Knowledge Management in China: A Tale of Two Companies

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Agenda

- Background
- Overview
- Case A: JAC Motors
  - Building a learning organization
- Case B: Taobao.com
  - Cultivating companies of practice
- Discussions
About Me

- Associate professor of Information Systems at UMass Boston, College of Management
- Teaching a graduate KM course
- Past KM-related research
  - Analyses of online communities of practice
  - Knowledge adoption in online communities
  - Acceptance of knowledge management systems
- Current KM-related research
  - Innovation
  - National/Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management
  - KM in outsourcing/offshoring projects
Background: About China

- The same size as US
- Population 1.33B
  - US 310M
  - 2010 College grad: 6.3M
- GDP 2009 $4.9T
  - 8.7% growth
  - $586B stimulus package
  - US GDP $14.4T
- Multiple imbalances
  - Population distribution
  - Wealth distribution
  - Regional development
Chinese economy is in transitions
• New challenges from domestic/global competition
• From labor-intensive to investment-intensive/hi-tech
  ▪ Biotech
  ▪ IT: the Internet of Things
• From resource-driven to innovation-driven
  ▪ A new focus on green energies/technologies and sustainable growth
• From coast provinces to inland/southwest China
• Younger, more educated, well informed workforce
Background cont’d

- Knowledge Management in China
  - Learning and wisdom are central to Chinese history and culture
  - Strong collectivism culture
  - Economic motivations
    - Increasing competition
    - High turnover rate
    - Workforce/self development
A Tale of Two Companies

- Why
- What
  - Theory?
- How
  - Actual practice
- Observations
- Still to be critically analyzed
**Compare-and-Contrast**

- **Similarities:**
  - Inspired by organizational ambitions
  - Influenced by organizational culture
  - Both quite successful (though at different levels and different scopes)

- **Differences**
  - Top-down vs. bottom up
    - Motivation
    - Commitment
    - Participation
  - Theory-guided vs. action-driven
  - Use of IT
Future Research

- Immediate plan
  - More data and critical analyses for teaching cases

- Culture and KM
  - National Culture and organizational culture
  - The effects of top-down vs. bottom-up
    - Motivation, commitment, and participation
    - Effectiveness
Thank You!

- Comments? Questions?
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