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Knowledge Management Systems in Healthcare- Futuristic Edge

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ABSTRACT *The need to be competitive has set in pace with many organizations trying to resurrect themselves in lean and stable ones which can deliver and meet the ever growing needs of their consumers. Healthcare is one such industry which has seen rapid growth in terms progression and with reference to Indian market the nature and scope of this vertical is very high. Though there are challenges which are to be faced in the long run, on a positive note there has been a significant change which is propelling our country to become the Numero Uno in terms of quality health care services. In regards to this the emergence of Knowledge management systems is adding up a big cutting edge which can make these hospitals deliver better and become more proactive in the sense of judging and forecasting the demands of the various health issues cropping up. This paper intends to discuss some of key factors and challenges of Knowledge management systems with respect to healthcare.*

Introduction

The concept of knowledge management has been quite here for a long time in various formats and methods. The era of digital trend had sent in a strong message to all organizations about the need for better information management which would guide the organization as well as be a proactive source to level the competition. Today the health care sector has improved with lot of cutting edge technologies trying to make inroads in various specialties. This has been propelled by information technology and other resources which has transformed medicine to miracles. Though the usage of Knowledge management systems is quite less when compared to western countries, but with the growing need of advanced methods , the requirement of documentation and better procedures is taking up the center stage. It is already seen in many cases that organizations grow due to individual performances and not by the group itself. This is because people feel that knowledge is completely restricted to individuals. They possess extraordinary powers. In the case of hospitals we find that the concept becomes stronger because it is widely believed that only due some specialists the name or brand goes up. KM is not just about increased use of technology and techniques but it is more about the understanding of overall organizational performance.

Literature review

There have been several leading experts who have commented about the essence of organizational growth. Knowledge Sharing (KS) at work is the dissemination or exchange of explicit or tacit knowledge, ideas, experiences, skills or technology among individual employees or groups of employees (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002; and Wang et al., 2008). Knowledge may be transferred through top-down, bottomup, or horizontal interchanges (Mom et al., 2007). KS requires participants to interact with each other, either face-to-face or through non-contact means (such as written documents and virtual communities); by definition the act requires a transfer of knowledge from one individual to another individual or group (Behnke, 2010). KS at work may entail know what, know-how, know-when, or know-why (Blumentritt and Johnston, 1999). By means of leveraging organizational knowledge, organizations know how to considerably improve their capability on the way to compete as well as offer merchandise or services that make the maximum return on investment. KS is one among the core competencies, many employees will have experienced contradictory messages about the need to share, particularly when rewards are to the individual rather than the group. As of the resource-based viewpoint, information plus knowledge have turned out to be progressively more known as competitive differentiators. In the knowledge-based view, organizational knowledge such as operational routines, skills or know-how is acknowledged as the most valuable organization asset. The capability to manage knowledge strategically is seen as the most significant source of competitive advantage (Grant, 1996). Job locations might play lip-service toward sharing, but provide restricted chance or support to actually perform. Knowledge-concentrated societies ought to support sharing along with collaboration. Individuals are required to vigorously share and converse their performance. In addition, knowledge has a significant worth as a product, it is capable of being sold to others.

Building the Competitive Edge

There are six stages for an organization to achieve competence using KM as a strategy for growth. They are as follows:

Stage one: Collection of data / information

Most of hospitals maintain records only for the purpose for data and for future disputes. Here we need to understand that the data should be made more proactive by bringing in a active storage system which would classify the records or data into observed, verified, shared and general. These classifications will the hospitals to understand the data at all levels which would all the levels of staff to understand internal capabilities and deliver better. Every stage of this collection should be filtered which would the organization to keep the required data and not just build repository to huge amount.

Stage two: Understanding of data

The data gathered needs to be understood carefully as what it means and what stands is for. This is the first seed of understanding rather than nucleation of understanding. This stage represents just a conceptualization and is dis-

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tinctly tacit form as it cannot be expressed easily by words. This is where we need to bring a clear picture from that of a hazy thought process, which would help all of us to clear the ambiguity and lead to concept building and stronger analysis of organization capabilities. At this point we need to remove all the ambiguous data and make things clear about the data and environment.

Stage three: Interpretation

The understanding of data becomes more important in this phase. The reason is quite simple here. When we observe something and when try to write down the observation they are two different things. Most of the organizations, in health care try to observe but do not try to replicate or relate things which leads to obsolete data. We need to build in tools which would help to interpret data the right way. It should be more explicit rather than the implicit way.

Stage four: Repetitive learning

The above stages need to be done again and again so that we are able to get stability but different views from all possible angles. Whenever attempts are reorganize, rearranged and redone with more efforts we reach the stage of perfection. This is very important to our hospitals which would help them to reduce time and effort in terms of data mining and getting positive results every time.

Stage five: Derivation of the intellectual component

The fourth stage passes through repetitive cycles to eliminate all the ambiguities based to a clear understanding, associated to tacit form of knowledge component which transforms into clear form. This in turn leads to a derivation mechanism or a scheme to get results in best possible manner. This is needed much in the hospitals and healthcare where it has to become a practice to make every employee more knowledgeable than ever and seek the intellectual knowledge rather than going by a mundane work process.

Stage six: Refinement of intellectual component

The last stage is of continuous improvement and this comes with the ultimate source of rich database which becomes an integral part of the system. When one views the data he is able to understand on the factor that there has been a great amount of effort which has gone through and the data is more systematically arranged. Challenges in this sage still can occur from observation and from third party view but our motto remains to get the best when the raw data is put forth in much more meaningful form.

Results vs. Reasons

One has to understand that every organization looks for final results but it more important to understand the reasons which govern with those conditions. The system need to be more supportive in healthcare where one can detect failures easily than success because that is where we try to understand the need for emerging technologies to prevail under big and testing times.

Conclusion

The sense of knowledge and its systems are very important for all of us and it makes every employee rekindle the thought process to a great extent. In the field of healthcare it becomes highly essential that we have more proactive and explicit data rather than old data which remains back only as history. The phenomenon of self-realization with customer insight makes any organization to propel forward with greater thinking process, but it only up to the management which makes the visionary thinking into realization. The request remains to train employees for stronger reasoning rather than just for results.

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