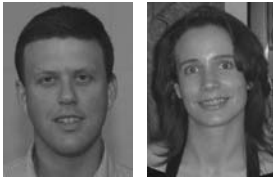


Integrating talent and knowledge management: where are the benefits?

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine how the principles of talent management (TM) can be leveraged to enhance an organization's knowledge management (KM) initiatives.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper critically reviews the literature pertaining to the emerging concept of TM and specifically that which focuses on “smart talent management” i.e. the fusion of TM and KM concepts. The authors offer insights as to how TM can benefit KM and then discuss these insights with a focus group of KM practitioners.

Findings – The fusion of the two concepts has so far only been considered by human resource scholars who have tended to examine how learnings from the field of KM can be leveraged to advance TM. The authors confront the issue in reverse and identify five KM concerns – identifying key knowledge workers, knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, developing knowledge competencies, and knowledge retention – which they argue can be advanced through the application of TM principles. Their focus group confirms that these KM concerns can benefit from the integration of TM principles, but some more than others.

Originality/value – The fusion of TM and KM has so far only been considered from a HR perspective. This paper examines the fusion of the two concepts from a KM perspective. Five specific KM concerns which can benefit from the integration of a TM approach are detailed and then validated by a focus group of KM practitioners.

Keywords Knowledge management, Talent management, Skills, Competence

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Knowledge is now regarded as the most strategically significant organizational asset with companies emphasizing capabilities and intangible resources as competitive tools (Kießling and Harvey, 2006). However, knowledge may also be the organizational asset managed least effectively (Schutz and Carpenter, 2008). Much of the knowledge that serves as a source of advantage is tacit in nature (McDonnell *et al.*, 2007), which is difficult to formalize and share due to its highly personal nature and its embeddedness in people's actions and experiences. Organizations vary greatly in how they manage knowledge workers who possess this tacit knowledge. Some organizations primarily focus on maximizing their productivity; others focus on the importance of collaboration and team work for knowledge sharing; while others heavily invest in their training and development and structure knowledge work for flexibility and change (Lepak and Snell, 2002). This diversity of management approaches is reflected in the significant variance in the performance of knowledge intensive companies within the same industry (Guthridge *et al.*, 2008). Organizations need to adopt a more strategic approach to managing knowledge workers as superior performance is linked to tacit knowledge, the retention of employees who possess this knowledge and the ability to continuously harvest their knowledge and expertise (Kießling and Harvey, 2006).

Therein lays the focus of this paper. We examine the emerging field of talent management (TM) in order to identify what TM practices can contribute to knowledge management (KM).

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Both the TM and KM fields have growing bodies of literature, however only HR academics have begun writing about a fusion of the two concepts. The HR literature generally considers what KM can contribute to TM. Our paper considers the issue in reverse – how can the principles of TM benefit KM? The contribution of this paper is twofold. Theoretical, it adds a new debate to the knowledge-based view of the firm by advocating that the effective exploitation of knowledge assets is dependent on a small number of key employees. From a practice point of view, the findings from our focus group confirm that the KM can benefit from the integration of TM principles, but some KM practices more than others.

Our research approach is now detailed followed by the presentation and discussion of our findings.

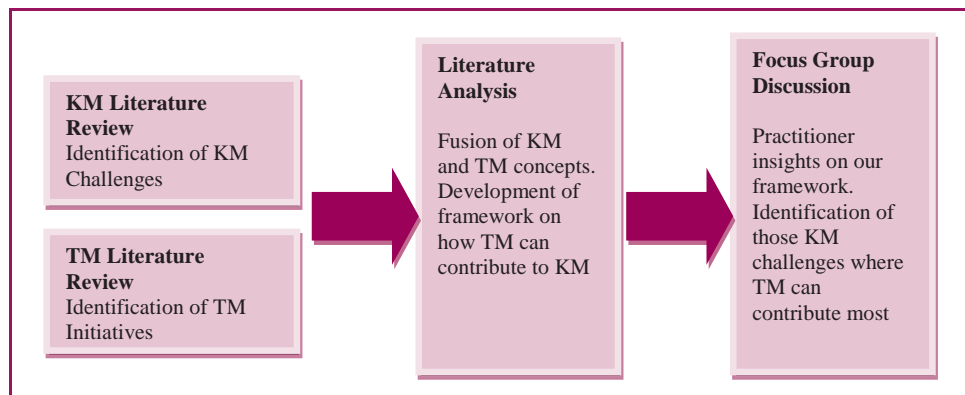
2. Research approach

Our approach for this study was to firstly to scrutinize the extensive body of KM and TM literatures, leading to the development of a structured plan of how TM can aid in addressing pertinent KM challenges. To examine the merit of our insights, we then conducted a focus group with three KM practitioners who represent companies involved in the Innovation Value Institute (IVI) consortium. The mission of IVI is to build an infrastructure – the IT Capability Maturity Framework (IT-CMF) – which enables IT organizations to measure and advance their innovation capabilities (see www.ivi.ie for more details). “Knowledge asset management” is one of the capabilities comprising the IT-CMF framework and the focus group participants are actively involved in developing a maturity curve for this capability. Figure 1 summarizes our research approach.

3. Talent management

Since McKinsey consultants coined the phrase the “war for talent” in the late 1990s, TM has become an important managerial activity (Hartmann *et al.*, 2010; Scullion *et al.*, 2010). TM is concerned with developing strategy; identifying talent gaps; succession planning; and recruiting, selecting, educating, motivating and retaining talented employees through a variety of initiatives (Groves, 2007; Guthridge and Komm, 2008; Ringo *et al.*, 2010). Employees’ knowledge, skills and competencies need to be maximized and recognized as a distinctive source of competitive advantage (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Lewis and Heckman, 2006). However, employee capabilities add varying degrees of value to the organization. For example, research by Heinen and O’Neill (2004) reports that the best 10-15 percent of organizational performers give rise to performance output improvements ranging from 19-120 percent. Ultimately, this is where TM differs from other HR approaches. TM is concerned with identifying the key positions which have the potential to differentially impact the firm’s competitive advantage and filling these with “A performers” (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2007; Huselid *et al.* 2005).

Figure 1 Summary of research approach



Despite many citations of organizational lack of proficiency in TM (Boston Consulting Group, 2007; Guthridge *et al.*, 2008; Cappelli, 2008; Ready and Conger, 2007), a 2008 CIPD report “the war on talent” found that organizations are now placing greater scrutiny on their TM processes (CIPD, 2010). However, to date there has been limited understanding on how competitive advantage can be supported through the interaction of KM and TM. KM researchers have not established a link to specific TM practices necessary to ensure knowledge creation, sharing and retention (Vance and Vaiman, 2008). Effective KM depends on effective management of the organizational talent who possess key knowledge, in terms of talent recruitment, training, performance management, succession planning, and knowledge sharing. Vance and Vaiman (2008) coined the term “smart talent management” to encapsulate the fusion of KM and TM. This is “the smart or effective management of all human resources, who embody an organization’s knowledge capital and capability in generating, acquiring, storing, transferring and applying knowledge in support of company goals and objectives”. Nonetheless, it remains unclear from their contributions how TM can specifically address key KM challenges.

The following section addresses this gap in the literature by examining how different TM practices can be used in addressing five key KM concerns i.e. identifying key knowledge workers, knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, developing knowledge competencies, and knowledge retention.

4. How managing key talent can contribute to KM

4.1 Identifying knowledge talent

The KM challenge. Organizations need to strategically manage talent flows so that individuals with the needed competencies are available, when needed and are aligned with the right jobs based on the organizations objectives (Iles *et al.*, 2010; Tarique and Schuler, 2010). Employees are needed to fill knowledge gaps as opposed to fill narrow, specialized roles (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008). The difficulty with identifying “A performers” stems from the fact that talent is a tacit resource, and considers potential and not just actual performance (Mellahi and Collings, 2010). Decisions with respect to key talent are dependent on the organization’s KM approaches. For those pursuing a codification strategy, organizations emphasize individuals who can identify problems, articulate them for capture in a knowledge database, and use information to solve problems. For those emphasizing a personalization strategy, organizations focus on individuals with critical and analytical skills, who can share knowledge through their social networks (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008).

The TM initiatives. In order to ensure the most appropriate talent is effectively deployed, some researchers (Collings and Mellahi, 2009; Huselid *et al.*, 2005) focus on those pivotal talent positions that may impact on organizational competitive advantage. Talented employees are identified to fill those positions through recruiting ahead of the curve. This is similar to the “Exclusive positions” perspective of TM which seeks to fill “A positions” with “A players”, fill support positions with “B players”, and outsource “C players” (Iles *et al.*, 2010). The following TM initiatives help ensure that key knowledge talent is identified both from the external market and internally:

- *Talent/performance management reviews.* Performance management helps in identifying those knowledge workers who are performing best, and provides feedback on employees’ roles and expected performance standards (Debowski, 2006). Success metrics helps quantify performance and identify those who contribute most to knowledge initiatives. Value metrics (e.g. revenue per employee), as opposed to activity-based metrics (e.g. number of training hours) are important in communicating TM’s success (Farley, 2005). As an example of a performance review process, General Electric (GE) has developed a structured leadership review cycle called Session C for assessing its leadership talent and determining its performance level, job accomplishments, strengths, development needs etc. Leaders are rated on their performance and promotion potential using a nine block matrix. This helps in identifying the organization’s high performers and

in implementing initiatives for addressing developmental needs. Such talent identification metrics need to be tailored when applied to knowledge-intensive environments characterized by collaborative efforts (Whelan *et al.*, 2010). Hence, talent programs which focus on individual accomplishments, such as GE's nine block matrix, can be erroneous when used to identify key talent in knowledge-intensive settings.

- *Talent recruiting.* Recruitment has significantly evolved, from a time consuming process bound by limitations of traditional communication channels, to a sophisticated one heavily influenced by web technology. Online screening and analysis tools, such as resume analysis programs and online pre-employment assessments facilitate the identification of key talent sources from the resultant increased applicant pool (Frank and Taylor, 2004). Organizations favor individuals who have flexibility to cope with new external challenges, competition, and changed processes. Guarino (2007) describes a Quick Screen approach to talent recruiting that helps evaluate the match between a candidate's competencies and key aspects of the position. Such an approach helps organizations source high performers, whose knowledge competencies may then be further developed through in-house initiatives. During the current economic recession, the focus of many organizations has been on downsizing. A GreatPlaceJobs (2009) employment study found that 86 percent of the *Fortune* 100's largest US companies had laid off workers during the previous year and a half. Therefore, in this climate, the emphasis on identifying key talent is more likely to focus on the organization's internal environment as opposed to external recruitment.

4.2 Knowledge creation

The KM challenge. Nonaka's (1994) dynamic theory of organizational knowledge creation proposes that knowledge is created through continuous dialogue between explicit and tacit knowledge. Some employees are naturally more creative than others. The tacit knowledge they accumulate through experience needs to become diffused, adopted and embedded into organizational routines. One of the key challenges to managing organizational knowledge is understanding how to amplify and crystallize the activities of creative knowledge workers (Birkinshaw and Sheehan, 2002).

The TM initiatives. The organization needs to support and provide a context for key knowledge workers to create new knowledge. Strategies for enhancing knowledge creation include practicing relevant leadership behaviors such as providing vision and support for innovation; and cultivating an organizational learning culture (Pei, 2008). TM can play a role in supporting such strategies:

1. *Cultivate knowledge creators.* Numerous theories are in existence which attempt to explain how organizational innovation happens. These theories tend to emphasize that only a fraction of the organization's workforce can be classified as true innovators. There is much empirical evidence which supports this view. For example, research examining patenting activity has found a highly skewed distribution with a small number of scientists responsible for the majority of applications (Ernst *et al.*, 2000). Thus, initiatives which aim to enhance the knowledge creation abilities of all employees may not be an effective use of resources. TM would advocate that these key knowledge creators should be liberated and placed on individualized career plans. What could such a plan incorporate? In essence, knowledge creators should be given preferential access to resources. One critical resource is time – knowledge creators need the opportunity to think deeply and generate ideas (Birkinshaw and Sheehan, 2002). They should also be given the space to codify their tacit knowledge, whether through writing a working paper or networking with internal and external experts to test their ideas. Key knowledge creators could also be fast-tracked to training programs on technologies that facilitate knowledge creation.
2. *Cultivate knowledge activists.* Knowledge creation is a fragile process, often hindered by strong barriers. In order to break down these barriers, a catalyst of knowledge creation is needed. This catalyst comes in the form of a knowledge activist (Von Krogh *et al.*, 2000).

“ It is surprising that to date KM academics have not addressed in-depth how TM initiatives can help address KM challenges.”

He or she may not be the prime knowledge creators themselves, but their skill is in creating the right enabling context for others to unleash their creative potential. A prime example is Apple CEO Steve Jobs. The success of Apple is often attributed to Jobs yet he is not the one who came up with the ideas for the iPod, iPhone, or iPad. Instead, Jobs's real skill is in stimulating innovation in others and championing good ideas. Von Krogh *et al.* (2000) advise firms to create new job positions and assign responsibility for knowledge activism to an individual. However, who should perform the role, and what requisite skills are needed, is unclear. This is where TM can be of benefit to the knowledge creation process. TM principles can be used to

- determine the ideal profile of a knowledge activist;
- instigate approaches to identify and liberate the individuals matching this profile;
- implement individualised coaching plans to optimize the performance of knowledge activists; and
- determine their career objectives and ensure they are retained by the firm.

4.3 Knowledge sharing and positioning

The KM challenge. The importance of social networks and personalization strategies for knowledge sharing has been well documented in the KM literature. However, the role of the small number of individuals who occupy pivotal network positions and who are disproportionately influential in coordinating knowledge flows have been given far less attention (Whelan *et al.*, 2010). Finding these star performers is not the only issue; a bigger problem is actually what to do with them (Cohn *et al.*, 2008). In TM terminology, this is often referred to as “talent positioning” i.e. having the right talent at the right place at the right time with the needed competencies and motivation at all levels and locations of the firm (Tarique and Schuler, 2010). A better understanding of these key individuals is particularly important in today's era of open innovation (Chesbrough, 2003), which promotes the importance of internal and external networking in order to exploit new knowledge (Swan *et al.*, 1999).

The TM initiatives. In an extensive series of studies, Rob Cross and colleagues studied the networking activities of those individuals who were deemed key talent by their organizations (see Cross and Parker, 2004). These studies revealed that individuals who occupy particular network positions – such as the central connector, broker, and peripheral expert – are hugely influential in ensuring that workgroup objectives are delivered. Many leading organizations have TM programs which target and maneuver these individuals into positions where they can contribute most value. The following TM initiatives promote effective knowledge positioning and sharing:

- *Organizational network analysis (ONA).* This is an established social science approach of studying human relations and social structures by disclosing the affinities, attractions and repulsions between people and objects (Moreno, 1937). ONA views social relationships as nodes and ties that can be illustrated visually and mathematically. As such, it can provide an x-ray of the inner workings of a particular network. With this tool, important patterns become visible, the relationships between people can be better understood, the health of a group can be assessed, and the people playing key roles can be identified (Cross and Parker, 2004). In recent years, ONA has been increasingly used by leading organizations as part of their talent positioning efforts. KM can incorporate these

techniques, not just to identify key knowledge networkers, but also to identify the gaps in their knowledge flow networks. Suitable employees can then fill these positions thus contributing to breaking down knowledge silos, promoting knowledge sharing, identifying state of the art knowledge, and ensuring strategic knowledge reaches those who need it.

- *Mobility opportunities.* Internal mobility opportunities in the form of horizontal employee movements to other organizational units can reduce barriers and encourage co-operation and knowledge sharing (De Vos and Soens, 2008). Looking externally, expatriates fill a boundary spanning role that facilitates development of social capital; they can transfer valuable knowledge from the parent company overseas and also import knowledge which can be exploited by the repatriating organization (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008). Job rotation enables employees to grow their network contacts and facilitate transfer of company culture (Collings *et al.*, 2007). Talent managers can support KM by determining the appropriate timing for employee transfers that enable them to capitalize on group cohesion, social ties and diverse experiences.
- *Network mentoring.* Once high potential knowledge workers are identified, smart organizations will assign a mentor in order to connect them to other key knowledge holders. Over time, this will enable the high potentials to extend their network and tap into the expertise of others. Mentoring is particularly important for those rising stars that are deemed peripheral experts. A study of R&D engineers by Whelan *et al.* (2010) finds that these knowledge workers add value to the organization by scouting for and introducing new technologies into the internal social network. Peripheral experts were most effective when they were mentored by a colleague who possessed an extensive internal network and who distributed external acquired knowledge on behalf of the peripheral expert.

4.4 Developing knowledge competencies

The KM challenge. Organizational performance is correlated with its employees' competencies i.e. the underlying knowledge, skills and abilities needed to carry out an organizational role (Abel, 2008; Macris *et al.*, 2008). In general, KM related competencies involve expertise related to collaboration, management, strategic planning, information skills, and relationship management (Debowski, 2006). The organization's key challenge in competency development lies in the tension between personal goals and organizational constraints. Knowledge workers tend to learn in an informal, self-directed manner; however this learning needs to be aligned with organizational requirements. In current approaches to competency development, there is a disconnect between competency descriptions and task performance, which may lead to unclear assessment results that are not linked to the work context (Ley *et al.*, 2008). In addition, the delay between identifying and filling competency gaps through learning remains too large (Capuano *et al.*, 2008).

The TM initiatives. TM initiatives seek to develop the abilities of star performers and high potentials with the firm's strategic needs. This helps an organization identify and address new competitive situations (De Pablos and Lytras, 2008). Information regarding tasks performed in the past highlights an individual's available competencies and identifies areas for future development through critical skills gap analysis (Bersin, 2006; Macris *et al.*, 2008). The following TM initiatives can promote competency development in key knowledge workers:

- *Competency-based training.* Training solutions should be responsive to dynamic competitive conditions and aligned with competency requirements. High quality training programs help assess employee skills; identify required competencies; develop skills, knowledge and attitudes; and improve performance (Abel, 2008). Effective competency-based training regards employees as active participants in the process, emphasizes problem-solving and demonstration performance methods during on-the-job training. Such training solutions can range from single event training workshops to expansive programs aimed at sustained cultural change (Debowski, 2006). As an example, Capuano *et al.* (2008) describe an approach to technology enhanced learning that integrates employee learning and business processes, through optimizing a

knowledge worker's learning with respect to business processes and optimizing business processes to take advantage of available competencies.

- *Succession planning.* This involves preparing for the organization's next senior team, developing a talent pool for internal recruitment by cross skilling employees, and/or ensuring the organization is future proofed with respect to skills availability (Hills, 2009). In the KM context, succession planning focuses on how the organization plans to replace key knowledge holders and how to ensure that high potential successors have been prepared to fill key roles (Bersin, 2006; Debowksi, 2006; Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008). Succession planning that involves continually recruiting, training and promoting employees is not only necessary to prevent a brain drain of corporate knowledge, but is also important in identifying required competencies and communicating needed skills (Jones, 2008). TM needs to continue to develop high performers for potential new roles, identify their knowledge gaps, and implement initiatives to enhance their competencies and ensure their retention (Cairns, 2009).

4.5 Knowledge retention

The KM challenge. Knowledge loss resulting from employee turnover – whether through competitor headhunting, redundancies, or retirements – exposes an organization to considerable risk. Departing employees leave with often rare and difficult-to-imitate knowledge, but they also take with them critical knowledge about who they know. This relational capital is crucial for getting work done in knowledge intensive environments (Parise *et al.*, 2006). Strategies for preventing knowledge loss have become a critical organizational concern due to the economic downturn and workforce layoffs, but also due to demographics which sees 60 percent of experienced US managers retiring by 2012. However, retaining key knowledge holders is difficult. First, a change in the psychological contract between employees and employers is evident, with the new Generation Y workers typically demonstrating lower loyalty and changing organizations more frequently (Burke and Ng, 2006). Second, employees often exploit their competencies to avail of more attractive opportunities at other firms (Collings *et al.*, 2007). This is particularly evident with respect to international assignments which are beneficial in building an individual's social capital; many employees leave their repatriating organizations within two years of return (Scullion *et al.*, 2007).

The TM initiatives. Much has been written in the TM literature on factors contributing to talent retention. Tymon *et al.* (2010) found that the key predictors of employee's intention to leave are satisfaction with and pride in the organization and perception of it being socially responsible. Hygiene factors (i.e. compensation, benefits, location) directly effect career success, while career success and intrinsic rewards indirectly contribute to reducing talent loss. Other factors include building trust and open communication channels into the employer-employee relationship (Frank and Taylor, 2004) and fostering employee engagement (Tarique and Schuler, 2010). The following TM initiatives are important in preventing knowledge loss:

- *Reward and recognition programs.* Failing to reward key knowledge holders results not only in them eventually leaving the firm but also absenteeism, disruptive office politics, disengagement, and poor productivity. Planning effective programs that include both monetary and non monetary incentives requires an understanding of the organization's accumulated knowledge base and of what motivates talent to come to work, to be productive and develop expertise. Several reward and recognition models are adopted

“ Knowledge loss resulting from employee turnover – whether through competitor headhunting, redundancies, or retirements – exposes an organization to considerable risk. ”

by organizations including traditional compensation packages, executive compensation, flexible compensation, perks, and informal and formal recognition (Debowski, 2006; Inskeep and Hall, 2008). For some employees, recognition may take the form of providing career development programs that match the individual's career aspirations (Lazarova and Tarique, 2005).

- *Knowledge transfer mentoring.* Mentoring promotes direct transfer of critical tacit work-related knowledge from an experienced employee to a protégé and can increase an individual's social capital through exposing him/her to the mentor's social network (Lengnick-Hall and Andrade, 2008). It can enhance employee motivation and commitment through achieving a relational psychological contract between employer and employee (Hartmann *et al.*, 2010). These mechanisms ensure that even if a key knowledge worker leaves the organization, his/her knowledge is retained through its transfer to other employees.

5. Practitioner insights

Building on our insights from the previous section, we developed a framework of how TM can contribute to KM activities. This framework, which is detailed in Table I, was discussed with the focus group participants. Each KM concern, and the TM approaches to address that concern, was presented and discussed separately. Overall, the KM practitioners agreed that TM has much to offer the management of organizational knowledge, but some KM concerns can benefit more than others. The final two rows of the table summarizes the focus group thoughts on what level of contribution TM activities can make to each of the five KM challenges.

The focus group participants concluded that the identification of talented knowledge workers, knowledge sharing and positioning, and knowledge retention, could benefit significantly from an integration of TM principles. Experience has taught each participant that informal KM approaches tend to be more effective than the formal, but that the success of informal approaches is dependent on a small number of key people who are often under

Table I TM initiatives addressing KM challenges

<i>Identifying knowledge talent</i>	<i>Knowledge creation</i>	<i>KM challenge Knowledge sharing and positioning</i>	<i>Developing knowledge competencies</i>	<i>Knowledge retention</i>
<i>TM initiatives</i>				
Talent/performance management reviews	Cultivate knowledge creators	Organizational network analysis	Competency based training	Reward and recognition programs
Talent recruiting	Cultivate knowledge activists	Mobility opportunities	Succession planning	Knowledge transfer mentoring
		Network mentoring		
<i>Focus group comments</i>				
Effective KM requires collaboration yet high performers generally determined by individual attributes and accomplishments. Collaboration abilities and helpfulness to others should be central to recruitment and promotion of high performing knowledge workers	All employees create useful knowledge at different times. Merit in facilitating key knowledge activists but less so for key knowledge creators	Strong agreement that effective KM requires having key people in key knowledge facilitation positions. Using ONA to identify and coach key knowledge networks has particular merit	Limiting competency based training to only those deemed talented could lead to resentment among other employees. Understanding what skills they possess and developing these potential replacements has merit	All participant firms suffered significantly due to loss of key knowledge holders. Initiatives to retain this knowledge is critical to future success
<i>Contribution</i>				
High	Medium	High	Medium	High

“Failing to reward key knowledge holders results not only in them eventually leaving the firm but also absenteeism, disruptive office politics, disengagement, and poor productivity.”

management’s radar. Being able to identify these talented knowledge workers and to maneuver them into positions where they can facilitate knowledge flows, could greatly enhance KM initiatives. Surprisingly, the participants agreed that incorporating key knowledge creators into a TM program would offer only limited benefits. As explained by one participant:

Every employee creates useful knowledge at one time or another. We don’t have a problem generating new ideas. I think if we mandated knowledge creation to a small number of employees who we think are talented [...] this could even have a negative impact. The rest of the workforce might think that creativity is not part of their job. OK, some people are better at coming up with innovative ideas [...] but our problem is not creating knowledge, it’s trying to figure out what ideas to go with at what times.

6. Discussion and conclusions

KM has been traditionally viewed as a vehicle for change in other disciplines. Indeed, the emerging discipline of TM is but the latest concept to leverage KM lessons to advance its own field of study. We have argued in this paper that for KM to mature into a respected academic discipline, it needs to move beyond merely being viewed as a vehicle for change. In this effort, this paper considers how the principles of TM can be leveraged to support KM initiatives. We describe five KM concerns which can be advanced through the application of TM principles. Our thoughts were then discussed with a focus group of KM practitioners who concluded that TM can contribute greatly to three of the KM challenges we identified, and offer minor advantages to the remaining two.

This paper contributes to the advancement of the KM field by proposing an approach that focuses on those few knowledge workers who are deemed to be key talent. It is well established that organizational knowledge assets are critical to competitive success. The strategic value of knowledge embedded in individual know-how, actions and collective experiences and expertise suggests that effectively managing the top performing knowledge workers is necessary for enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness. It is therefore surprising that to date KM academics have not addressed in-depth how TM initiatives can help address KM challenges. We find in our review of the literature that there is a dearth of research with respect to how the principles of TM can be leveraged to enhance the KM process. Yet, the drawbacks of integrating a TM perspective into knowledge intensive work environments must be noted. An obvious concern relates to those not designated as key talent. These individuals may be left feeling their role is of little value to the organization. Such resentments can lead to serious drops in productivity. Thus, practitioners are urged to proceed with caution when contemplating adopting the principles described in this paper.

This research is of benefit to practitioners as it identifies the specific TM principles which can potentially contribute most to KM. Based on our findings, we advise knowledge managers to initially focus on using TM principles to:

1. identify key knowledge workers;
2. maneuver key knowledge workers in network positions where they can enhance knowledge sharing; and

3. identify key knowledge holders whose departure would detrimentally impact knowledge flows, and implement plans to retain this knowledge.

Our paper provides an initial guideline to KM managers by identifying and describing the various TM approaches which can aid in each of these three areas.

This research represents an initial attempt to address the challenges of KM through the integration of TM principles. As such it is subject to a number of limitations which open pathways for future research. Our framework is based on our own understanding of the challenges faced by KM practitioners. Due to time constraints, we did not have the opportunity for our focus group to consider how other KM challenges could be improved through TM. Future studies should consider what additional KM areas can be added to our framework. Additionally, our findings cannot be generalized to all organizational settings as our focus consisted of only three participants. Future research needs to empirically examine the relationship between TM activities and KM success in a larger pool of organizations.

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