. This contribution investigates knowledge aspects in e-government and gives a survey on relevant knowledge issues in the public sector. Based on the comprehension of public sector knowledge, examples are considered where administrative work is enhanced with knowledge.

**Key words** - knowledge management, e-government, public sector, organizational learning.

## Introduction

The term public sector refers to the functioning agencies & units at the federal, state, country, municipal & local levels of government. The sector includes all agencies, govt. coopeartions, the military & departments, agencies & miscellaneous units that perform some form of public service. This paper is about how government managers & administrators are adopting the public sector developed concepts & practices known as Knowledge Management. What KM is? - Knowledge management is the process through which an enterprise uses its collective intelligence to accomplish its strategic objectives. Knowledge management is not just about technology. It is about processes, people, behavior, workflow & other technology. It is about processes, people, behavior, workflow & other factors. Knowledge management is about understanding how people work, sharing concepts and ideas, identifying groups of people who work on similar things & seeing how they can learn from one another.KM is about organizations learning from their experiences & about leadership in organization.

Butler,feller,Pope,Barry and Murphy (2003,83) described Km as a multidisciplinary domain of internet with origins in philosophy,economics,organization theory, information systems, marketing, management strategy, innovation research & organizational learning. Elements of these disciplines have been brought together to result in a management philosophy & set of tools & processes founded on four basic tenets-

1) Knowledge is created in the minds of people

2) Knowledge can be captured, put on paper, entered into a computer system, put to work, or simply remembered.

3) Following a fundamental characteristic of the human mind, knowledge is classified, combined, modified & recognized. Technology makes it easier to recapture knowledge by making it possible to search using key words or phrases

4) Knowledge is shared, as it is shared, it is recycled, modified & enlarged

## Evolution of KM In Public Sector

KM is nothing new rather it is latest component in the government's fifty-plus-year effort to integrate IT into operations to improve performance and make government agencies and departments more accountable. By 2005, the latest development in this progression had become a global movement to reform the way governments serve their citizens around the world that movement is referred to as e-government. One leading enterprise software & knowledge system industry spokesperson described the foundation for this movement in these terms:

Government organizations worldwide are facing challenges as administrative, executive and judicial bodies continue to evolve into an electronic work environment pushed by paperwork –reduction mandates, requirements to handle increase workloads with fewer personal & the rapid addition of

electronic communication channels by tax payers and citizens, governments are often on the forefront of adopting new approaches to electronic information management (McKin 2005)

According to Cliao & Thai(2002), the National Performance review (NPR) Act, which gave life to the reinventing government movement may have been the most important reform of the twentieth century. It came at a time when there was higher- than- ever demand for changing the way governments function.

**Concept of E-Government**

According to the Institute for development Policy and Management (2008), "e-government is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the activities of public sector organizations"

Heeks (2008) explains that e-government covers the following three main areas:

- Improving government process / e-Administration by making processes time and cost effective, managing process performance, making strategic connections in government, and creating empowerment;
- Connecting citizens (e-Citizens and e-Services) by providing citizens with public sector activities details, increasing citizen input into government decisions and actions and improving public services;
- Building external interactions by creating an e-Society, that involves improved relationships between public agencies and other public and private companies, interaction between government and business (Heeks, 2008). E-government requires internet-based technologies to provide facilitated access to government information and services, and citizens and enterprises engagement through e-government portals as a collective vision of all government activities.

Thus, e-government can be used to refer to a government that uses IT and e-commerce to provide access to government information and delivery of public services to citizens, and all other business partners and stakeholders including private sectors. E-government is citizen-centric.

**Importance of Knowledge Management in E-Government**

Knowledge management provides the overall strategy to manage the e-content of e-government by providing knowledge organization tools and techniques, monitoring up datedness of knowledge contents and availing all necessary information to citizens. Zhou & Gao (2007) have identified three benefits of knowledge management in e-government as being conducive to enhance governments' competence, to raise governments' service quality, and, to promote healthy development of e-government. Knowledge needs to be managed time and cost effectively in order to connect citizens to citizens and citizens to government and vice versa to make participative government policies and decisions. That brings government transparency and citizen empowerment and buys in of government projects and policies and consequently results in a more citizen centric government. So, the success of e-government depends heavily on knowledge management. "Knowledge management for e-government is no longer a choice but an imperative if economies have to survive in the unfolding era of privatization, liberalization and globalization" (Misra, 2007). Thus e-government is not merely a transformation from manual to digital; it is a collective vision of all government activities, vision and

mission. Since e-government is largely knowledge intensive, it requires knowledge management applications and techniques to represent government fully and appropriately.

**Basic Framework for Knowledge Management in E-Government**


**Figure 1: Basic Framework For Knowledge Management In e-government**

## Challenges of KM in Public Sector

Public sector managers and administrations face many challenges and new responsibilities in the twenty-first century. Just a few of the more salient of these challenges are defending the homeland against terrorist actions, preventing the spread of infectious disease, maintain a reliable stream of social security income, continuing to support the transition from welfare to work, ensuring that our education systems meet the needs of students both young and old, and repairing an aging and in many cases decaying physical infrastructure (U.S. GAO 2004). Further exacerbating the effects of these and other challenges are a number of social and economic trends that hinder the ability of governments to carry out their appointed tasks. Among the key trends impacting the way government must act today and in the future are:

1) A global reaction and response to the threat of terrorism and other physical threats to our personal and national security

2) the globalization of society that will continue to increase the interdepencance of business and industries,national and regional economies,markets for products and services,civil societies,and national governments.

3) the shift to market –oriented ,knowledge-based public services,and the continued pressures for privaitaion of governmmnet services.

4) A demographic mega-shift taking place in many industrial societies, including more legal and illegal migration, an aging and more diverse population in the United states and elsewhere, and zero or negative population growth.

5) Continued rapid advances in science and technology-and the blending of the two, as in biotechnology-and the opportunities and challenges these advances represent-incluiding the potential for adverse public reaction to such advances.

6) The many challenges and opportunities facing governments for maintaining and improving the quality of life for their citizens, families, communities, and nations in general, including gaining control of rising healthcare costs.

7) The challenges government managers and administrators face with the changing and increasingly diverse nature of government structures (such as collaborations across jurisdictions) and tools, including e-government.

8) A continuing demand that governments do more with less, and for greater accountability for the actions of government. This global trend is driving a movement for improving the performance of governments. This movement goes by many names ,such as “reinventing government” and “management transformation”. A primary feature of the movement is public-and private –sector parternerships.

**Conclusion:**

Our analysis of study regarding implementation of KM in public sector help us to conclude the following:

1. There are no theoretical obstacles of Km in public sector CRM implementation, improving quality and efficiency of public services gaining similar benefits as in private sector.

2. Employment of KM allows standardization and automation of customer service and support processes, as well as introduction of customer-centric universal front office delivery model in public sector institutions. It could bring the following benefits:

-improved and more consistent public service quality;

-more accessible services, aligned with customer preferences (channel selection possibility)

-more streamlined and efficient customer service process;

-relief of the skilled personnel from routine customer service work, thus enabling them to focus on more value-added activities;

-possibility to outsource specific customer service functions.

3. In general, the public sector is lagging behind the private sector in applying modern customer-centirc service methods and currently isd focusing on the implementation of CRM initiatives providing basic CRM functionality

4. Extensive applications of Km in the provision of pub;ic services is not widespread yet;it could become a common practice as soon as CRM implementation initiatives are successfully completed.

5. Overall.Km has to be considered an important building block in the improvement of public services and successful realization of e-governmnetr initiatrives in the government instituitions and municipalities.

**Recommendations**

To make a successful e-government it is further recommended that:

- E-government should not be limited to a project level, but should be seen a comprehensive government wide ongoing process;
- There is a need of change management ; individual change of mind-set and governmental change to keep pace with the global changes to gain and sustain a competitive edge;
- There should be strong collaboration at local, regional and national levels and between public and private sector organizations;
- Knowledge management portals should be based on citizen empowerment and interaction and they should provide multi-channels delivery of public services to cater for all levels of citizens and stakeholders.
- There is a need of decision support systems for designing new services tailored to citizen needs and suitable for a complex E-government scenario (Meo,2008).

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