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Данная статья рассматривает управление знаниями в компании Unilever. проанализированы общая стратегия компании, а также стратегия управления знаниями. Рассмотрены методы обмена знаниями во внутренней и внешней средах компании. Выявлены проблемы внедрения стратегий обмена знаниями в разных странах мира, а также дана рекомендация о совершенствовании реализуемых стратегий управления знаниями компании для более эффективной и рентабельной работы компании Unilever.

Ключевые слова: управления знаниями, Юнилевер, Unilever, обмен знаниями, неявные знания, явные знания

Unilever is a British-Dutch multinational consumer goods company which was founded by a merger of the companies of British soapmaker Lever Brothers and Dutch Margarine Unie in 1929 [1]. Its co-headquartered are located in London, United Kingdom, and Rotterdam, Netherlands. Company produces food, beverages, personal care products and cleaners under more than 400 brands that are well-known all around the world [2].

Unilever states that their business model center is «Unilever Sustainable Living Plan» (USLP). This plan sets out how they are growing business, whilst reducing environmental footprint and increasing company's positive social impact [2]. According to Unilever official website «Unilever Sustainable Living Plan» includes three main goals [2]:

Help more than a billion people to improve their health and wellbeing [2];

Halve the environmental footprint of our products [2];

Source 100 % of our agricultural raw materials sustainably and enhance the livelihoods of people across our value chain [2].

Sustainability strategy, which is used by Unilever, leads to economic growth and improvement of social conditions. Unilever Company creates new knowledge and according to Dalkir [3] creation of new knowledge may take place in individual innovations, which help to improve company's performance, Research & Development (R&D) projects, hiring new employees and so forth [3].

Unilever encourages knowledge-sharing, and company's Intranet was created also for this purpose. Not only knowledge-sharing between employees in one department or country is promoted, but also Unilever has its own Unilever Learning Academy. This Academy enables people from all over the world to share opinion, debate and grow as professionals. They could attend virtual and actual classes in every part of the planet. The only thing Unilever's employees need to access Unilever Learning Academy is learning passport [4]. Unilever Company states that «in December 2010 we formed the Unilever Learning Academy (ULA), bringing together all our major functional academies (Marketing, Supply Chain, R&D, Finance, HR, IT, Customer Development) with our Leadership Skills and General Skills teams to share best practices and to adopt common processes and standards for learning» [4]. This Learning Academy could be considered as a modified Community of Practice, because according to Dalkir [3] Community of Practice (CoP) is «a group of people having common identity, professional interests and that undertake to share, participate and establish a fellowship» [3].

Unilever also does a lot of work in innovation field and sets out that «in our scientific innovation to meet consumer needs we will respect the concerns of our consumers and of society. We will work on the basis of

sound science, applying rigorous standards of product safety» [5].

Based on the above-described, there are two Knowledge Management strategies used in Unilever:

Personalization. Unilever Company cares about billion people all over the world, and the company helps people by producing their products of more than 400 brands and holding important social programs.

Codification. As any producing company Unilever has its own R&D department that needs databases to store all information and knowledge that will reduce time spend on looking for information by Unilever employees.

According to Dalkir [3] Unilever uses all three types of KM initiatives:

External structure initiatives. For example, their brand Dove invites real women for their advertising campaigns, not professional models. And real woman don't play roles, they use Dove products and share their opinions. That helps Dove and Unilever to gain knowledge from customers.

Internal structure initiatives. Unilever supports knowledge-sharing using personalization and codification strategies to capture knowledge.

Competence initiatives. Unilever facilitates knowledge-sharing culture and creates special environment for sharing knowledge, such as their Unilever Learning Academy.

Unilever also works with different types of knowledge:

Tacit. This kind of knowledge is difficult to capture, that why Unilever supports sharing knowledge through professionals interactions, for example in their Learning Academy.

Explicit. This knowledge is stored in Unilever's databases and documents.

Embedded. This kind of knowledge is enclosed in the products. Unilever save this knowledge in different guidelines to use it again in future creating new products.

Unilever also works with students. They offer different internships and learning programs, such as Unilever Future Leaders Programme [6]. Unilever does it because understands that today students are tomorrow's leaders, and Unilever Company treats research and pursuit for knowledge from students [6].

By coincidence, when I have already chosen company for this paper and started my research this week, one of the managers of my regional Unilever department conduct an open lecture in my university. During this lecture I and other students learned more about Unilever, their structure and also asked some questions about the company. The Unilever representative also told us about career opportunities for students in the company and about a test that every candidate for any position should pass.

To sum up, Unilever Company has a great knowledge-sharing strategy and Knowledge Management culture that according to Dalkir [3] a good Knowledge Management strategy consists of:

An articulated business strategy and objectives [3];
A description of knowledge-based business issues [3];

An inventory of available knowledge resources [3];

An analysis of recommended knowledge leverage points that describes what can be done with the above-identified knowledge and knowledge artifacts and that lists KM projects that can be undertaken with the intent to maximize ROI and business value [3].

And Unilever KM and K-sharing strategies meet all these items.

But after meeting with its representative in my region in Russia I understood that Unilever is a large global company and has a lot of problems trying to apply its knowledge-sharing strategies in different countries. This happens not because strategies are not good enough, but because people from countries all around the world are different. They have different mentalities and points of view to some issues.

For example, Russian people don't have that knowledge-sharing culture because nobody cared about it pass years. But now people start realizing that they couldn't just stay with their own knowledge. It is a century of IT and people are slowly but surely come to the conclusion that if they share their knowledge, they won't lose it, but only expand it and will help others to solve their problems.

Nowadays Unilever should also focus on improving their existing strategies to make them work all around the world that will lead to increasing of productivity and profitability of the company. ■

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Knowledge Management in Unilever

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This article examines knowledge management in Unilever Company, and analyzes the company's strategy, as well as the knowledge management strategy. Methods of knowledge sharing in the internal and external company's environment are examined. Problems of knowledge-sharing strategies' implementation in different countries are revealed, and also a recommendation on Unilever's present knowledge-sharing strategies improving is given for more productive and profitable performance.

Keywords: knowledge management, Unilever, sustainability strategy, knowledge-sharing, tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge