



EXECUTIVE INTERVIEW

University approach to knowledge management

Natalya Tikhomirova, Anatoly Gritsenko and
Alexander Pechenkin

*Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI),
Moscow, Russia*

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to describe several Knowledge Management initiatives at Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI).

Design/methodology/approach – The design of the paper takes the form of an interview.

Findings – MESI has successfully established Quality Management and E-Learning Systems and is on a fast track for total KM implementation.

Originality/value – Describes the implementation of a KM system at MESI, providing a model and case study for other universities to follow.

Keywords Quality management, Knowledge management, E-learning, Russia

Paper type Case study

One of the most difficult challenges in corporate management innovation is Knowledge Management (KM) systems' implementation. There are hundreds of organizations all over the world that changed their organizational structure by creating Knowledge Management departments and creating a Chief Knowledge Officer position. Fortunately, educational organizations have recently begun to understand the importance of those changes, and Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI) is no exception. There are several KM initiatives that universities can do in this regard:

- creating KM research centers;
- creating KM disciplines, and implementing them in a university curriculum;
- opening KM learning programs on certificate, bachelor's, master's and PhD levels;
- implementing KM Initiatives in University's processes; and
- organizing external consultancy services for government and private organizations.

MESI has undertaken all of these initiatives. MESI's objectives are to improve collaboration with government and business; to increase quality, effectiveness, efficiency, and innovation; and as a result, to achieve powerful competitive advantages.

MESI was founded in 1932, and is one of the leading research and educational centers in the field of economics, statistics, mathematics, IT and management throughout Russia and the Commonwealth Independent State (CIS) countries. MESI is



a recognized leader in the development and implementation of the latest training methods and innovative technologies of E-learning. Recognizing the idea of “life-long education,” MESI offers the entire spectrum of study programs: from pre-university training to postgraduate study. MESI is an innovative educational and scientific complex, with 50 branch establishments, 117 representative offices, and more than 200 regional partners in Russia, CIS, and other countries.

MESI has implemented a quality management system (QMS), which is certified in compliance with ISO 9001:2000 (a first in Russia covering all production lines). This implementation of QMS concepts, such as leadership, process and systemic approach, client orientation, etc., lays the foundation for planned KM initiatives. The University QMS is actually a system for requirements’ identification and fulfillment, and addresses the needs of external and internal stakeholders, who are learners (with their relatives), employers, regulating authorities, and internal interested parties (faculty and staff). It also supports the international requirements for quality education and research.

From the QMS point of view, knowledge is a strategic resource/asset for the university that must be leveraged throughout the entire university system. We see this fact addressed in QMS standards and frameworks. For example:

- European foundation for quality management Excellence Model (like Malcolm Baldrige award model) includes sub criteria 4e “Knowledge and Informational management”;
- ISO 9001:2000 includes such demands as 5.5.3 “Internal communication” and 4.2 “Documentation requirements”; and
- ISO 9004:2000 includes such demands as 6.3 “Information”, presenting its view of KM.

Additionally, there are other KM-reinforcing elements embedded in existing QM approaches.

MESI’s system of Strategic and Operational Management Planning support knowledge programs throughout the strategic plan, and quality policy and goals (see Figure 1).

MESI conducts, every six months, both an internal and external evaluation of its vision, goals, and strategy, in accordance with an internal Rules of Procedure. It is a self-assessment of each main process and output. It is carried out by the Rector’s Administration and Strategic Committee, and includes:

- annual EFQM-based report;
- monitoring and measurement of processes;
- monitoring and measurement of satisfaction (feedback monitoring);
- internal quality audits; and
- monitoring and control of nonconformity products.

There is also a system for monitoring, reviewing and analysis of needs, opinions and attitudes of employers and end-users (e.g. through applicants’/students’/graduate students’ surveys, special forums at the MESI web-site, interviewing and testing, etc.). The services of marketing and monitoring have been developed and used for this purpose.

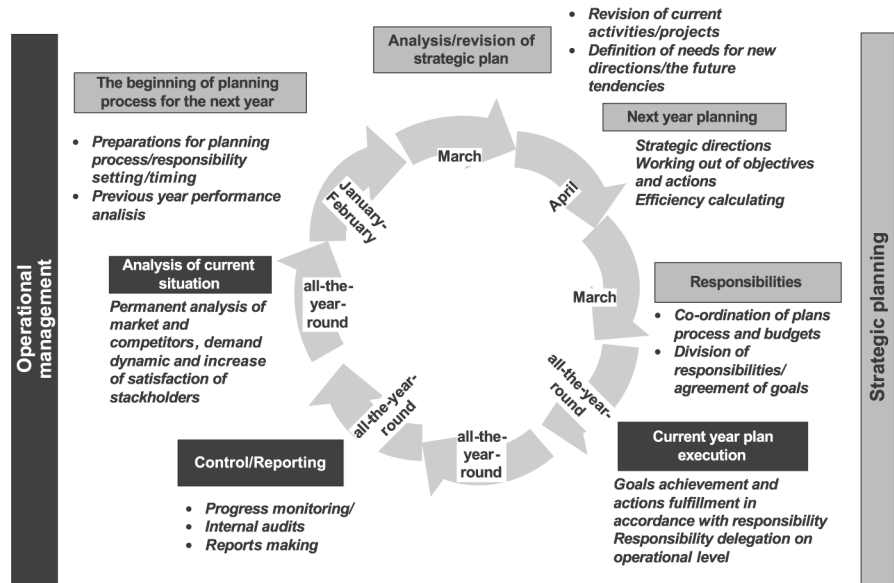


Figure 1.
Strategic planning of university

As the result of these analyses MESI has seen improvements in the following areas:

- institutional and executive commitment;
- technological infrastructure;
- student services;
- instructional design and course development;
- instruction and instructors;
- program delivery;
- financial health; and
- evaluation and assessment procedures.

MESI leverages its knowledge resources/assets by using a systems approach. MESI operates its business activities and functions by utilizing a process model (see Figure 2).

Every basic process in MESI has an owner and well-defined goals/KPIs. They are described and translated in the regulation documents of MESI, and are available to the faculty and staff via a university corporate portal. They continually undergo reengineering as a result of feedback and analysis.

MESI's QMS is designed and developed on the basis of the EFQM model. It has the following:

- continued personnel involvement in QMS initiatives;
- EFQM and RADAR logic integration;
- balanced score card approach (BSC);
- knowledge management implementation;
- E-quality criteria implementation (EADTU – eXellence);

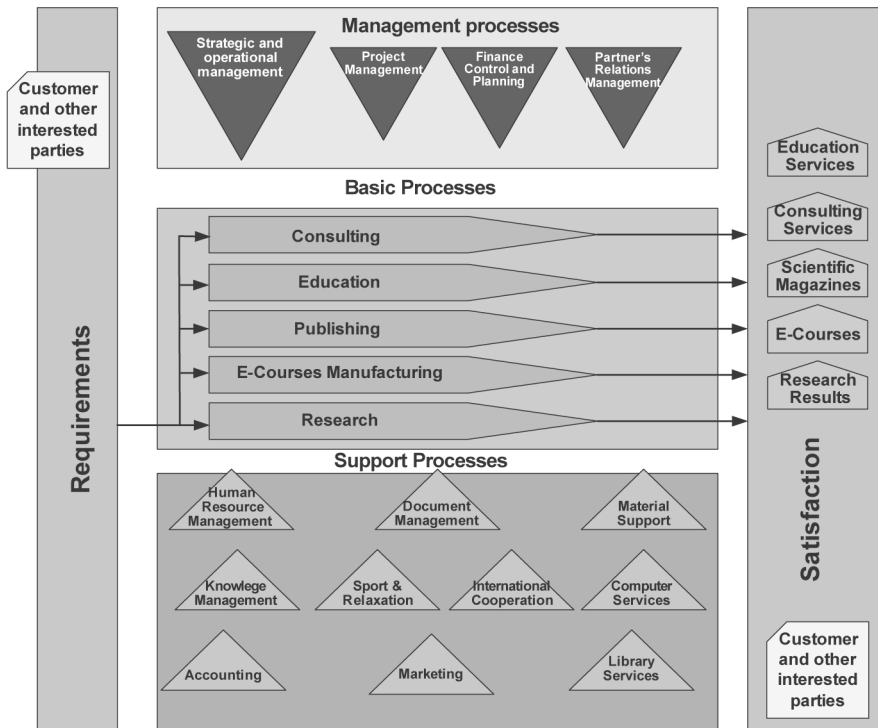


Figure 2.
MESI process model

- international accreditation of educational programs; and
- EFQM KM Framework assessment.

The main goal of KM for MESI is the rapid, efficient, effective, and innovative utilization of knowledge resources/assets for University personnel, infrastructure, processes, and technologies. The KM programs respond to both internal and external changes, while providing effectiveness, efficiency and innovation in learning, consulting products, and services to MESI's global markets. Our goal is to make the University knowledge resources/assets relevant, systematic, transparent, accessible, and usable. In summary, the principles of a "learning organization" can be realized at each management level. The corporate culture should be opened to those processes, and corporate learning should support it. Our Knowledge Management System provides answers to the following questions:

- (1) Who is owner of different knowledge objects in MESI?
- (2) How are knowledge transfer mechanisms realized in MESI?
- (3) How to create knowledge objects?
- (4) Who is the target group for each knowledge object?
- (5) How to work up with knowledge?
- (6) How to store knowledge?
- (7) How to reuse it?

- (8) How to get rapid access to knowledge?
- (9) What is the value of a knowledge object?
- (10) How to provide the use of the right knowledge, in the right place, and at the right time?

The main idea of a systematic approach to KM implementation is integrating the KM cycle to every business process; from MESI's process model to providing the appropriate KM tools and technologies to the system.

The KM cycle consists of five parts:

- (1) Knowledge identification and capture.
- (2) Knowledge creation.
- (3) Knowledge classification and storage.
- (4) Knowledge retrieval, circulation, and distribution.
- (5) Knowledge application.

For each process, all possible knowledge sources are identified (staff, clients, competitors, partners, internal/external informational resources, scientific and research centers, marketing information, learning materials, etc.). Knowledge mapping activities help in the Knowledge Audit stage. The most difficult thing after that stage is classifying all the knowledge sources and objects in a clear and useful way. MESI currently uses the ARIS methodology for document description and classification.

MESI is on a fast track for total KM implementation. Our Quality Management and E-learning programs are both mature, and are sound foundations on which to proceed with our KM initiatives. Fortunately, both these efforts include a lot of solutions that can be used for KM. For example: our Content Management System, Learning Management System, Authoring Tools, and Communication Systems can be used in most elements of the knowledge cycle in a lot of our processes. Our e-learning system is actively used not only for students and teachers, but also for University staff development. Creating e-learning courses, for example, helps to capture, store, and disseminate an author's knowledge. That kind of knowledge becomes both a resource and product at the same time. Finally, different general IT solutions are being used for KM processes as well (Microsoft Outlook, ARIS Toolset, Microsoft Share Point, Microsoft Project, and the MESI internal/external portal).

In conclusion, MESI is committed to becoming a worldclass knowledge management and learning enterprise. It has successfully established Quality Management and E-learning Systems, which are solid building blocks for a KMS. If successful, not only will MESI leverage its own knowledge resources/assets for enhanced organizational performance, but also will provide a model and case study for other universities to follow.

About the authors

Natalya Tikhomirova has been Rector of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI) since 2007. Dr Professor Natalya is author of books and articles on Quality Management, e-Learning, Knowledge Management.

Anatoly Gritsenko is director of the Quality Management Institute, Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI). Dr assessor EFQM (R4E), Russian official

representative in Group of Quality of Education of European Organization for Quality. Anatoly is author of articles and official reports about Quality Management.

Alexander Pechenkin is HRD director, Chief of Knowledge Management and Applied Informatics Department, Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI). Dr associate professor, vice editor-in-chief of *e-Learning World* magazine. From 1999 he participated in 11 IT and e-learning projects in state and commercial organizations (ING bank, Alfabank, NordGroup, Eggar Technologies, MESI and other companies). He has more than 50 publications. Alexander developed 14 courses for bachelor and master programs of MESI and regularly organized trainings, workshops and master classes at KM, information management, e-learning. Alexander Pechenkin is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: alexthetis@mail.ru

University
knowledge
management

21

To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com
Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints

المنارة للاستشارات

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.