



## Using Social Media for Managing Organizational Knowledge, Learning and Innovation: In the Perspective of Samsung

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### ABSTRACT

Organisational learning is a broad concept and it has evolved over time. However, based on context and characteristic of the user organisation, the learning technique and process differs significantly. Whichever learning model a company employs, Knowledge Management (KM) remains an important business practice for all. With the advent and popularity of Social Media (SM), KM is becoming more and more dependent on the use of varied social online networks. Now a day's most of the organization which is innovative as well as want to survive in the competitive marketing for the long run taking social media is an important tool for managing knowledge and innovation. Nevertheless, the issue of innovation though social media surrounded knowledge management is a matter of debate among scholars. This case study has explored this issue in the context of Samsung Group.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Knowledge, Learning and innovation.

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### 1.0 Introduction

In the last decade, Samsung's visible success has been extensively acknowledged. Samsung is a well-known and leading electronics and information technology company in the world, holding the largest market share in terms of total sales (Yun et al., 2018). It's the world's largest television producer, largest cell phone manufacturer as well as the largest flash memory supplier (Statista, 2020; Eadicicco, 2019). Furthermore, Fast Company Magazine (2011) ranked Samsung as the 2nd most innovative company in the consumer electronics and 3rd most innovative company in the category of consumer products. It also won 30 CES 2019 innovation awards for design and engineering excellence. (Businessstelegraph, 2019)

The key idea of this study is to build knowledge in what manner and how organizations uses social media is facilitating their knowledge, learning and innovations. Samsung follows 'marketing innovation' strategy, which means it offers a varied range of specifications and prices amongst various smartphones (Song et al., 2011). For instance, the company offers about 153 varieties of handsets to its customers, whereas its biggest competitors don't offer even a quarter of this (IntelligentHQ, 2013). The same applies to other products offered by Samsung such as consumer electronics and device solutions. Consequently, Samsung is looking forward to get an advantage over its compatriots through marketing innovation by quarrying insights from its current and probable customers through its SM activities in such a manner that would result in product-line and

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market innovation (Chrzanowska, 2018). So it's of paramount importance to facilitate the innovation process through generating insights from the current and potential market segments with the use of social media embedded knowledge management techniques.

This case is mainly composed of four major sections. In the first section, social media based knowledge management for business innovation has been articulated; which includes, organization's learning and process, organization learning and management structure, flow of learned knowledge, internal and external integration. In the second part Samsung's knowledge management feature pertaining to brainstorming meeting, blogging and social networking, social media respiratory have been mentioned. In third section Samsung's different approaches for managing social media which includes both direct and indirect are mentioned. In the fourth a section Samsung's social media developments have identified. And in the final section, Samsung's opportunity for innovation has described like production, product, marketing innovation etc.

## 2.0 Methodology

Basically this research is based on secondary data. Data has been collected through existing literature related to social media, innovation, knowledge management and organizational learning from social media. Emphasis has been given on website of Samsung as well as Samsung's periodical, announcement and press release. Samsung's announcement on social media like facebook, tweeter, YouTube video also taken in consideration.

## 3.0 Social media based knowledge management for business innovation

### 3.1 Organisational learning and processes

Organizational learning is a subject, which combines various disciplines such as cognitive and social psychology, organizational behaviour and theory, strategic management, sociology, economics, information systems and technology, and engineering (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Organizational learning and knowledge got much attention due to both practical concerns and theoretical and methodological advances (Chung, Ding & Ma, 2019). The comparative analysis of the performance scenario and capacity of KM in organisations is a significant research area for some scholars (Pisano, Bohmer and Edmondson, 2001; Melvin, 2019). However, certain researchers describe organizational learning as a transformation in the range of potential behaviours (Shamim, Cang & Yu, 2017).

Organizational learning occurs in a perspective (Glynn et al. 1994) which embraces the organization and the environment in which the organization is embedded and keeping this in mind it can be claimed that organisational learning is a dynamic cyclic process through which experience of task performance is converted into knowledge which in turn changes the organisation's framework and affects experience of future (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Learning begins with experience, which can involve both successful and failure task performance units (Kim, Kim, and Miner, 2009). However, one characteristic of experience that has recently gotten a lot of attention is its rarity (Lampel, Shamsie, and Shapira, 2009). These organizational learning processes include three sub-processes: creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge (Miller, Fern and Cardinal, 2007). However, positive relationship between experience and creativity or innovation is still a topic of debate among scholars and majority have argued that amplified experience contributes to creativity and innovation only up to a definite point, with diminishing rate of returns at high levels of experience (Hirst, Knippenberg and Zhou, 2009).

Based on context and characteristic of the user organisation, the learning technique and process differs significantly. Early commentators like Argote & Miron-Spektor (2011) devised a process that based on contextual knowledge creation. However, others came later to elaborate and some proposed a completely different model.

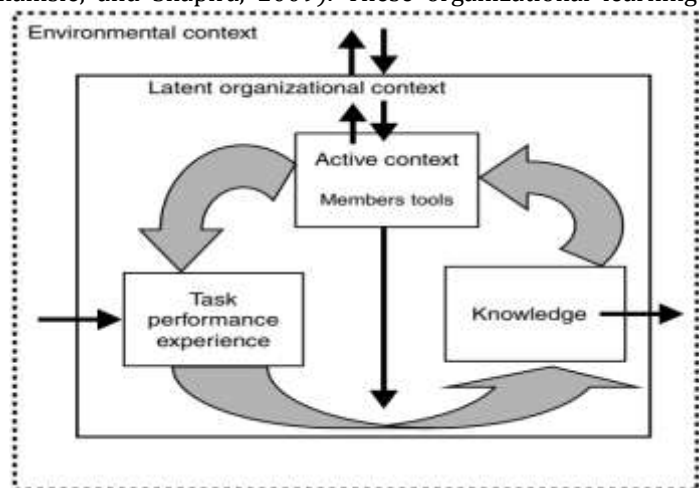


Figure 1. Organisational learning process, based on contextual knowledge creation (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011).

### 3.2 Organisational learning and management structure

Organizations with open and interactive organisational structures facilitate faster problem solving and innovation (Zannad & Rouet, 2003, Alagaraja et al., 2015; Ramdani & Hadijah, 2020). Increased use of social networks, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Email, Internal Blog, Shared Data Repository can lead to more interactive organisational structure (Iblasi, Bader & Al-Qreini, 2016; Nisar, Prabhakar & Strakova, 2019).

This can improve responsiveness to market demands, competitiveness, flexibility and cross-sectional communication (Volk et al., 2017).

### 3.3 Flow of learned knowledge

Cross sectional communication is necessary for an organisation in order to align its core and operational goals and strategies (Volk et al., 2017). To ensure the flow of communication, an effective KM system is a prerequisite along with frequent feedback loops (Ahbabi et al., 2019; Alqadami & Shelke, 2019). These steps tend to become troublesome for the large corporations; however, in Samsung, an effective KM system has been introduced to generate knowledge in various layers and distribute them all over the company for evaluation and reviews, opinions and knowledge (Jang et al., 2019). In order to ensure innovative atmosphere in the organisation, knowledge needs to flow not only in a vertical but also in horizontal direction (Haq & Anwar, 2016; Bratianu, 2019).

### 3.4 Implementation of learned knowledge and internal integration

Collins and Porras (2004) argue that a visionary company requires 1% vision and 99% alignment. In order to build an organisational culture that is conducive to sustainable innovation, employees need to integrate internally among various departments (Choet al., 2011; Alani et al., 2019). Tackling small challenges will make them ready for bigger challenges. Forcing employees to bypass the solution matrix is an effective way in this regard (Maria & Andrei, 2016; Jang et al., 2019).

### 3.5 External integration

Knowledge Management through the use of information technology have increased the rate of product and process improvement continuously, as it opens up the communication with external parties and promote culture of sharing and creativity (Alagaraja et al., 2015). External integration is playing important role for innovation and /or creativity.

## 4.0 Samsung knowledge management features

Knowledge generation and sharing enhances the basic and business-critical skills of employees which can foster innovative (Alagaraja et al., 2015; Gloet & Samson, 2016; Ahbabi et al. 2019). Samsung has identified three main challenges in its KM paradigm; which are knowledge generation, knowledge retention and knowledge sharing (Haq & Anwar 2016; Li et al., 2019). Previously, valuable knowledge used to fade out due to poor knowledge management; however, to mitigate such loss of valuable insight, the company have introduced organizational KM mechanisms and technological solutions to facilitate innovation (Ferraris et al., 2019).

### 4.1 Brainstorming meetings

In order to facilitate problem solving in this era of complex business operations (Bandera et al., 2018) which covers both new product or business development process and existing business improvement mechanism (Cho et al., 2011), Samsung arranges 'brainstorming hours'. It's actually a two hour long weekly meeting comprising of teams from different disciplines in a furnished room with tall windows, wide screen TV and generous refreshment arrangements. This was designed to foster problem solving and innovation in the company (Samsung Newsroom, 2018; Samsung Newsroom, 2013). This soothing and generous surroundings helps employees think innovatively, socialise with each other and share ideas (Gloet & Samson, 2016) which in turn give the company a competitive edge over its competitors in the market (Melvin, 2019).

### 4.2 Blogging and social networking

To encourage socialisation which helps sharing ideas in an open and spontaneous manner (Mardani et al., 2018; Jang et al., 2019), Samsung introduced company-wide simple but powerful blogging and social networking systems. The blog and social networks help employees' contemplation and spontaneous deliberation of ideas so as to extend their existing knowledge in a steady and profound manner (Samsung, 2020).

### 4.3 Shared knowledge repository

Knowledge warehouses helps to store modifiable critical knowledge which can be accessed by all concerned parties (Santoro et al, 2018, Wolf, Semm & Erfurth, 2018) throughout Samsung. Managers are properly educated about how and what types of knowledge to collect and share, which encompasses procedures, such as how to write various types of reports, how to create simulated project models and how to perform a systematic project review. For monitoring enormous data an alert system was devised to screen out business-critical data (Volk et al., 2017).

## 5.0 Samsung knowledge management approach

SM based KM in Samsung is conducted through two different approaches:

1. Direct approach:

In this approach the company ensured its direct presence in the SM such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Blogs etc. to reach the employees and the customers. The company directly interact with various target groups in this manner.

2. Indirect approach:

In this approach, Samsung uses various tools and techniques to dig into floating opinions of the customers and potential customers as well as other relevant parties and generate insights through the use of advanced technologies

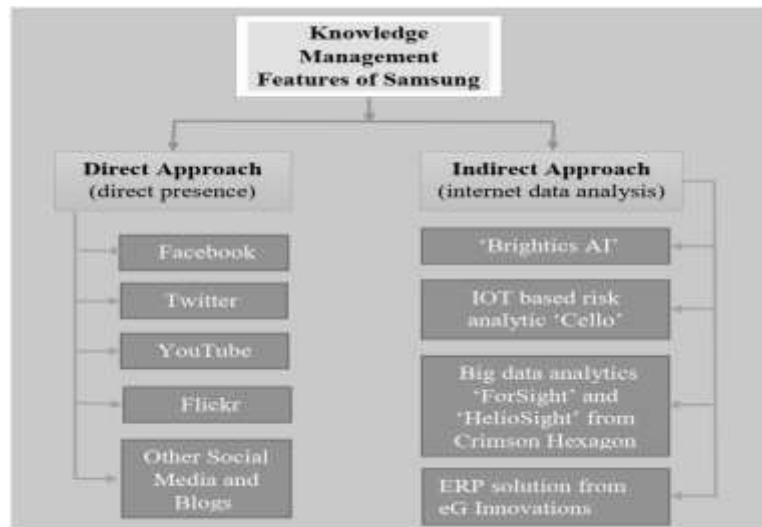


Figure 2. KM feature of Samsung (Samsung SDS, 2020; Samsung, 2020; eG Innovations, 2019; Macaulay, 2017)

Samsung introduced 'Brightics AI' which can process 45 terabytes of data daily and automatically identify demand through deep data based visualized learnings. The company uses 'Cello', an integrated supply chain and logistics solution which uses IOT driven risk analysis techniques (Santoro et al., 2018) and optimal logistics planning and also predicts the arrival date of freight through the use of blockchain which also reduces the time in contract processing (Samsung SDS, 2020).

To gain deep insights on product trends, existing customers' feedback, potential customers' sentiments and purchase intentions (Chang, Wang & Hawamdeh 2018; Ferraris et al., 2018) the company uses a specialised tool named 'ForSight' (Macaulay, 2017). This analytic tool generates demographic data about targeted people, their linking and motivations, and understandings of each of their SM posts through the interpretation of specific emotions (Tuten and Solomon, 2018). However, for faster insight generation, the company uses the 'HelioSight' searching tool to discover trends in social conversations (Sentence, 2018; Macaulay, 2017).

6.0 Samsung social media development

One of the main features of social media is that it enables self-generated content and sharing of information. Organizations could build capacity, foster the formation of online communities, and receive timely feedback (Patroni, Recker, von Briel, 2015). Samsung developed its SM apparatus in a manner so that the company can effectively engage with the wider customer base to enhance the acceptability of its products and services. Without an effective feedback system this purpose would not be served. Consequently, the company have chosen the social media platforms in a manner that guarantee effective and timely feedback and response system. The major SM presence of Samsung is:

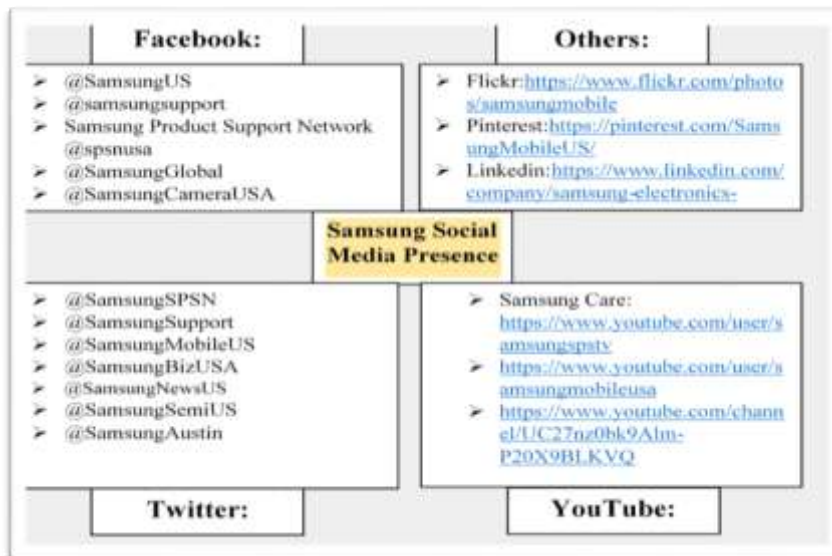


Figure 3. Major SM presence of Samsung (Samsung, 2020)

## 7.0 Samsung's opportunities for business innovation

### 7.1 Production technology innovation

Samsung values the concerns of their customers and through its customers' perception analysis it found that majority of its existing and potential customers are aware of the adverse impact of industrialisation on the nature. Direct interaction with a wide spectrum of audience in the SM inspires Samsung's innovation strategy of Eco-Management Plan. This plan contains a blueprint of reducing direct greenhouse gas emissions from Samsung's manufacturing facilities by 50% and reduces indirect greenhouse gas emissions from all goods by 84 million tons over the next 5 years (Samsung, 2012) and this requires innovation in the production technology.

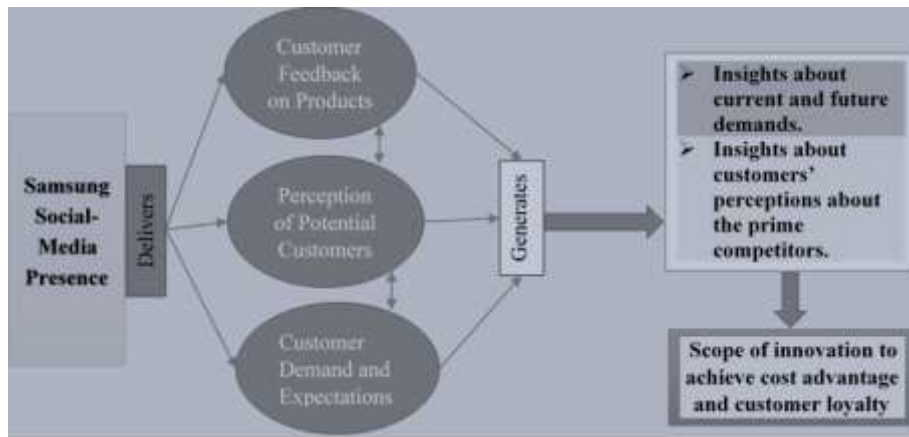


Figure 4. Scope of business innovation in Samsung (Chrzanowska, 2018;Iblasi, Bader& Al-Qreini, 2016; IntelligentHQ, 2013)

### 7.2 Product innovation

Through social media Samsung discovered that that people who are more fascinated in QLED display powered TVs are more environmentally-friendly and concerned more about environmental sustainability (Jang et al., 2019). This helps the company to market its existing products in the right place; however, it leaves another opportunity to focus more on its R&D to innovate displays that are more environment friendly than the current QLED ones, as TVs with such display technologies have proven demand in the market (Macaulay, 2017).

### 7.3 Marketing innovation

The insights from social media embedded knowledge management also had a major influence on Samsung's promotional strategy (Iblasi, Bader &Al-Qreini, 2016). For instance, although voice assistant service 'Bixby'wasn't yet available, Samsung was promoting it during the launch of S8 smartphones. Social media analytics discovered that this was a major cause of discontent in the customer base (Macaulay, 2017). As a result of this insights the company switched its marketing strategy, stopped talking about Bixby and began more talking about its'Infinity' screen (Samsung Newsroom, 2020).

Social commerce is another emerging area of Social media analytics (Khan &Vorley, 2017) and in this regard Samsung sought to understand consumer purchasing behaviour that is when customers are moving from researching products to purchasing them (Sentence, 2018). This process requires new pathways to reach out the current and potential customers and meeting up the customer demand can also facilitate product or business innovation.

### 7.4 Co-creation and co-innovation

Co-creation is another feature of Samsung that fosters innovation (Melvin, 2019); for instance, under a joint venture with Qualcomm that produced and marketed semiconductors, both company's R&D, marketing and service teams made incremental innovations by combining the knowledge generated from their experience, both internally and externally (Park & Lee, 2015). In the same manner, Samsung built its corporate level innovation capability (Mardani et al., 2018) though the usage of Six Sigma and TRIZ, which are methodologies for generating new ideas and problem solving (Park &Lee, 2015). Samsung Advanced Institute of Technology (SAIT) continuously works with other stakeholders simultaneously through co-innovation for implement planting and harvesting innovation (Jang et al., 2019).

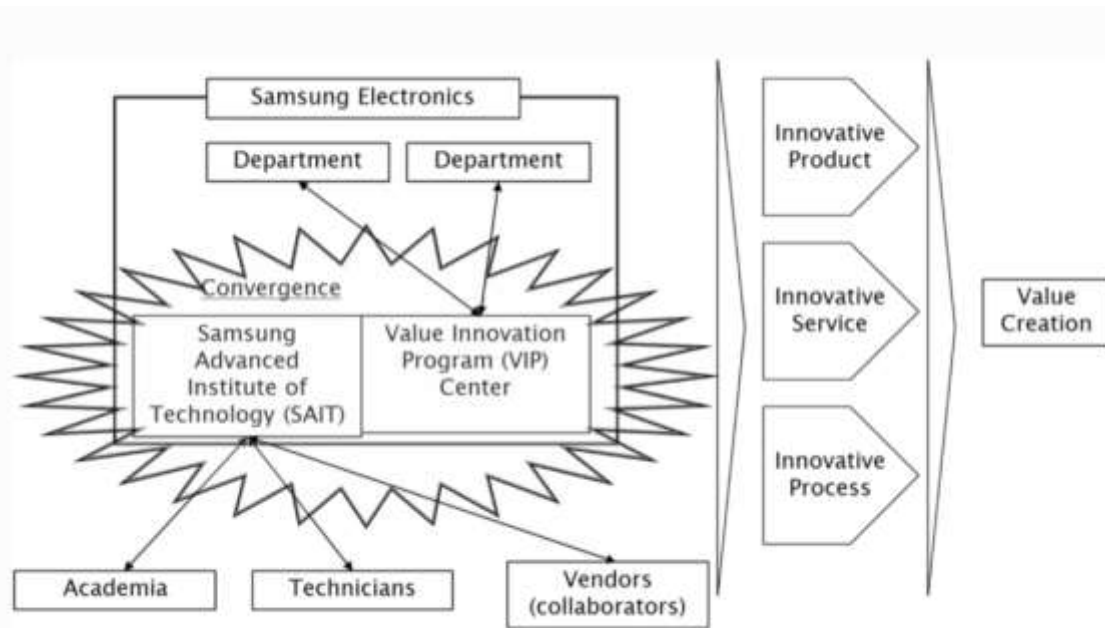


Figure 5. Co-innovation at Samsung Electronics (Jang et al., 2019).

### 7.5 Business process innovation

To conduct business-critical operations, Samsung previously used traditional applications such as SAP, Network, WAS, and databases which were in some cases redundant in terms of coverage and cause the company lose significant time and productivity when monitoring performance issues. However, the situation worsened when Samsung launched a global Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) initiative merging around 200 servers with SAP application systems around the world (eG Innovation, 2019). To solve this problem Samsung collaborated with 'eG Innovation' to develop an augmented ERP system which is a pressing example of innovation through knowledge management.

### 8.0 Conclusion

Organisational learning is a broad concept and learning technique and process varies organisation to organisation. Knowledge management is becoming more and more dependent on the use of varied social online networks which results in innovation. Samsung is one of the leaders of Social media exploitation for business operations. The company is one of the most active entities in the social networking arena and constantly trying to utilise its Knowledge management mechanism to foster innovation in the area of product design and business development through the use of state of the art analytics and business solutions. However, such Knowledge management techniques are not entirely absolved from criticism (Lee, 2018). Despite such shortcomings, social media surrounded knowledge management is likely to flourish in order to for the company to achieve advantage over its competitors.

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