Knowledge Transfer Across Countries and Cultures

An International Theory-Building Case Study

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A report of a research project in partial requirement for the Master of Business (Research) in the Brisbane Graduate School of Business, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

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The work contained in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher educational institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been a strong testament to the power of knowledge transfer through social interaction. Throughout my journey, I have never ceased to be amazed by the quality of the knowledge development process when two or more people are brought together in a mutually supportive environment, to explore concepts and ideas.

I feel tremendously privileged to have had access to three great mentors and supervisors in Dr Paul Davidson, Dr Brian Delahaye and Dr Kate Andrews. Each brought with them on my journey, a different coloured lens through which we could examine together, the intricacies of knowledge transfer. As light travels further, becomes more colourful and takes on different shapes as it is reflected through a prism, so also is knowledge transformed and energized when it passes through different lens of analysis.

These findings are the result of this powerful dynamic.
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Organisation</td>
<td>Amadeus Central - based in Nice, Madrid and Munich, is responsible for the development, support and deployment of products to the NMCs for distribution in their markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central team</td>
<td>The Product Market Managers (PMMs) and Market Managers (MMs) who provide support directly to the NMCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Manager</td>
<td>Developed the Knowledge Management program at Amadeus. Role was then responsible for driving the implementation of Best practice transfer in sales and marketing throughout the markets of EMEA LA The Knowledge Manager is the researcher for this study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Marketing Company or Distribution Company or NMC</td>
<td>The local distributor of Amadeus products in that country or market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Can be one or several countries in which Amadeus has actual or potential commercial relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERA</td>
<td>Amadeus internal intranet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices Exchange</td>
<td>Is the area on the Amadeus intranet dedicated to providing best practice case studies and summaries in sales and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMEA LA</td>
<td>Europe Middle East Africa and Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>Middle East &amp; Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>Central Eastern and Southern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMs</td>
<td>General Managers</td>
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KEY WORDS

Knowledge management; organisational learning; knowledge transfer; knowledge measurement; barriers to knowledge transfer; tacit knowledge; culture; indicators of knowledge transfer; knowledge filters
ABSTRACT

While the importance of knowledge creation and management has been widely recognised as vital to an organisation’s ongoing competitiveness and success since the 1990s, there has been little systematic study of knowledge creation and transfer processes in organisations. Much of what has been reported in the literature is anecdotal in nature.

Particularly lacking is research within an international context, exploring issues related to the transfer of knowledge across countries and culture. It is proposed that there is a need for theory building research in the area of knowledge transfer.

Given the complex and social nature of knowledge, a qualitative approach to undertaking this research was adopted. The study is an inductive, theory-building case study in relation to a multinational company.

In summary, this study evaluated the effectiveness of a best practice knowledge management program in achieving knowledge transfer in sales and marketing practices throughout the markets of Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America. It considered the methods by which knowledge was transferred and their relative effectiveness, and those factors which may have mediated or limited the knowledge transfer processes.

The research was undertaken by the company’s Knowledge Manager who had created the best-practice knowledge transfer program. The implications of this situation on the study’s validity and reliability are discussed, and were taken into account in the design of the questionnaire and in the analysis of all findings.

The case study site was a European-based, global travel technology company. The principal data-gathering method was a structured interview conducted by telephone with senior staff from within 28 European and Latin American markets. In total, 31 interviews
were undertaken. This broad-ranging interview method gathered information and feedback on the processes used for identifying and distributing best practices in sales and marketing. The interview data were supplemented by feedback questionnaires from best practice forums, intranet usage statistics, observations from best practice forums and from interviews with staff in the central organisation.

While there was evidence that knowledge transfer had occurred, the results of the study highlighted the difficulties in effectively measuring the knowledge transfer process. It is the researcher’s view that clear and visible measures of knowledge transfer are not universal or even generic, but rather are to be discerned in a range of indicators across actions, behaviours, attitudes and outcomes in culture-specific settings. A time based knowledge measurement model was developed to assist in this regard.

Other major outcomes from the research included:

• The confirmation of the critical importance of face-to-face communication mechanisms for knowledge transfer to result in knowledge uptake.

• The identification of the role of technology as an enabler of communication and distribution of knowledge, but not as a driver for action or knowledge uptake.

• The recognition of the relationship between the broad factors impacting on knowledge transfer such as organisational factors, external environment and individual characteristics, in a complex and non-linear manner, suggesting that knowledge transfer is a multi-factorial process involving interacting variables to an extent greater than generally accepted hitherto. A tool for use within organisational settings has been developed in this regard.

• The identification of the interplay between different individual specific characteristics or factors such as personal experience of change, experience of working in a different cultural context, ego/personality, and credibility of the person transmitting the practice which influence the decision to adopt or not adopt a practice from another market.
• The identification of the need for cultural similarity and high levels of homogeneity, in terms of market maturity, market size and competitive position for practices to transfer more often between countries.

• The recognition that many factors operate to influence and shape the knowledge or indeed to block the transfer of practices between countries, with resistance to other practices possibly relating to an individual’s need for the application of creativity, personal ownership and control.

Additionally, the researcher observed that much of the language within the existing literature describing those factors which block or limit knowledge transfer is negatively framed. The researcher believes that a change in attitude about the positive influence of an individual’s filtering processes, together with a change in organisational language describing resistance to knowledge transfer, would yield a positive impact on individuals’ attitudes and behaviour with regard to knowledge transfer.

Several areas for further research as a result of the study were identified and include individual factors such as cultural characteristics, motivation, personality and adult learning styles. Additionally, a more detailed examination and understanding of the impact of organisational factors such as leadership and generational gaps on knowledge transfer would be of significant value to the body of knowledge.
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

“Many organisations can articulate the How in knowledge transfer – but not the Why. …..There has been very little systematic study of knowledge transfer in organisations”
(Dixon 2000, p. 172)

1.1 Background to the Research

While the importance of knowledge to the development of society has been recognised by
writers and philosophers since the ancient Greek period (Gamble 2001; Nonaka &
Takeuchi 1995), it has been only in the last ten years that its importance to organisational
life and organisational effectiveness has received detailed attention (Prusak 1998; Wah
1999).

The development of knowledge management as a distinct area has been historically
influenced by research undertaken across a broad range of disciplines. These disciplines
include sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Since the early 1990s, research in the
knowledge management area has been extended through contiguous areas including
change management, leadership development, systems theory, organisation theory,
organisational development, organisational learning and artificial intelligence. Of the
many parent disciplines or related fields, organisational learning is arguably the closest
‘cousin’ to knowledge management ‘...with knowledge management and organisational
learning being considered two sides of the one coin’ (Hackett 2000, p. 16).

Over the last ten years there has been significant interest in knowledge as an
organisational and commercial variable (Blackler 1995; Brown & Duguid 1998; 1993;
Edvinsson & Malone 1997; Spender & Grant 1996; Sveiby 1997), with the requirement to
better understand knowledge processes in organisations being specifically identified as
important (Dixon 2000; Leonard 1998; Miles, Miles, Perrone & Edvinsson 1998; Teece 1998). However, while its value to organisational success has been well documented, there has been little systematic study of how knowledge is enabled and transferred in organisations (Deviney, Soo & Midgley 2001; Dixon 2000; von Krogh, Ichijo & Nonaka 2000). Because of this, much of the knowledge management theory is based on limited and often anecdotal evidence. This is particularly the case for knowledge transfer within and between different cultural contexts.

In the discussion that follows, Section 1.2 introduces and justifies the research problem, with the research questions directing the study presented in Section 1.3. Section 1.4 describes and justifies the methodology adopted. Section 1.5 outlines the contents of the report, describes the limitations of the research and lists the key assumptions. Section 1.6 concludes the chapter.

### 1.2 Research Problems

As a term, ‘Knowledge Management’ is not easy to define, nor as an object or entity, is easy to value or measure (Romhardt 1998). In fact, the term ‘knowledge management’ is itself an oxymoron as knowledge is not really capable of being managed in the traditional sense of an organisational resource (Davidson & Griffin 2003).

Organisations that attempt to manage knowledge as if it were any other organisational asset, object or tangible good, typically meet with limited success. In the words of Karl-Erik Sveiby, one of the founding fathers of knowledge management, this is because ‘knowledge is a human faculty…’ (cited in Wah 1999, p. 10). As such, it is both conceptually and fundamentally different from other organisational ‘resources’ such as financial and physical resources. This point is supported by von Krogh, Roos and Kleine (1998) who comment that ‘knowledge management is so challenging because we need to discard our very ingrained notions of control, structure and goal rationality’. Prusak (cited in Cortada & Woods, 1999, p. 3) comments that knowledge management as an overt
activity performed within firms is still considered to be a ‘black box’, with people using many different determinations for knowledge management. Thus the nature of the subject topic is not universally understood, although its value has been widely reported. Additionally, there are clear challenges to be faced in analysing ‘knowledge’ as an object itself.

Having set the context for the research project, it is useful to outline the broad objective of the study. This objective is to conduct a detailed examination of knowledge transfer processes in an international organisational setting. As a consequence, the study should validate and extend existing knowledge-transfer theory, frameworks and models.

1.3 Justification for the Research

A knowledge management program should support the achievement of an organisation’s strategic objectives (Earl 1997; Hackett 2000; Stewart 2002; Sveiby 1997). It should also provide the following benefits:

- facilitate quicker knowledge creation and leveraging;
- encourage innovation;
- safeguard against knowledge loss when staff leave;
- help to build closer relationships with customers;
- enhance overall competitiveness,
- improve productivity and efficiency; and
- reduce the cost of reinvention (Hackett 2000)

For these reasons, it is an extremely valuable area for research attention. As has been stated earlier, the study of knowledge creation, knowledge development, knowledge transfer, knowledge measurement and knowledge management is a relatively new area of organisational and research interest. While anecdotes abound with regard to various
knowledge management initiatives undertaken by different organisations, there is a lack of systematic study on knowledge transfer in organisations (Dixon 2000, p. 172; von Krogh, Ichijo & Nonaka 2000). This is particularly the case for knowledge transfer within different cultural contexts.

The existing literature does however provide a basis for developing research questions to guide further study in this area. Based on detailed analysis and interpretation of the existing literature, and identification of gaps in the literature, three research questions have been developed to anchor the present study. These are:

1. By what means is knowledge transferred across countries and cultures?
2. What factors impact on knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?
3. What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?

1.4 Methodology

The objective of this study is to test existing theory as well as to develop new theory in the domain of knowledge transfer. Given the complex and social nature of knowledge, a largely qualitative approach to undertaking this research was adopted.

The company’s Knowledge Manager who had created the program, undertook the research. The implications of this involvement for the validity and reliability are taken into account in the design of the questionnaire and in the analysis of all findings.

The case study site used was a European-based, global, travel technology company. The principal data-gathering tool was a structured interview conducted by telephone with senior staff from within twenty-eight European and Latin American markets. This broad-ranging interview gathered information and feedback on the processes used for identifying and distributing best practices in sales and marketing. The interview data were also
supplemented by intranet usage statistics, best practice commitment reports, observations from best practice forums and from interviews with staff in the central organisation.

As a theory-building research project, analysis and interpretation was a data-driven process with new themes and insights emerging directly from the data itself. The study’s data set allowed complexities in the relationships between the factors impacting on knowledge transfer to be identified. In the report, links between the conclusions drawn in the study and the data on which they are based is explicitly maintained by reporting the respondents’ own words.

The third chapter of this report, details the methodology used in the study. The choice of research method used has also been justified in this section, where the use of a structured interview as a primary research instrument has been compared and contrasted with other qualitative research methods.

This research was undertaken as a part of a wider review of the effectiveness of the organisation's knowledge management program.

1.5 Report Outline

The following section overviews the structure of the research project by describing the seven chapters of the report.

Chapter One provides the background for the study, and overviews the contribution of each chapter.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on knowledge management, citing the influences of other disciplines and contiguous areas of research. Specific attention is directed to reviewing existing models and theories with regard to knowledge transfer. The objective
of this chapter is to create a theoretical foundation upon which the research will be based. Based on this analysis, three research questions are developed to guide the study.

Chapter Three provides the methodological justification for the research approach to be adopted. The study’s research methodology is chosen with consideration for the study’s three research questions and the constraints and limitations of the study site. Alternative research methods are considered and reasons provided for non-selection. Processes to ensure case study quality are also described, with steps taken to achieve the same identified. Taken together, Chapters Two and Three provide the methodological justification for the research study and its methods.

Chapters Four, Five and Six present the results of the study with regard to each research question with limited commentary on the information presented.

Chapter Seven presents the study’s findings and conclusions, with the limitations of the study being clearly identified. The chapter closes by identifying areas for further exploration and analysis.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the groundwork for the study. It has introduced and justified the research problem and research issues. Additionally, the study’s three research questions have been specified. The methodology was briefly described and justified, and the contents of the report were outlined. On these foundations, the report can proceed with a detailed description of the research project.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

The survey of literature on knowledge management is presented in three sections within this chapter. The first section examines definitions of knowledge. This is a critical first step because knowledge is complex with our understanding of how knowledge is created, transferred and leveraged developing significantly over time.

The second section looks at the evolution of our understanding of organisations, and of the role that knowledge plays in organisations. This section provides a historical context to the literature and draws on learning from disciplines considered to be parent theories of knowledge management.

The third section compares and contrasts previously proposed theories, models and experiences relating specifically to knowledge transfer in organisations.

A representation of these key literature areas, is outlined in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Organisation of the literature within Chapter Two

- Definitions of Knowledge
- Parent disciplines of knowledge management
- Contiguous research areas
- Literature on knowledge management generally
- Literature on knowledge transfer specifically

Sub Section 2.2.1  Sub Section 2.2.2

Section 2.1  Section 2.2  Section 2.3
Out of the analysis of these areas will emerge the study’s three research questions. These questions will guide the design of the research process. Additionally, in the review of the literature that unfolds in this chapter, clear justification will be provided for a theory-building case study to explore knowledge transfer.

The report will now turn to the first part of the literature review, which considers the nature of, and definitions for knowledge.

### 2.1 Definitions of Knowledge

The term knowledge is not easy to define although many writers have attempted to do so. These definitions describe the characteristics, dimensions and tenets of knowledge and reveal the complexity of factors impacting on the development and movement of knowledge. Romhardt (1998, cited in Mertins, Heisig, and Vorbeck, 2001), found forty separate dichotomies for the term ‘knowledge’.

Examples of a number of descriptions are provided below to illustrate this point:

- Knowledge is organised information applicable to problem solving (Woolf, 1988, pp. 1-3).
- Knowledge is the whole set of insights, experiences and procedures that are considered correct and true…guide the thoughts, behaviour and communication of people (van der Spek & Spijkervet, 1997, pp. 1-3).
- Knowledge is information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. It is a high value form of information that is ready to apply to decisions and actions (Davenport, De Long & Beers, 1997, p. 87).
- Knowledge encompasses the implicit and explicit restrictions placed upon objects (entities), operations, and relationships along with general and specific heuristics and inference procedures involved in the situation being modelled. (Sowa, 1984, pp. 1-3).
Knowledge consists of truths and beliefs, perspectives and concepts, judgements and expectations, methodologies and know-how (Wiig, 1993. pp. 1-3).

Knowledge is complex and socially constructed. Knowledge seeks community. Knowledge is a living organism. Knowledge travels on language. Knowledge is messy and slippery (Allee, 1997).

It can be seen that these definitions range from being narrow and tightly defined, to being broad and complex with philosophical overlays. Distilling the wisdom of these perspectives, the term knowledge is taken to refer to, for the present purpose:

“a dynamic mix of information, ideas and experience which is socially constructed and contextually bound, and which is acquired, integrated, stored, retrieved and potentially communicated between people”.

Before closing this analysis of definitions of knowledge, it is important to provide a commentary on different cultural perspectives and language relating to knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and Wheatley (2001) all believe that ‘The West’ has previously demonstrated a strong preference for explicit knowledge over tacit knowledge, and that this preference is related to our understanding of what knowledge is. Wheatley (2001) asserts that current approaches to KM in the west demonstrate that we believe that knowledge is a thing, a material substance that can be produced, measured, catalogued, warehoused, traded and shipped. She believes that the language is littered with ‘the thing’ thinking. ‘We want to capture knowledge; to inventory it; and to push and pull it out of people’ (Wheatley 2001, p. 29). She states that this language and the beliefs that engender it need to be abandoned, and that we need to pay more serious attention to the human dimension of knowledge if we are to be successful in our knowledge creation and transfer efforts.
2.2 Organisations and Knowledge

‘Despite all the attention by leading observers of business and society, none of them has really examined the mechanisms and processes by which knowledge is created’ (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, p 49).

The development of knowledge management as a distinct area has been historically influenced by research undertaken across a broad range of disciplines. These disciplines include sociology, psychology, and philosophy. In the last five to ten years particularly, thinking in the knowledge management area has been influenced by and extended through contiguous areas including change management, leadership development, systems theory, organisational theory, organisational development, organisational learning and artificial intelligence. A brief historical overview of the influence of some of this literature is provided below.

2.2.1 Historical Overview of Parent Theories

Organisations, at least as we know them, came into existence in the industrial era. Since this time, much research attention has been directed towards understanding how we can make the people in the organisation more effective. A brief overview of the key ideas that emerged during the last 100 years, which ultimately led to the recognition of the importance of knowledge in organisations, is provided in the following pages.

Early theorists were very systematic in their thinking about organisations with Frederick W. Taylor believing that jobs could be scientifically analysed and employees scientifically selected. (Davidson & Griffin 2003, p. 46) The scientific management approach was an attempt to formalise workers’ experiences and tacit skills into objective and scientific knowledge. However, it failed to perceive the experiences and judgements of the workers as a source of new knowledge. (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Fayol and Weber took the ideas of people and work management further by identifying the major management
functions of planning, organising, commanding and controlling (Davidson & Griffin 2003). Fayol’s principle of the unity of command is challenged by the development of modern organisations with flatter and more fluid organisational structures and processes and more dynamic information and knowledge systems.

At the beginning of the last century, Mary Parker Follett, Chester Barnard and Lyndall Urwick developed human-relations theories that were between classical management and behavioural approaches to the employment relationship. This genre of thinking about organisational effectiveness emphasised the importance of social factors at work including work teams, leadership styles and ‘informal’ systems in organisations (Nankervis 1994). While knowledge was not a central issue in Barnard’s management concept, his views of knowledge can be condensed as follows. Firstly, knowledge consists not only of logical, linguistic content, but also of ‘behavioural,’ non-linguistic content. Secondly, leaders create values, beliefs and ideas in order to maintain the soundness of knowledge systems within the organisation as well as to manage the organisation as a cooperative system (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, p. 37). The work of human-relations theorists provided an excellent groundwork for future thinking about the social context of knowledge in organisations.

The Hawthorne experiments undertaken by Elton Mayo in 1927-32 produced surprising but significant results, highlighting the positive impact of perceived management concern on employee behaviour (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, p 36). This work together with that undertaken by Maslow (1943), McGregor (1960) and Herzberg (1959) on theories of motivation provided a context for later researchers to understand some of the conditions under which knowledge is created and transferred in organisations.

Alfred Marshall, a forefather of today’s tradition of neo-classical economics was among the first to state explicitly the importance of knowledge in economic affairs. According to Marshall (1965) ‘Capital consists in a great part of knowledge and organization…Knowledge is our most powerful engine of production…organization aids
knowledge.’ This notion was further clarified and defined through the work of Hayek and Schumpeter, Penrose and Nelson, and Winter (Nonaka 1995, pp. 32-33).

One of the earliest references to the impact of knowledge in organisations was by Polanyi (1966) who identified that every ‘piece’ of knowledge has two dimensions, i.e. a tacit and explicit dimension. This differentiation has been described as the most cited and influential in the knowledge management literature (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 246), and is of particular relevance to the discussion on knowledge transfer in Section 2.3.

Drucker is known as being the first, in about 1960, to coin the term ‘knowledge work’ or ‘knowledge worker’ (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 43). He heralded the coming of the new organisation and of the need for businesses to convert themselves into knowledge specialists to remain competitive (Drucker 1993, 1998). He asserted that an organisation has to be prepared to abandon knowledge that has become obsolete and learn to create new knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 44) believe that Drucker seemed to recognise the importance of tacit knowledge when he argued that a skill could not be explained in words, whether written or spoken.

In the middle of the century, Simon developed a model for analysing organisations in terms of decision-making processes. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 38), Simon’s work on problem solving and decision making processes in organisations, overemphasized the logical aspect of human reasoning and organisational decision making processes. He attempted to formalise information and knowledge by disregarding the ‘non-linguistic mental process or behavioural knowledge discussed by Barnard and the tacit knowledge’ emphasised by Polanyi (Nonaka 1995, p. 39).

The Simonian paradigm was challenged by the ‘garbage can model’ of organisations proposed by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) and March and Olsen (1976), who emphasized the irrational and ambiguous nature of human problem solving and decision making (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, p. 39). The garbage can model noted the role of
ambiguity or disorder in the organisation, but contained no valid insight on the learning
that takes place among individuals and organisations. The model did not throw light on
the importance of active knowledge creation within an organisation and neglected to
integrate organisational behaviour with systematic organisational learning. (Nonaka &
Takeuchi 1995, p. 39)

The Systems oriented approach as adopted by Burns and Stalker, Rice, and Trist and
Emery in the 1960s, saw organisations as unified systems, with specified inputs,
transformational processes, outputs and feedback loops (Nankervis 1994, p. 7). From a
knowledge management perspective, a contribution of this approach was its focus on the
interaction between people and technology.

The Contingency approaches developed by writers such as Burns, Mintzberg, Hershey and
Blanchard in the seventies contended that every organisation and every environment was
different and therefore that there was no ‘one best way’ to manage an organisation
(Davidson & Griffin 2000, p. 61). This certainly became true as the eighties heralded in a
period of rapid change with the globalisation of business, increased competition, the
advancement of technology and the growth of the internet.

In response to these circumstances, organisations needed to develop new ways of doing
business. Porter (1980) developed a framework for understanding how firms create and
sustain competitive value. While Porter’s model implicitly assumed the importance of
strategic knowledge, it did not consider the importance of values and beliefs, and
precluded the possibility of the creation of knowledge or vision from its theoretical
domain. Additionally the science of strategy pre-supposed the top-down style of
management, in which only top management were assumed to think or manipulate
existing explicit knowledge. A final limitation of this framework was that it did not pay
sufficient attention to the role of knowledge as a source of competitiveness (Nonaka &
Around this time Peters and Waterman (1995) spent time observing what makes an ‘excellent’ company. They observed that ‘excellent companies’ had made efforts to promote the sharing of values among their employees and had created their own unique corporate culture, which determined how the company thought and behaved. The issue of culture type to be discussed later, was to become very central to thinking on knowledge creation and sharing.

In the late eighties and early nineties, two related themes of interest received widespread attention. These were the focus on understanding organisational capability as described by Prahalad and Hamel (1990), and Stalk, Evans and Schulman (1992), and on seeing knowledge as strategy (Earl 1997; Stewart 2002; Sveiby 1997). The latter area came to prominence as a result of the reporting of the success of two organisations called Skandia and Shorko (Earl, 1997 pp. 1 – 15). These organisations had consciously leveraged their organisational knowledge to achieve competitive advantage. They did this by basing their competitive strategies on understanding their operations in chosen territories better than their rivals. Earl (1997, p. 9) later asserted that for a business to build a strategic capability in knowledge, it must have four components including knowledge systems, networks, knowledge workers and learning organisations.

Other emerging areas of interest and research in the decade that followed included: working across cultures (Evans, Hau & Sculli 1989; Ferraro 1990; Hampden-Turner 1993; Harris & Moran 1990; Hofstede 1997; Trompenaars 1993); understanding organisational culture (Deal & Kennedy 1982; Schein 1985); and developing leadership skills in an international context. (Bass 1997; Karpin 1995; Nadler & Tushman 1990; Vroom & Jago 1988).

The research on organisational culture was able to shed light on organisations as epistemological systems (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). It emphasised the importance of human factors such as values, meanings, commitments, symbols and beliefs and paved the way for research on the more tacit aspects of knowledge.
Not surprisingly, the challenge of how to manage change became a focus for organisational attention in the eighties. This new movement, which often described the need for significant change in organisations in terms of a ‘paradigm shift’, drew extensively on research from across many organisational and management research domains. Key authors and influencers at this time included Dunphy (1981), Handy (1996), Kotter (1995) and Peters (1988). At an individual level, the impact of change and transition was discussed by prominent thinker/psychologist William Bridges (1995).

The 1990s also saw the influence of the total quality movement and business process reengineering. Prusak (cited in Cortada & Woods 1999) believes that the quality movement had a positive influence on the development of knowledge management as it brought focused attention to internal customers, overt processes and shared transparent goals.

With the benefit of hindsight, business process reengineering often had a negative impact on an organisation's knowledge sharing systems and culture as organisations adopted a very systematic approach to reorganising work with little consideration for social relationships and networks. As Schein (2000) said in an interview on the subject: ‘one of the problems with business process re-engineering was that it was too technical a process; there was no consideration of cultural elements, no understanding of the cultural framework of what was to be reengineered.’

With the growth of technology came a new science called artificial intelligence. This science which included expert systems, intelligent knowledge-based systems and knowledge engineering, really challenged/tested the limits of our understanding of computers’ capacity to hold ‘human’ knowledge. At the same time, research was being extensively undertaken to better understand the relationship between people and computers (Earl 1997, p. 4).
The research area of organisational learning (OL) covers areas of significant interest to, and relationship with, knowledge management. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 45) provide a useful definition of OL as an adaptive change process that is influenced by past experience, focused on developing or modifying routines, and supported by organisational memory. The OL research area itself is diverse with Easterby-Smith (1997) differentiating six distinct disciplinary clusters. Andrews (2000) provided a succinct summary of these disciplinary clusters. Given its relevance to the discussion on knowledge management, this summary is attached in Appendix 1.

Within the field of organisational learning, it is important to draw specific attention to research undertaken in the areas of Single-Loop and Double-Loop Learning (Bateson 1973; Argyris & Schon 1978), the learning organisation (Senge, 1990), emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer 1990), experiential learning (Kolb, 1993), and intuition (Vaughan, 1998). Each made a contribution to our understanding of knowledge in an organisational setting. A synthesis of this learning is provided below.

**Single-Loop and Double-Loop Learning**

The understanding of how individuals learn was enhanced in the 1970s when it was widely recognised that learning consisted of two kinds of activity. The first kind was concerned with obtaining information/know-how to solve specific problems based upon current premises. The second kind of learning was concerned with establishing new premises (i.e. paradigms, schemata, mental models or perspectives) to override the existing ones. These models were called ‘Learning I’ or ‘Learning II’ (Bateson, 1973) or single-loop learning and double-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 44), commented that they believed that learning and knowledge creation resulted from the dynamic interaction of these two kinds of learning and that organisations were generally not very good at implementing double-loop learning.
The Learning Organisation

Senge (1990) recognized that many organisations suffered from ‘learning disabilities’. To cure this affliction and to enhance the organisations capacity to learn, he proposed the ‘learning organisation’ as a practical model. This model included five components. These were the adoption by Managers of (1) systems thinking; (2) encouragement of personal mastery of their own lives; (3) the bringing of prevailing mental models to the surface and challenging them; (4) building a shared vision; and (5) facilitating team building (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, pp.44-45). Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) believed that Senge’s model built a new synthesis between scientific and humanistic approaches to management and that his emphasis on systems thinking may hold a key to linking reason and intuition. However (Weick 1991, p. 122) criticised Senge’s view that knowledge development alone constituted learning.

Emotional Intelligence

Salovey and Mayer first proposed their theory of emotional intelligence (EI) in 1990. Emotional intelligence at the most general level refers to the abilities to recognise and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others. It is a theory derived from a number of psychological fields including developmental, educational, clinical and counselling, social, industrial and organisational psychology (Goleman, 1998). Over the intervening decade, theorists have generated several distinctive EI models including Reuven Bar-on (2000) placing EI in the context of personality theory, and Goleman (1998) formulating EI in terms of performance. Goleman’s (1998) definition suggests four major EI domains: Self-Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. These theories provide a useful perspective for examining how individual and social dynamics impact on knowledge transfer in the workplace, with the capacity for developing effective relationships, clearly being an influential factor impacting on knowledge transfer processes.
Experiential learning

The importance of experience to learning first received attention in the early 1980s when Freire (cited in Kelly, 2000) and others stressed that the heart of all learning lies in the way we process information, in particular our critical reflection of experience. They spoke of learning as a cycle, that begins with experience, continues with reflection and later leads to action, which itself becomes a concrete experience for reflection. Kolb further refined the concept of reflection by dividing it into two separate learning activities, perceiving and processing (Algonquin 1996). The work of Kolb and other learning theorists makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of individual knowledge assimilation and creation processes.

Intuition

The link between intuition and knowing is another area of research relevant for the present study. Vaughan (cited in Mishlove, 1988, p. 1) stated that ‘intuition is a way of knowing’ and that even though intuition is instinctive, it can be learnt. She believes that while it transcends reason, it is not in opposition to reason. Intuition therefore may reasonably be seen to be a potential source of influence on the way individuals perceive and process information and knowledge (Mishlove, 1988, pp 1-2).

Concluding Remarks

This section has provided an overview of the influence of many different thinkers and theorists on the knowledge management domain. From this review it is clear that particularly since the 1990s, organisations have continued to search for ‘that thing’ that would provide them with the ongoing competitive advantage that they needed to survive. Increasingly more and more voices were saying that it was the knowledge inside the organisation that would make the difference. This knowledge resided in many places including internal documents, business processes and people’s heads. The knowledge in people’s heads was affected by the organisations processes, systems and culture, and by individual and organisational learning methods and preferences. The challenge for organisations’ was therefore how to identify or create the knowledge, access it, and then to
distribute it effectively throughout the organisation. This discipline came to be known as Knowledge Management. An overview of this domain is provided in Section 2.2.2.

2.2.2 Overview of Knowledge Management Discipline

Whereas the previous sub-section provided an historical overview of parent and contiguous theories of knowledge management, this subsection examines theories and models directly concerned with knowledge management. Most of these models have emerged since the 1990s, with an exponential growth of interest in the area since 1998. This point is evident in the ever-increasing number of articles published each year. A count of articles published on ABI inform in the knowledge management area is provided below in Figure 2.2 to illustrate this point.

Andrews (2000) notes that recent interest in the area is also evidenced by the existence of special issues of major journals such as Strategic Management Journal: Special issue on Knowledge and the Firm, Winter 1999; California Management Review Special Issue on Knowledge Management, April 1998; and Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management, 1999. Additionally a large number of internet newsletters, on-line
discussion groups and websites have recently emerged to cater for the mushrooming interest in the area.

This section will discuss four major contributions to our understanding of knowledge management generally, before a more detailed review of existing theory related to knowledge transfer specifically. These areas are:

- Tacit and Explicit Knowledge Dimensions;
- Knowledge Workers;
- Communities of Practice; and
- Knowledge as Strategy.

**Tacit and Explicit Knowledge Dimensions**

Building on the work of Polanyi (1966), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) made one of the most significant contributions to our understanding of knowledge in organisations through their descriptions of the different types of knowledge. In brief, they asserted that there were two kinds: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers and shared in the form of data, scientific formulae, specifications and the like. This kind of information can be readily transmitted between individuals formally and systematically. Tacit knowledge on the other hand is highly personal and hard to formalise, making it difficult to share with others. Subjective insights, intuitions and hunches fall into this category of knowledge. Tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual’s actions and experience as well as in the ideals, values, or emotions he or she embraces (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, pp. 10-11).

To access knowledge involves tapping the tacit and subjective insights of individual employees, and that these insights have to be made available for use throughout the company. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 36) see the company as a living organism with a collective sense of identification, equivalent to self-knowledge in an individual. This
requires that the organisation becomes capable of sharing tacit and explicit knowledge in
four base patterns:

- **Tacit to Tacit.** From one individual to another as in the master-apprentice role
- **Explicit to Explicit.** Combining desirable pieces of explicit knowledge (Nonaka &
  Takeuchi, 1995, p. 28) into a new whole i.e. creating a companies financial status
  reports by collecting the pieces from each organisational unit.
- **Tacit to Explicit.** An individual through sharing and articulating tacit knowledge
  makes it readily available to everyone
- **Explicit to Tacit.** As individuals better understand shared explicit knowledge, it helps
  to build a cognitive bridge with their own tacit knowledge base which can spin off or
  broaden a new dimension of tacit knowledge.

This model is represented in Table 2.1 below.

*Table 2.1: SECI model by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995 p. 72).*

This table is not available online. Please consult the hardcopy thesis available from the QUT Library

This is a very insightful description of the interplay between tacit and explicit knowledge and highlights how the different knowledge types react from and build on each other. This finding is both and significant and will need to be brought forward for consideration in the development of the research questions to guide the study.
Knowledge Worker

The importance of the knowledge worker to the success of firms has been cited as important since the early 1990s. Influential writers in this area include Drucker (1991), Quinn (cited in Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995) and Wenger, Snyder and Mc Dermott (2002). Drucker (1993) asserts that the knowledge worker is the single greatest asset in a society based on knowledge. Quinn (cited in Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, p. 7) comments that the capacity to manage what he calls ‘knowledge-based intellect’ is fast becoming the critical executive skill of the era, with Wenger, Snyder and Mc Dermott (2002) stating that in the global economy, companies are competing for people with the expertise and capabilities to generate and implement innovative ideas. Finding and keeping the right people can make a big difference to a company’s ability to become market leader. Understanding the importance of knowledge workers to organisational success has emphasised the critical nature of organisations, recruitment, development and retention strategies.

Communities of Practice

The importance of informal networks or communities of practice has also emerged in the last decade as important for knowledge sourcing, creation, leveraging and transfer within organisations (Brown & Duguid 1998; Davenport & Prusak 1998; Gamble & Blackwell 2001). By way of definition, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002, p. 4) have defined a community of practice as a group of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise. They comment that while communities of practice have been pervasive in society and organisations for a long time, it is only recently that organisations have recognised both the central role that these communities play in managing knowledge, and of need to be more systematic and intentional in supporting them. O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) found that once an organisation created the environment and technology to support networks, they often emerged and flourished.

Knowledge as Strategy

In section 2.2.1, it was noted that Porter (1980) developed a model for how firms create and sustain value that implicitly assumed the importance of strategic knowledge. Twenty-
two years later, Wenger, Snyder and McDermott (2002) commented that many organisations still do not have an explicit, consolidated knowledge strategy. They assert that the existence of knowledge driven markets make it imperative for organisations to develop a ‘knowledge strategy’ along with a business strategy. This knowledge strategy will detail in operational terms how the company will develop and apply the capabilities required to execute the business strategy.

Having examined the contribution of writers covering areas including tacit and explicit knowledge, knowledge workers, communities of practice and knowledge as strategy, the study will now focus on specific knowledge topics, as a way of further refining the focus for the present research. These topics include knowledge transfer mediums, influencers in knowledge transfer and knowledge transfer measurement.

2.3 Knowledge Transfer

‘The process of identifying and transferring practices is trickier and more time-consuming than most people imagine’ (O’Dell & Jackson Grayson, 2001, p. 1).

While section 2.2 examined theories and models relating to knowledge management generally, section 2.3 overviews literature relating specifically to knowledge transfer, and where available, knowledge transfer across countries and cultures. This section is organised under the following five subject areas:

2.3.1 Components of knowledge transfer
2.3.2 Velocity and viscosity issues in knowledge transfer
2.3.3 Mechanisms for knowledge transfer
2.3.4 Factors impacting on knowledge transfer
2.3.5 Measurement tools and processes for knowledge transfer
2.3.1 Components of knowledge transfer

Existing models in the field of communications theory have influenced many of the theories about knowledge management. Of particular importance has been work undertaken by Shannon and Weaver (1998), who proposed a general, mathematical model of communication examining each step within the message transfer process. Breaking the communication process down into parts highlighted different influencers and mediators as a message (or knowledge) moves from sender to receiver.

Mehrabian (1968) has also provided a very valuable contribution to our understanding of the most important and effective aspect of ‘face-to-face’ communication between two persons. Their research revealed that in any face-to-face communication, 55% of what is communicated is done through body language and expression, 38% is communicated through tone, and only 7% is communicated through words. This finding is very significant when considering, the impact and effectiveness of different knowledge transfer mediums.

Building on the work of Shannon and Weaver (1998), Davenport and Prusak (1998) purported that knowledge transfer involves two actions: transmission (sending or presenting knowledge to a potential recipient) and absorption by that person or group. If knowledge has not been transferred or absorbed it has not been transferred. Merely making knowledge available is not transfer. Access is necessary but by no means sufficient to ensure that knowledge will be used. Even transmission and absorption together have no useful value if the new knowledge does not lead to some change in behaviour or the development of some new idea that leads to new behaviour.

Kanouse and Jacoby (in Davenport & Prusak, 1988, p. 102) point out that "There are good reasons to believe that behaviour change is a much rarer event than the acquisition of knowledge…..Resistance to change is powerful, even in the face of indisputable objective evidence that a particular change makes sense. We are hardly wholly rational creatures".
For the purposes of this study, the description of knowledge transfer as offered by Davenport and Prusak (1998) will be used.

2.3.2 Velocity and Viscosity issues in Knowledge Transfer

Velocity and viscosity issues are important considerations in knowledge transfer. Davenport and Prusak (1998) describe velocity as the speed with which information knowledge moves through an organisation. For example:

- How quickly and widely is it disseminated? and
- How quickly people who need the information, become aware of it and get access to it?

Viscosity refers to the richness or thickness of the knowledge transferred. Some critical question related to viscosity include:

- How much of what we try to communicate is actually absorbed and used?
- To what extent does the original knowledge get pared down?
- Does what was absorbed, bear any resemblance to what we tried to transmit, and retain any of its original value?

Viscosity is influenced by a number of factors, especially the method of transfer. For example, knowledge transferred by means of a long apprenticeship or mentoring relationship is likely to have a high viscosity with the receiver gaining a tremendous amount of detailed and subtle knowledge over time. Knowledge retrieved from an on-line database or acquired by reading an article is much thinner.

The adoption and application of new knowledge can be a slow and arduous process, and the success rate will be profoundly influenced by the culture of the organisation.
(Davenport & Prusak 1998). More on culture and its impact on the knowledge transfer process is provided in section 2.3.4.3.

2.3.3 Mechanisms for knowledge transfer

‘A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge’ (Kahlil Gibran, cited in Cortada & Woods 1999, p. 504).

As was mentioned in Section 2.2, knowledge can be identified as either explicit or tacit. The most appropriate or effective knowledge communication and/or transfer mechanism depends on the type of knowledge to be transferred. From an explicit point of view, knowledge can be captured in documents in words and images, and can be distributed and communicated via technology. Tacit knowledge needs human contact to be distributed. This can happen between two people, or within a team or community.

Knowledge transfer is not easy to achieve as demonstrated by the following quote:

‘You would think that these better practices would spread like wildfire to the entire organisation. They don’t (Senior Vice President, Xerox, cited in O’Dell & Jackson Grayson 2001, p. 1).

An overview of the mechanisms available for knowledge transfer is presented in the figure below. As you can see from Figure 2.3, most transfer mechanisms have both tacit and explicit knowledge dimensions. While technology is often used to transmit explicit knowledge, as would be the case with documents and databases, recent innovations in the area of on-line chat groups have increased the scope of technology to transmit tacit knowledge.
2.3.3.1 Documentation of Explicit Knowledge

Knowledge that can be described through language (i.e. explicit knowledge) can be documented. This is a common way of capturing and communicating knowledge. Documentation is an important part of knowledge transfer process, particularly if the organisation has many employees and is geographically dispersed.

Documenting explicit knowledge and particularly the more complex explicit knowledge, is not an easy task. This is because collecting, codifying and documenting knowledge is actually a high level skill. Dixon (2000, p. 117) suggests that an external person, who has been trained in interviewing and who has a good understanding of the organisation, should be used to document explicit knowledge with regard to best practices. She believes that this action will help to reduce and neutralise the actual or perceived biases of those collecting the data. She also commented that using a third party increases believability of the resulting knowledge. These are all important considerations when examining the quality of explicit information capture and documentation processes within an organisational setting.

Dixon (2000) also asserts that timing is an important factor in documenting knowledge. It is better where possible to collect and construct knowledge in real time, than when team members rely on their memory of past events and reasoning (Dixon 2000, p. 117).
When people say that tacit knowledge is difficult to transfer, they generally mean that it is difficult to transfer by writing it down. Tacit knowledge is best transferred through human interaction as will be discussed at various points within this study. (Dixon 2000; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). Other ways of transferring tacit knowledge include using metaphors, analogies and models (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995, pp. 64-67).

2.3.3.2 Technology

Most modern organisations recognise that technology such as Lotus notes, e-mail, databases, etc are efficient ways to distribute explicit knowledge (O’Dell & Jackson Grayson 1998). According to Lei, Slocum and Pitts (1999) the availability of computer-based technology components, models and inter-intra network connectivity can significantly enhance the rapid and multi-level, multi-location sharing of knowledge, innovation and status of progress on all fronts.

However, technology may not be the most effective transfer mechanism as reflected in the philosophy of Davenport and Prusak (1998), that successful knowledge transfer involves neither computers nor documents but rather interactions between people. Further they believe that knowledge management approaches that overemphasize technology are less effective than those that focus on creating human knowledge sharing processes, changing behaviours and organisational change.

Meridian Resources Associates Inc (1977) have developed a useful model for understanding the limitations of technology in communicating and transferring knowledge. Table 2.2 below applies this model in describing those elements of communication, which are present with different knowledge transfer mechanisms. The table should be read from the top of the left hand column down the page.

The table indicates that person-to-person communication has all the elements which facilitate effective communication, including words, control over the format, voice tone,
immediate feedback, non-verbal actions, environmental, physical exchange and informal exchange. At the other end of the scale, e-mail has only words.

Table 2.2: Communicating Across Technology – Meridian Resource Associates (1977)

This table is not available online. Please consult the hardcopy thesis available from the QUT Library

More commentary on technology as a knowledge transfer mechanism is provided in section 2.3.4.12

2.3.3.3 Face-to-face mechanisms

Face to face mechanisms are recognized as the most effective way for communicating tacit knowledge by many writers including Davenport and Prusak (1998), Dixon (2000), Hackett (2000), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). As highlighted by Davenport and Prusak (1998, p 99), sometimes knowledge transfer can work only if people are brought together physically. Their example of the difficulty of transferring knowledge between two groups of tunnelers, one in New Zealand the other in Boston, highlights this point. Davenport and Prusak’s (1998) story illustrates how difficult it can be to make tacit knowledge explicit, and to transfer it quickly and easily. The fact that the knowledge to transfer may have been too subtle and complex to
express in words, is only one of the reasons for failure. They suggest that the instinctive resistance to change and the need for trust are at least as important. These factors are discussed in greater detail in sections 2.3.4.6 and 2.3.4.8 respectively.

2.3.3.4 Use of Experts

Some organisations such as Lucent use designated experts to transfer knowledge in specific topic areas (Stanley, 2001). With clearly identified experts, all employees know whom to contact on specific topic areas. Dixon (2000) sees a limitation with this type of transfer mechanism on the receiver. She believes that all employees have expertise in some area, and that people are more likely to accept the knowledge of others when their own knowledge is accepted. By identifying some people as experts over others there is a change in the dynamic of sharing knowledge between the two parties, which has a negative impact on knowledge transfer.

2.3.3.5 Physical Transfer of Persons with Knowledge

Similar to the findings of Davenport and Prusak (1998), O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) comment that the actual transfer of people from one location to another was and probably still is, the most effective way of transferring knowledge and practices between areas. With a physical transfer of a person you move the implicit or tacit knowledge as well as the explicit.

2.3.3.6 Communities of Practice and Knowledge Networks

The power of communities of practice in transferring knowledge has already been referred to in section 2.2.2. Understanding of the impact and power of group dynamics in facilitating learning and knowledge transfer was first highlighted by Festinger in 1957. Since this time, there has been extensive interest and research on the conditions that make self-managing teams an effective vehicle for motivating individuals, transferring knowledge and getting organisational work done (Probst, Raub & Romhardt 2000).
Given that the type of channel or medium for carrying knowledge has emerged as a significant influencer in knowledge transfer, it will be carried forward to frame the research questions for this study.

2.3.4 Factors impacting on knowledge transfer

A review of the literature reveals that there are many factors impacting on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer processes. The most often cited factors are illustrated in Figure 2.4 below.

*Figure 2.4: Representation of factors impacting on knowledge transfer*
A brief description and analysis of each of these factors as described within the existing literature, is provided in the following pages. The discussion is not completely linear as it is difficult to discuss some factors in isolation from others. It is clear that many factors have a complex interconnectivity to each other.

2.3.4.1 Nature of the Knowledge being transferred

The impact of the type of knowledge on selection of the most appropriate transfer processes has previously been discussed in section 2.2.2 and 2.3.3. Taking this analysis further, Dixon (2000, p. 144) has developed a model to link five types of transfer mechanisms, based on the sort of work people are doing and where they are doing it, with different types of knowledge based on her observations inside various organisations. A brief description of this model follows.

*Serial transfer* uses the knowledge a team has learned from doing its task, that can be transferred to the next time when the team does the task in a different setting.

*Near Transfer* uses the explicit knowledge that a team has gained from doing a frequent and repeated task. The organization would then like to replicate this knowledge in other teams that are doing very similar work.

*Far Transfer* uses the tacit knowledge a team has gained from doing a non-routine task that the organisation would like to make available to other teams that are doing similar work in another part of the organisation. (When a transfer is ‘far’ the knowledge from the source team has to be translated or considerably modified for it to be applicable to the receiving team.)

*Strategic Transfer* uses the collective knowledge of the organisation needed to accomplish a strategic task that occurs infrequently but is of critical importance to the whole organisation.
Expert Transfer uses the technical knowledge a team needs that is beyond the scope of its own knowledge but can be found in the special expertise of others in the organisation.

Dixon (2000, p. 169) believes that the identification of the most effective transfer system involves asking the following questions:

- Who is the intended receiver of the knowledge in terms of similarity of task and context?
- How routine and frequent is the task?
- Is the knowledge tacit or explicit?

From the answers to these questions the appropriate transfer mechanism can be selected. The two key fundamental messages from Dixon’s model are that:

1. There are many very different ways to transfer knowledge.
2. Knowledge is transferred most effectively when the transfer process ‘fits’ the knowledge being transferred.

The usefulness of this model will be reviewed in light of the research findings in Chapter Seven.

The importance of considering work contexts in knowledge transfer was also highlighted by Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000, p. 168). However, they were more detailed in their analysis of the impact of work context, considering all of the physical, technical and organisational aspects of individual and group work.

Davenport and Prusak (1998, p. 95) comment that when a company is committed to transferring tacit knowledge, they often establish formal mentoring programs and make passing on knowledge to young employees an explicit part of the job descriptions of skilled senior staff. Other strategies that they have observed for transferring tacit knowledge include knowledge fairs or market places, open forums and corporate picnics.
Davenport and Prusak (1998, p. 92) provide examples of different knowledge transfer mechanisms used in the Japanese versus American cultures. This experience illustrates how important it is that the transfer method suits the culture. The impact of national culture on knowledge transfer will be discussed further in Section 2.3.4.3.

This section has considered the impact of the nature of knowledge on knowledge transfer processes. In doing so, the discussion has digressed into other areas influencing the knowledge transfer process including knowledge transfer systems themselves. Section 2.3.4.2 considers the design of these systems in greater detail.

2.3.4.2 Design of Knowledge Transfer Systems

The design of the transfer process system itself, impacts on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer (Davenport & Prusak 1998; Dixon 2000). Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) advocate that organisations should consider a combination of people and technology in a hybrid systems approach to knowledge transfer for it to be more effective.

Dixon (2000) provides a philosophical overlay to the discussion by asserting that if the designers of knowledge transfer systems thought of knowledge as dynamic, they might design conduits to enhance the flow rather than creating warehouses for its storage. Planning would then be focused on how to maximize the movement of knowledge across the organisation.

Dixon (2000, p. 162) believes that splitting thinking about knowledge into technological and cultural components is misleading. Her assertion is that both systems need to be integrated and that knowledge must relate to an organisation’s goals. This point must be evident to those who will use the system.

Another key point about the design of systems relates to its objectives. To be effective, a transfer system needs to be designed for a specific purpose i.e. that meets a specific knowledge need (Dixon 2000, p. 163). An organisation may need many knowledge
transfer systems for many unique populations. Dixon (2000) asserts that a transfer system designed for ‘just anyone’, is less effective.

2.3.4.3 National Culture

Hofstede (1997, p. 1) defines culture to be ‘the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group of people from another’. In terms of impact on knowledge transfer, the closer people are to the culture of the knowledge being transferred, the easier it is to share and exchange knowledge (Davenport & Prusak 1998; Gamble & Blackwell 2001; Hofstede 1997). This view is also supported by Gagne (1997) who asserts:

‘Learning theorists have long known that the more a learning experience resembles the place and situation where the knowledge will be used on the job, the more effective the transfer of learning.’

Gamble and Blackwell (2001, pp. 154-156) believe that most social groups are ethnocentric, which is to say that they favour their own culture over others. They comment that ‘everyone is raised in a particular cultural context and it is perfectly natural to use our culture as the standard for perceiving, judging and evaluating experience’. As a consequence of this situation, people tend to devalue other cultures. Gamble and Blackwell (2001, p. 156) also commented that country culture can be very strong, with the resulting impact that a knowledge system, however well-designed, can hardly be expected to overcome prejudices that might have been acquired over years or even centuries.

Hofstede (1997, cited in Gamble & Blackwell, 2001, p. 156), who is widely considered to be an expert on work related cultural differences, has identified four dichotomies that tend to distinguish people from different countries relevant to the way in which they work. These are:

1. Power Distance
2. Individualism/collectivism
3. Masculinity/Femininity.
4. Uncertainty Avoidance.

These factors all impact on the way an individual from one cultural setting, perceives another, is open to new ideas and makes decisions about new ideas or knowledge.

In recognising that culture inhibits knowledge transfer, Davenport and Prusak (1998, pp. 96-97) recommend a number of ways to overcome this ‘friction’. Some of their proposed strategies include: giving people time to build relationships and trust through face-to-face meetings, providing education, job rotation, recruiting people who are open to new ideas, accepting and rewarding creative errors and through encouraging non-hierarchical approach to knowledge.

National culture is clearly a significant and complex issue in knowledge transfer and will be brought forward for consideration in the framing of the study’s research questions.

2.3.4.4 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is complex. Pulling together the contribution of several theorists in this area (Davenport & Prusak 1998; Hackett 2000; Probst, Raub & Romhardt 2000), it can be asserted that an organisation’s culture can defined by many influencers including:

- the organisation’s values;
- climate of trust;
- attitude to risk and innovation;
- style and frequency of communication;
- style of leadership;
- level and use of technology;
- design of jobs, organisational structure and work processes; and
- reward mechanisms/incentives.
The prevailing organisational culture has a huge impact on both willingness to share knowledge, and on willingness to adopt practices from another area (Hackett 2000; Wah 1999). Davenport and Prusak (1998) comment that knowledge management initiatives that don’t fit well with an organisation’s culture, won’t survive.

In 2000, a major study of Knowledge Management experiences was undertaken by a working group from leading organisations, under the guidance of the Conference Board (Hackett 2000). The project involved interviews with 200 executives from 158 global companies. Each of the companies participating in the survey had on average 40,000 employees, with the US being the headquarters for most respondents (85%). European and Asia Pacific headquarters were represented as 13% and 2% respectively.

The findings were very illuminating in terms of the impact of organisational culture on the relative success or failure of knowledge management programs. The findings were that the second biggest barrier to knowledge programs working was a culture of hoarding knowledge, with functional silos being the third most reported barrier. The main obstacle to successful knowledge management was that the need to manage knowledge has not been clearly articulated at senior levels within the organisation. This point is discussed in greater detail later in the report. Figure 2.5 on the following page presents the top 15 reasons cited for the failure of knowledge management programs. As shown, many barriers are related to organisational culture.
O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) pose the following key question about organisational culture: ‘How can people be motivated and rewarded for sharing?’

They comment that most managers have never learned ‘how to learn’, especially cooperatively with many American schools and colleges, stressing individuality and competition, not collaboration and sharing. O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) believe that real cultural support must be in evidence if we are to avoid the stress placed on
individuals who work on knowledge sharing initiatives which have long term payoffs. Their colleagues may be saying to them, ‘Why are you spending your time doing this kind of thing? We need you here’. This reality highlights the importance of communication to explain and build support for knowledge management initiatives.

Texas Instruments (TI) experiences in attempting to achieve knowledge transfer (cited in O’Dell and Jackson Grayson, 1998) revealed four cultural barriers to sharing knowledge. These were:

- Current financial measures encouraged competition among plants
- Plant management had no responsibility for sharing
- There was no common vocabulary to facilitate conversation, and
- There had never been a rallying cry for common purpose.

Texas Instruments responded to these barriers by physically transferring people from high-performing plants to those that needed help but also, created a common business process map for wafer fabrication, reallocated funding to the least productive plants, gave plant managers common goals, and built sharing networks to support the process. They also reinforced worldwide sharing by measuring and rewarding plant managers for overall wafer fab results, not just their own plant’s performance. O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) commented that an organisational culture that fostered a vibrant sense of curiosity and a deep respect and desire for learning from others, was key.

3M’s experience in developing an effective knowledge sharing culture has been well reported in the literature in Davenport and Prusak (1998), and Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000). 3M provides a striking example of culture that encourages and enables knowledge transfer. Deeply ingrained beliefs and values at 3M have encouraged knowledge transfer and led to significant investment in the machinery of transfer. Delegating responsibility, tolerating creative mistakes, and respecting individual talents at all levels in the firm have been part of the company’s culture almost from the beginning. Researchers at all levels
are expected to spend fifteen percent of their work time on personal research interests. All are eligible to apply for grants to support their research and encouraged to involved other employees in their projects. Making knowledge widely available and giving people time to play around with it has led to some notably new products. Davenport and Prusak (1998) report that knowledge sharing has been achieved not by technology, but by a culture of sharing knowledge.

Wah (1999) has also stressed how important it is that there is a shift in corporate culture for a knowledge management program to be effective. She asserts that the new culture must be woven into every business process. Furthermore, she identifies the key to success as a culture that instils knowledge sharing as a trait deeply embedded through the enterprise. Wah makes an interesting comment that culture shifts won’t really hold….. ‘unless the leadership embraces practices and supports an interactive learning environment’ (Wah 1999, p. 24).

O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (2001, pp. 2-3) have identified the following negative organisational-cultural influencers on knowledge transfer:

1. Organisational structures which promote ‘silo’ thinking, in which locations, divisions and functions focus on maximising their own accomplishments and rewards, hoarding information and thereby sub optimising the total organisation.
2. A culture which values personal technical expertise and knowledge creation over knowledge sharing. This is rampant in engineering and knowledge-based organisations such as consulting and research firms.
3. An over reliance on transmitting ‘explicit’ rather than ‘tacit’ information.
4. Not allowing or rewarding people for taking the time to learn and share and help each other outside of their own small corporate village.

O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) assert that these aspects must be addressed in order for the transfer process to have a chance of working. One reason that internal transfer is
so difficult is that these enablers have been poorly understood and were rarely addressed in earlier attempts.

To understand organisational culture better, Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000, pp. 260-261) have identified nine questions relating specifically to the existence of a knowledge culture. These questions include:

- Are employees encouraged to share their knowledge?
- Is the working atmosphere open and trusting?
- Is customer value the main objective of knowledge transfer?
- Do employees regularly and creatively discuss their visions of the company’s future?
- Does the firm provide enough information, incentives and resources to enable employees to build up the skills that they need?
- Do employees continually improve their knowledge and skills

### 2.3.4.5 Differences in Individual Learning Styles

There has been extensive research undertaken into the impact of different individual learning styles on learning. This in turn has direct relevance for our study of factors impacting on knowledge transfer. Influential theorists in this area in addition to those theorists already referred to in Section 2.2.1, include Clare Graves (1970) & Ken Wilber (2001) whose multi-level models and theories highlight the complexity and interconnectivity of factors impacting on how individuals learns.

Gamble and Blackwell (2001, p. 161) asserts strongly that if an effective KM systems is to be introduced it must overtly recognize individual differences and preferred learning styles. When consideration is given to the influence of country culture as discussed in section 2.3.4.3 on individual learning styles, an additional layer of complexity is revealed in this factorial analysis.
2.3.4.6 Fear of Change

Resistance to or fear of change is a factor often proposed as impacting on knowledge transfer (Kanouse & Jacoby 1988). As was mentioned earlier, the subject of change has been an area of intense organisational interest since the eighties. Resistance to change is a by-product of many other factors including organisational culture, external environmental or market conditions, individual absorptive capacity, individual motivation, and an individual's previous experience of change to name but a few (Davenport & Prusak 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Szulanski 1996). These factors will be discussed individually in greater detail, in later sections.

Davenport and Prusak (1998, p.103) report on Mobil's experience in encountering resistance to knowledge transfer and take-up. They assert that resistance to abandoning procedures that have been successful for years is a universal phenomenon, which is not limited to Mobil.

2.3.4.7 Push and Pull factors

‘Push’ and ‘pull’ factors are designed by organisations to encourage knowledge distribution and take-up. The design of these drivers and knowledge enablers has a direct impact on an organisational culture. Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) describe a push factor as a process an organisation creates to push knowledge down an organisation and to motivate its uptake. Typical ‘push’ processes include training sessions, use of experts to distribute knowledge or the setting of goals to drive knowledge uptake.

Dixon (2000) provides several examples of push factors at Ford. One key driver is the performance management system. All plants at Ford have to improve productivity each year by 5%. This goal encourages them to look at best practices from other plants to see if there are best practices which will help them to achieve this goal. Additionally a central system pushes documentation on best practices out to each plant. For each best practice received, the plant has to declare whether they will accept or reject the best practice. This is another driver. All plants are assumed to have best practices, and it is expected that
these will be documented. The Vice-Presidents review the number and location of best practices documented and implemented. Those plants not submitting best practices are ‘pushed’ to do so. Additionally it is a considerable source of pride for a plant if there best practices are being implemented in other plants. This is clearly an important element of their organisational culture.

Buckman laboratories use of ‘push factors’ for knowledge transfer is well reported in the literature (Dixon 2000; Housel Bell & Gamble 2001; Liebowitz 1999; Probst, Raub & Romhardt 2000). Buckman laboratories have created techno forums for knowledge sharing and discussion with strong processes to ensure that all requests for information are followed up. Additionally they provide both financial rewards and accelerated promotion to management, for peoples who show themselves to be best at knowledge sharing.

Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) describe the ‘pull’ factor principle as focussed on the knowledge user and their needs. The knowledge user must be able to locate and obtain knowledge himself quickly where necessary.

The type and nature of push and pull factors are an important element of the design of knowledge transfer systems, and will have a direct impact on the organisations culture. This point again highlights the complexity and interplay of the many influencers on knowledge transfer and will be brought forward for consideration in the development of the research questions.

2.3.4.8 Psycho-Social Filter and Trust issues

‘People judge the information and knowledge they get in significant measure on the basis of who gives it to them. We judge people on reputation’ (Davenport & Prusak 1998, p. 100).
In their study on organisational learning and knowledge processes in a bio-medical consortium, Andrews and Delahaye (2000) found that micro-processes emerged as highly influential in knowledge transfer with individual perceptions of approachability, credibility and trustworthiness mediating knowledge importing and knowledge sharing activities. Their ideas are reflected in Figure 2.6 below.

*Figure 2.6: The Psycho-Social Filter (Andrews 2000, p. 214).*

The importance of a quality relationship had already been identified by Szulanksi (1996) who asserted that one of the key disablers of knowledge transfer is a laborious and distant relationship between the source and recipient: individuals involved in the transfer do not have credibility with one another and therefore have difficulty validating the practice.

O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) also provide support for Andrew and Delahaye’s (2000) model through their comments that internal transfer is a ‘people-to-people’ process; relationships seem to precede and be required for meaningful sharing and transfer. Therefore it can be summarised that the credibility of the source, the level of trust between the sender and receiver, and the opportunity for relationship development all mediate the knowledge transfer process.
2.3.4.9 Status
The perceived status of the person distributing the knowledge has also been reported to have a direct impact on knowledge transfer. This factor relates directly to the previous discussion regarding the psycho-social filter. The literature reveals that junior staff are less effective as transfer agents – even if they have the same knowledge as more senior/experienced staff (Dixon 2000).

2.3.4.10 Importance of multiple channels
The comment has been made previously about the importance of assessing the suitability of different channels, for different audiences and different objectives (Dixon 2000, p. 144). Davenport supports this view and states that multiple channels reinforce one another with each adding value in a different way – and that their synergy enhances use. (Davenport cited in Cortada & Woods 1999, p. 102)

2.3.4.11 Support from senior management
Knowledge management programs benefit tremendously from senior management support. (Davenport & Prusak 1998; O’Dell & Jackson Grayson 1998). In fact senior management sponsorship is critical, with Hackett (2000) reporting that the major barrier to successful KM initiatives, was that the need to manage knowledge was not clearly articulated at a senior level.

O’Dell & Jackson Grayson (1998) believe that most people have a natural desire to learn, to share what they know and to make things better. This natural desire is thwarted by a variety of logistical, structural and cultural hurdles and deterrents that we erect in organisations. With regard to leadership specifically, they comment that a leadership team and culture supportive of knowledge transfer requires a common focus and common fate among all employees. Without it, people have little incentive to overcome other obstacles that time and space create.
2.3.4.12 Technology

Technology has become an important enabler of communication within organisations. Hackett’s survey found that many organisations felt that a lack of proper technology for sharing knowledge was a barrier to effective knowledge management. O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998) comment on this point, that technology should no longer be a major barrier to identifying and notifying the organisation of best practices. All the necessary software solutions already exist from Lotus Notes and other Groupware to powerful and user-friendly databases to email and internal intranets. However, they do not believe that technology is the solution for knowledge transfer. Rather, technology is seen as having a helpful role to play, but it will not be the driver of knowledge transfer, for two reasons:

1. All the important information about a process is too complex and too experiential to be captured electronically, and
2. The incentives for and barriers to sharing are not technical.

This view is supported by Prusak (cited in Cortada & Woods 1999, p. 3), who states that most technology is only focussed on making available explicit knowledge.

2.3.4.13 Motivation

There are many definitions and theories of motivation. The Latin root of the word motivation means to ‘move’. Therefore in a basic sense, the study of motivation is the study of action (Eccles 2002). As has been mentioned previously, Maslow (1943) was an influential writer on motivation and believed that motivation was directly related to the satisfaction of a hierarchy of needs. Modern theories of motivation believe that action is related to beliefs, values and goals.

An important theory of motivation is called Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964). This theory describes how individuals make decisions regarding various behavioural alternatives. It considers which elements of motivation:
a. Energise Behaviour – What initiates a behaviour and determines the level of effort?
b. Direct Behaviour – What determines what behaviour an individual chooses?
c. Sustains behaviour – What determines an individual’s level of persistence?

A representation of this theory is provided in Figure 2.7 below.

**Figure 2.7: Expectancy Theory**

Szulanski (1996) studied 122 best practice transfers within 8 companies. A *lack of motivation* was identified as one of the top three factors impacting on knowledge transfer. Some of the reasons for this lack of motivation included rivalry between departments or areas of the company, general resistance to change, and the well-known ‘Not Invented Here’ or NIH syndrome. From the descriptions and definitions above, it is clear that there is complexity in understanding all of the influencers on an individual’s motivation.

### 2.3.4.14 Absorptive Capacity

A lack of absorptive capacity was another key factor identified by Szulanski (1996) as impacting on knowledge transfer. Lack of absorptive capacity is evident when a recipient individual does not have the time, energy or resources to value, assimilate and apply the new knowledge.
2.3.4.15 Market Conditions

An external driver on knowledge transfer and uptake is the market or competitive environment within which a person or company operates. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) state that conditions of uncertainty force companies to seek knowledge held by those outside the organisation. They provide several examples of Japanese companies who when struggling against tough international competition, are forced to innovate and to anticipate change. Clearly the fear of ‘not surviving’ is a key driver of knowledge transfer in these circumstances, and is an area worthy of further research attention.

2.3.5 Measurement tools and processes for knowledge transfer

‘What can’t be measured can’t be managed’ (Anonymous, cited in Probst, Raub & Romhardt, 2000, p. 244).

The subject of knowledge measurement is of great interest to many theorists and practitioners. This is because we know that in order to measure the success of knowledge management, we need to be able to measure knowledge. Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) believe that this is nearly impossible to achieve because the value of knowledge depends on the circumstances. To quantify knowledge, they assert that we must objectify it and this means separating it from particular situations, times and people. They comment that organisations can only control knowledge indirectly, by controlling the context within which it operates. Perkmann (2002) supports the views of Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) when he comments on the challenge in establishing a direct causal link between concrete initiatives and their impact on business performance.

An illustration of this point can be seen in the knowledge activity network model developed by Wiig (1996) and shown on the following page.
In Figure 11.1, each arrow represents a theory about a causal relationship. This model points to the independencies that underlie different processes and highlights the difficulties in demonstrating the impact of different knowledge management initiatives.

Having commented on the inherent difficulty in measuring knowledge and knowledge transfer, it is useful to review some of the measures that organisations are using. These measures can relate to cost savings, revenue generation, impact on decision making and employee perceptions of efficiency. Texas Instruments and Ford both report the impact of knowledge transfer in terms of cost savings or productivity improvements at their manufacturing sites (Dixon 2000). Liebowitz (1999) reports that Buckman laboratories assess the effectiveness of KM by measuring the percentage of revenues derived from new products while General Motors attempts to measure the effect of knowledge on decision making. They are doing this by attempting to implement a program of decision audits –
particularly with regard to new car development decisions. Perkmann (2002) reports that BT & MWH are using a range of measurement tools to assess knowledge transfer including anecdotal and case study evidence of knowledge transfer, feedback from users or participants, large-scale user surveys and indirect measures such as system usage. On this last point, Perkmann comments that system usage is very easy to measure but there is no guarantee that this will actually result in individual or business performance. He believes that the measure is too indirect and that quantitative tools should only be used as a supporting heuristic.

From this review of measurement practices in organisations it is evident that there are many indicators of knowledge and knowledge transfer available although the reliability of some as an effective measurement instrument, has been questioned.

Kaplan and Norton (1992) have developed a method of incorporating knowledge into an organisations management and monitoring systems. This model or method is called the Balanced Score card. Their model provides four perspectives on company activity: from the customer’s perspective: finance, internal business processes and learning and growth. This model is presented in Figure 11.2 below.
While not providing knowledge indicators specifically, this strategic model seeks to link operational interventions in the organisation's knowledge base, with long-term goals and provides a useful framework for considering measurable variables or indicators.

Several useful models for identifying classes of indicators and for measuring knowledge, have been developed by North, Probst and Romhardt (1998). Table 2.3 shows one approach to identifying indicators across four classes. This model demonstrates a clear relationship between cause and effect. North, Probst and Romhardt (1998) have developed a multi-dimensional system for developing knowledge which is illustrated below in Table 2.3. Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) comment that every organisation must decide what are the most important indices for them, given their mission, resources, and environment.

Table 2.3: Classes of indicators
Before closing the discussion on knowledge measurement, it is useful to consider a number of other challenges within organisations with regard to knowledge measurement. Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000, pp. 248-249) believe that a range of problems may affect the measurement process. These problems include:

- Knowledge that is critically important to the company’s competitive position may not be sufficiently recognised, or recognised at all.
- There are no monitoring systems to measure changes in the individual building blocks of knowledge management (e.g. changes in transparency of knowledge, knowledge development).
- Only internal indices are used; there are no measures that could show how the company’s knowledge resources are developing compared with those of competitors.
- The skills and abilities of individuals are measured, but collective knowledge is neglected.
- Only the inputs are measured (e.g. expenditure on training) and not outputs (e.g. the success of that training)
- Quantitative measures are preferred, and qualitative ones are neglected.
- The measurements have an internal frame of reference; there are no comparisons with external competitors or leading companies.
- People measure things that are easy to measure, without considering what use the results will be.

Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000, p. 250) assert that this list of problems (which is not exhaustive), shows how important it is to have a well-considered knowledge measurement system. This is clearly a contentious and multifaceted area deserving further research attention and will be brought forward for inclusion in the study’s research questions.
2.3.6 Summary

Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of this chapter have reviewed the literature on knowledge management, knowledge transfer and knowledge measurement. In the following section, the literature is drawn together and the three research questions are formally stated.

2.4 Summary and Research Questions

Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 have introduced the research literature in the study’s area of interest. The purpose of this concluding section, is to summarise key issues arising from the literature and to formally state the three research questions which will guide the study.

There are many definitions of knowledge to be found in the literature. This review has revealed the inherent complexity of knowledge as an entity, and as an object for study. As was identified by Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000), the value of knowledge depends on the circumstances. To quantify knowledge, we must objectify it and this means separating it from particular situations, times and people. However, while it is a difficult area for study, it is a worthwhile area for research. As has been stated earlier, the study of knowledge creation, knowledge development, knowledge transfer, knowledge measurement and knowledge management, is a relatively new area of organisational and research interest. While anecdotes abound with regard to various knowledge management initiatives undertaken by different organisations, there is a lack of systematic study on knowledge transfer in organisations (Dixon 2000, p. 172; von Krogh, Ichijo & Nonaka 2000). Thus, much of the KM theory is based on limited and often anecdotal evidence. This is particularly the case for knowledge transfer within different cultural contexts.

The existing literature does however provide a sound basis for developing research questions to guide further study in the area. Clearly it is important to examine how knowledge is carried or transferred within an organisation. The review of the existing literature within this chapter has described a number of ways that knowledge can be transferred within organisations, and has made suppositions as to the varying levels of
effectiveness of each medium. A detailed study should reveal and/or validate the most effective transfer mediums.

As knowledge develops, its size and shape is clearly mediated by a broad range of factors. The review of the literature has identified a myriad of factors including but not limited to, national culture, organisational culture, motivation, market conditions, absorptive capacity, technology and the design of knowledge transfer systems themselves. Which factors most influence this movement process, and in which ways, is also of key interest.

Finally, with consideration for the complex and often invisible nature of knowledge, a question of key relevance to all organisations emerges: ‘How can we determine or measure that knowledge transfer has actually occurred?’ The discussion in section 2.3.5 highlighted the difficulty and importance of this activity in an organisational context. Clearly, it is also an area worthy of further research attention.

Pulling together all of these findings, three well-justified questions emerge for investigation in the present study. These are:

1. By what means is knowledge transferred across countries and cultures?
2. What factors impact on knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?
3. What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?

In conclusion, the review of the existing literature has highlighted the value of undertaking a theory building research study in the area of knowledge transfer, guided by the three research questions described above. A company has been identified with a formal two-year-old knowledge transfer program in place, within a global environment. This organisation will therefore provide an ideal setting within which to investigate knowledge transfer across countries and cultural contexts.

Chapter Two has established a clear research agenda for the study. In Chapter Three the research methodology and its methodological justification will be described.
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, the justification for the research project was outlined in terms of the current literature on knowledge management. From the gaps in the literature, three research questions emerged for investigation. This chapter discusses the selection of the research methodology used to examine knowledge transfer processes across countries and cultures and subsequently to build new theory and test existing theory related to knowledge transfer. The first half of this chapter is organised in three parts. The first part justifies the selection of the research paradigm deemed most appropriate for the nature of this research. The second part outlines why a combined qualitative and quantitative approach was selected within the selected research paradigm. And the third part justifies why a case study was selected. The key steps in the selection of a research methodology are outlined in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Overview of Research Study Methodological Selection

Review and evaluate research paradigms

Research paradigm selected

Compare and contrast appropriateness of qualitative vs quantitative research design

Mixed research design selected

Review and evaluate methods

Case Study approach selected

Review data collection methods

PARADIGM  DESIGN  APPROACH
Three factors influenced the selection of the research paradigm which was used to address the research questions. The first of these was the nature of the research questions themselves. Secondly, recommendations on research approach were sought from within the knowledge management literature. Thirdly, recommendations were identified within the literature pertaining to research strategy. These three influences are represented in Figure 3.2 below:

Figure 3.2: Overview of Factors Influencing Research Methodology Selection

A short description of each of these influencers is provided below. As outlined in Chapter two, the three identified research questions for this project were:

1. By what means is knowledge transferred across countries and cultures
2. What factors impact on knowledge transfer across countries and cultures
3. What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures

These questions were derived from an examination of the existing literature on knowledge transfer, and more specifically from identification of gaps within the existing literature. The literature review highlighted the complex, socially constructed and ‘living’ nature of knowledge (Allee 1997; Davenport, De Long & Beers 1998; van der Spek & Spijkervet,
1997). It was therefore deemed to be a subject that could not be analysed, measured and understood adequately through a single, highly structured and defined research approach, but needed to have a more open approach with several data collection processes and provision for opportunistic exploration of issues as they emerged. The questions themselves were focussed on three specific areas within the knowledge transfer field. This delineated a structure within which to identify further questions as a part of the overall research approach.

The second area impacting on the selection of research paradigm was from the recommendations made within the literature on knowledge transfer. The existing literature provided many anecdotal examples of how knowledge was transferred in organisations and of the many factors that impact on the transfer process. There was however a lack of systematic and structured research in this area, as a result of the fact that knowledge transfer was a relatively new area of organisational interest (Dixon, 2000). With regard to the measurement of knowledge transfer processes specifically, Perkmann (2002) recommended use of a case study approach. Thus knowledge transfer within an organisational setting was identified as an area ripe for further research, with a case study approach being recommended as an appropriate research vehicle.

The third factor influencing the choice of research paradigm was an examination of the literature pertaining to research strategy itself. This review revealed that the research approach for this study was exploratory in nature, with the design of the research instruments being driven by existing theory. More detail and explanation in this area is provided in Section 3.1.
3.1 Factors to Consider in Research Selection

‘Philosophers and methodologists have been engaged in a long standing debate on how best to conduct research’ (Patton 1990, p. 37).

This section overviews the literature on the selection of research paradigm, and then describes the factors which most influenced the choice of research strategy for this study. The choice of paradigm is fundamental to research, since the paradigm reflects what is seen as important, legitimate, and reasonable (Patton 1990). It portrays an understanding of the world, and is used to determine what problems deserve research attention, and how the research might be conducted (Deshpande 1983; Lincoln & Guba 1985).

There are two major epistemological approaches to conducting research. Epistemology has long been concerned with the opposing views of logical positivism and idealism (Patton 1990). The former (positivist or ‘nomothetic’ research) typically relies on quantitative and experimental methods to test hypothetical-deductive generalisation. The latter called ‘interpretivism’, typically uses qualitative methods to understand human experience in the context of real life settings.

The selection of an appropriate paradigm for investigation, and thus a broad class of research methods, is not always made on the merits of the situation, but on the grounds of methodological orthodoxy or personal experience of a single paradigm (Patton 1990):

‘The issue then becomes one of not whether one has uniformly adhered to prescribed canons of either logical positivism or phenomenology (interpretivism) but whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions investigated, and the resource available. The paradigm of choices recognises that different methods are appropriate for different situations. Situational responsiveness means designing a study that is appropriate for a specific inquiry situation’ (Patton 1990, p. 39).
Perry and Coote (1994, p. 103) make the following comments about the two paradigms:

‘In comparison to positivist research, interpretive research considers words rather than numbers as the major elements of data; tends to be more inductive ... aims at internal validity through information-richness ... tends to use data within its context, from the field ... includes subjective information collected from interviews rather than concentrating only on objective value-free data ... tends to pay more attention to particulars while also being more broadly focussed.’

It was the researcher’s assessment that this research project stemmed from the positivist paradigm for the following main reasons:

- The research questions have been developed with consideration for existing theory.
- A questionnaire survey instrument was used as the principal data gathering tool
- The survey questions were well defined, although there was ample provision for open ended responses to questions and opportunistic data collection.

However, the overall research design for the project combined various research methods, calling for the integration of different theoretical perspectives rather than being wedded to a particular theoretical style or paradigm with its particular features and limitations. For example, the research approach included both objective and subjective elements. While an essentially quantitative and deductive approach was used for analysing the questionnaire, a qualitative and inductive approach was used when combining and analysing the data pulled together from all sources. The data was analysed drawing on the researcher’s deep knowledge of the organisation, and intuition. The latter step clearly involved subjective interpretation on behalf of the researcher. Brewer and Hunter (1989) comment that there are distinct advantages for theoretically oriented research in adopting what they describe as a ‘multi-method’ approach. They also use the term ‘paradigmatic pragmatism’ to describe the process of synthetic problem formulation and theory generation.
Having described the overall research approach, it is now appropriate to consider the next question in research design. This is the question of whether a qualitative or quantitative methodology is more appropriate given the nature of the study. A consideration of those factors influencing this decision is outlined in the next section.

3.2 The Case for a Qualitative Methodology

The decision as to whether a qualitative methodology is more appropriate than a quantitative methodology involves consideration of several criteria. A brief examination of the literature in this regard follows.

Lee (1999, p. 41) states that if a researcher can answer in the affirmative to one or more of the following questions, then a qualitative research design is to be preferred over a quantitative design:

- Is it important for the researcher to understand the in-depth processes that operate within the organisation or industry?
- Do the research issues involve poorly understood organisational phenomena and systems?
- Is the researcher interested in the differences between stated organisational policies and their actual implementation (e.g. strategic versus operating plans)?
- Does the researcher want to study ill-structured linkages within organisational entities?
- Does the study involve variables that do not lend themselves to experiments for practical or ethical reasons?
- Is the point of the study to discover new or thus far unspecified variables?

In the present study, affirmative answers can be given to some of these questions indicating that the survey will clearly have elements requiring a qualitative approach. However, with the subject of research being an existing knowledge transfer program, there
are clearly elements which can be tested through a more structured quantitative approach as well.

Choice of approach is also influenced by the objective of the study with regard to the development or testing of theory. Bonoma (1985), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Neuman (1994) all assert that a qualitative approach is more theory-building than theory-testing oriented. It is the researcher’s assessment that this study has both of these objectives.

According to Minichello et al (1995, p. 9), ‘qualitative research attempts to capture people’s meanings, definitions, and descriptions of events. In contrast, quantitative research aims to count and measure things.’ Indeed, qualitative methods are ‘ways of finding out what people do, know, think, and feel by observing, interviewing, and analysing documents’ (Patton 1990, p. 94). Miles (1984) makes the point that qualitative data with its emphasis on people’s lived experiences is fundamentally well-suited for locating the meanings people place on events, processes and structures in their lives; their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgments, presuppositions, and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. This research project had an approach which involved both the counting of responses to certain questions as well as an examination of the respondents’ feelings towards the subject matter as reflected in their words. The latter is peculiar to a qualitative approach.

As explained in the next section, this research project used a structured interview as the principal data-gathering tool. Qualitative techniques based on interviews, as were conducted, are well-validated (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001; Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Eisenhardt 1989; Gilchrist 1992; Minichello et al. 1995; Zikmund 1997).

In summary, there is ample justification for the application of a largely qualitative methodology for this project. The next section will present the arguments for the selection of a case study approach.
3.3 The Argument for a Case Study Approach

Building on the methodological discussion from the previous two sections, it is now appropriate to review the theoretical arguments supporting the use of a specific research approach. For this project a case study research approach was selected. Section 3.3.1 provides an overview of the reasons for this decision together with the advantages of the case study approach, while Section 3.3.2 highlights the criticisms and limitations of this approach.

3.3.1 Advantages of Case Study Approach

There is significant methodological justification within the research literature for conducting a case study approach for this study. An overview of these arguments is outlined below. The first of these arguments relates to the objectives of the study.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Yin (1994) state that when the main purpose of the research project is exploratory, then a case study approach is an appropriate strategy. More specifically, Yin (1994) asserts that the case study is appropriate for exploratory analysis when investigating contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, and when the boundaries between the phenomena and the context are not clear. Furthermore, case studies are the strategy of choice when the focus is on understanding the dynamics present within single settings, and when existing theory seems inadequate (Eisenhardt 1989).

The second key factor which influenced the use of a case study, related to the nature of what was being studied. As stated previously, the study of knowledge transfer is complex and involves examination of human factors such as perception, feelings and impact of culture. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (1991, p. 24) indicate that:
research problems in case study investigations often involve an understanding of managerial perceptions or culture where meanings are socially-constructed rather than being value-free’

This was certainly the case for this study on knowledge transfer.

A further advantage of the case study approach with regard to this study relates to style and structure. A case study approach permits ‘flexible and opportunistic data collection methods that allow additions to questions during interviews’ (Easterby-Smith 1994, p. 532; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991). This capacity to add questions was considered very valuable in the current study with its objectives of exploration and theory building.

An overview of other researchers’ comments on the general advantages of the case study approach, is outlined below. These comments provide further justification and support for the research design selection decision:

- Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1999), Emory and Cooper (1991) and Neuman (1994) all agree that a simple, well-constructed case study can enable a researcher to challenge an existing theory and to provide a source of new hypotheses.
- Torraco (1997) believes that case studies more than any other method offer the greatest potential for revealing richness, holism and complexity in events.
- Adelman et al (1983, pp. 8-9) believe the advantages of case study research to be that it is strong in reality, allows generalisation either about an instance or from an instance, recognises the complexity of social truths, and represents the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants.
- Dick (1990, p. 10) contends that case research deals with the world on its own terms by enabling a greater depth of description.
• Stake (1983, p. 73) states that case studies are valuable because they utilise the reader’s knowledge and experience. Stake argues that this use of the reader’s own experiences and tacit knowledge will enable them to generalise from the case and aid in their own understanding. This is particularly true for this study as the researcher had an intimate knowledge of the organisation and was well known to the survey respondents.

Overall, it is the researcher’s view that the key strengths of the case-study approach which are most relevant to this project include: the capacity to utilise the researchers experience, insights feelings, and values in the analysis findings; the capacity to manage complexity and ambiguity; and the potential to develop new theory.

However, there are several criticisms of the case study approach. Some of these criticisms reveal that a case study’s strengths may indeed also be its weakness. Outlined on the following page is an overview of the key criticisms of the case study approach.

### 3.3.2 Criticisms of Case Study Approach

The most common criticisms of the case study approach are that it is subjective, lacks statistical validity/is unscientific and has the potential for bias (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2001; Emory & Cooper 1991, p 143; Hagg and Hedland (cited in Gummerson 1991)). Craig Smith (1991, p. 157) believes that the potential for bias comes from the dependence on the researcher’s analytical skills and ability to maintain objectivity. In their view, the researcher is at risk of becoming too close to the phenomenon.

Another limitation of the case study approach relates to the potential for developing and testing theory. Hagg and Hedland (1991) believe that a case study approach can only be used to generate hypotheses but not to test them, and that generalisations cannot be made on the basis of results. Emory and Cooper (1991) and Yin (1994) make a similar point.
when they comment that the problems associated with case studies include the difficulty of supporting or rejecting hypotheses.

There are however limitations with any methodology used. If these limitations are understood, then checks and balances can be incorporated into the research design process. Strategies for limiting the impact of these factors are described in section 3.4.

With the research approach justified, attention can now move to describing the setting for the case study.

3.3.3 Research Setting

From the analysis presented to date, it is clear that the characteristics of the research topic favour an exploratory, qualitative, case study methodology. Of particular influence in determining overall approach, have been the three research questions which were developed out of the existing literature.

The research setting for this study was something of a natural choice for the researcher as it was the organisation within which they were employed as the Knowledge Manager. The organisation was global with operations in 200 countries. In 2000, this organisation had developed and implemented a best practice knowledge transfer program in sales and marketing for their National Marketing Companies (NMCs) of Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America (EMEA LA). At the time of the study, the best practices program was two years old. This duration of time had allowed the program sufficient opportunity to demonstrate clear outcomes, which meets Yin’s criteria for a strong, positive example in site selection (Yin 1994, p. 12). Additionally, it was an easily accessible site for the researcher as an employee of the organisation, with significant potential not only for follow-up but also for validation of all findings. Further, other benefits of the site selection were that the researcher was not time constrained, had access
to a broad range of valuable evaluative data about the knowledge transfer program, and benefited from their own experiences and perspectives on the program. The potential richness of the analysis of the data was therefore believed to be quite deep.

3.3.4 Survey Participant Selection

The participants for the study were generally drawn from a pool of General Managers and Sales Directors from the National Marketing Companies (NMCs). (The exception to this was for the German NMC called START – where the head of Strategy was invited to participate as they had been actively accessing the program’s intranet site. There had been no other involvement in the program from this NMC’s General Manager or Sales Director). These senior roles were selected because they had had the most active involvement with the best practices program, and because they were the roles with direct accountability for implementing any changes in their market.

The maximum survey population for the study was sixty (60). The researcher was keen to obtain interviews with a representative group from NMCs across all four regions. An overview of the objectives for the size and makeup of the survey’s group, together with the actual achievements are outlined in table 3.1 below.
### Table 3.1: Criteria for survey participant selection with justification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size of group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Obtain a representative number of survey respondents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are 60 NMC’s in EMEA LA. Survey with 28 of the 60 markets represents a 47% sample. (n.b. Some markets were not approached to participate as a result of an organisational request. Refer to Appendix IV)</td>
<td>Of key importance was to obtain a group number of sufficient size to receive redundant data (Nair &amp; Reige 1995). This was achieved after a relatively small number of interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic/Cultural representation</strong></td>
<td>Representation as follows:</td>
<td>It was important that the survey group included respondents from across all regions and from a range of cultural perspectives to have credibility inside the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WE 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CESE 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEA 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LA 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Representation</strong></td>
<td>Representation as follows:</td>
<td>This gender split closely reflects the ratio within the total NMC population in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detail on the validity of the group size is provided in Section 3.3.5.

Table 3.2 overleaf lists all roles interviewed and provides details of interviewee, region, gender and ethnic origin of respondent. (Appendix X provides a list of the names of the persons interviewed for the study.)
Table 3.2: List of details of survey respondents by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Role Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Arg./Ital</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Aus.</td>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BENELUX</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Belg</td>
<td>Director Sales &amp; Business Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BENELUX</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Belg</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BENELUX</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Account Director, Director Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Brzl</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CWA</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Ecuador/Brasilian</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fin</td>
<td>Sales Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dane</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Spnsh</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Israeli</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Morocc</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>GM, Deputy GM and Training manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Parag</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Deputy GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Scandinavia</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Norweg</td>
<td>Sales Dir-Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Germ/SA</td>
<td>GM, Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tunisian</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>GM/Sales Dir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>CESE</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>GM &amp; Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Zim</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.5 Methodological Validity of Makeup of sample

The researcher had two main objectives for the makeup and size of the survey sample. Firstly, it was the researcher’s objective to seek as large a sample as possible within the total identified population because of the organisation’s objective for using the survey process itself, to prompt the NMCs’ interest in best practices from other markets. Thus from the organisation’s point of view, the higher the sample size the better.

Secondly and more importantly from a research perspective, it was imperative to ensure that the group size and composition provided a valid window for data gathering. It is submitted that based on their deep knowledge of the organisation, the group size of 28 more than sufficiently achieved this. Nair and Reige (1995) provide support for this view by suggesting that the group size is sufficient when redundant data begins to emerge. This was the case for this study with redundant data appearing after ten interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 235) state that ‘it is usual to find that a dozen or so interviews, if properly selected, will exhaust most available information’. Patton (1990, pp. 184-185) believes that for qualitative inquiry there are no rules for sample size believing that:

‘... it depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources … The validity, meaningfulness and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the cases selected and the observation/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size.’

With consideration for the comments made by Patton (1990), the researcher can affirm that the higher the number of interviews obtained across a representation of all regions, the more credible the outcomes not only to the identified population, but also to the client organisation. From a quality perspective, a smaller size would probably have provided enough representativeness and information richness to answer the study’s three research questions, and would have met the criteria for being of sufficient size to produce redundant data as suggested by Nair and Reige (1995).
Perry and Coote (1994) mention the value in conducting interviews at different hierarchical levels of a network of relationships. In the present study, interviews were undertaken at two levels, i.e. General Manager and/or direct report such as Sales Director, although there were not expected to be differences in the results reported based upon the managerial level of the respondent.

With consideration for all the views stated above and with consideration for the nature of the target population, there appears to be ample justification for the respondent group size obtained for this study.

The data collection methods that were considered and applied in this study will now be outlined in Section 3.4.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

As was mentioned previously, a case method was chosen for this study. There are many data collection methods available within a case study methodology. The data gathering methods which were used in this study will now be described, together with the alternative methods considered but not selected.

#### 3.4.1 Overview of Methods Considered

**3.4.1.1 The Questionnaire**

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1999) assert that the questionnaire is one of the most widely used survey data collection techniques. This is because it is an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample. Given that the nature of the information to be collected related to an individual's experiences and perspectives on knowledge transfer, a questionnaire used within an interview, was deemed to be the most appropriate data collection tool available for this study. A more detailed explanation on the considerations for, and steps involved in designing the survey are provided in Section 3.4.4.1.
Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran (2001, p. 137) assert that the most common data collection methods used are interviewing, focus groups and observation. A brief description of each is provided below.

### 3.4.1.2 Interviews

Interviews provide a unique opportunity to uncover rich and complex information for an individual. The face-to-face interview can, under the guidance of an experienced interviewer, encourage the interviewee to share intrinsic opinions and to dredge previously un-thought of memories from the unconscious. (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2000, p. 138).

Minichello et al (1992, p. 101) believe that in-depth interviews, including structured interviews, are particularly appropriate for theory-building methodologies as is the case with this study. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face, via video-conference or by telephone.

### 3.4.1.3 Focus Groups

The focus group method is a research technique that collects information through group interaction. (Morgan 1997, cited in Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2000, p. 153). Morgan points out that the focus group provides direct and immediate evidence about similarities and differences in participants' opinions and experiences, as opposed to reaching some conclusions from post hoc analysis of separate statements from each interviewee.

### 3.4.1.4 Observational Studies

Observational studies involve observing people in a natural work environment or in a lab setting with their activities and behaviours recorded. These studies provide the opportunity to observe their activities, movements, work habits, emotions and body language. (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran 2000, p. 159).
3.4.2 Methods Rejected

A number of methods were considered appropriate for the nature of this study, but were rejected for reasons including geographic spread, practicality, cost and/or lack of suitability. These methods included:

- Individual (face-to-face) interviews with the key participants from markets participating in the best practice program; and
- Focus Groups.

All of the participants within the best practices program were physically resident within their country/market. They visited Nice in France, (the location for the researcher) on average twice a year. Thus the window of opportunity to undertake this study on a face to face basis through individual interviews or focus groups was very small. Additionally, the cost of the researcher flying to each of the markets participating in the program was prohibitive.

The focus group approach was also rejected because the nature of the information that was being sought, did not relate to a group’s experiences of a phenomena, but rather to the individual’s experience. Therefore a collective meeting was not considered of value in terms of the study’s objectives.

3.4.3 Methods Selected

As was mentioned previously, the principal data-gathering tool selected for this study was a survey interview conducted by telephone. A structured interview as defined by Kvale (1983, p. 174) is:

‘an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena.’
Neuman (1994) asserts that semi-structured interviews have the highest response rates of all research methods, permit the longest questionnaires and allow the interviewer a vast array of questioning techniques. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1999) comment that questionnaires provide an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample prior to analysis. Within a semi-structured interview it is appropriate to utilise a questionnaire to guide discussions.

For this study, it was beneficial that the researcher personally knew many of the respondents to the survey and had insights into the sales and marketing challenges within their markets. This was believed to have a positive impact on participant disclosure, and enabled the interviewer to undertake informed probing in response to statements made. More on the credibility of the researched is provided in Section 3.6 – Ensuring Case Study Quality.

The interview data were also supplemented by secondary data sources including:

- feedback questionnaires from best practice forums;
- intranet usage statistics;
- commitment sheets from best practice forums; and from
- interviews with staff in the central organisation.

Additionally, the researcher had had the opportunity to observe many of the survey respondents over the previous two years as they participated in Best Practice Forums. An overview of the principal and secondary data collection methods used in the case study are outlined in Table 3.3 below. For each method, a purpose is identified and the relevant research questions noted.
Table 3.3: Overview of data methods employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Method</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured telephone interviews with NMC staff</td>
<td>Seek feedback about distribution mechanisms for best practice transfer program.</td>
<td>1. By what means is knowledge transferred?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify barriers to implementation</td>
<td>2. What factors impact on knowledge transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek evidence of implementation</td>
<td>3. What are the indicators of knowledge transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Observe interest in practices from other markets</td>
<td>1. By what means is knowledge transferred?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify barriers to considering practices from other markets</td>
<td>2. What factors impact on knowledge transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What are the indicators of knowledge transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face interviews with Central Staff</td>
<td>Identify markets to be precluded from survey</td>
<td>2. What factors impact on knowledge transfer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obtain perception of motivation of GM’s and key issues in markets</td>
<td>(Motivation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review intranet usage statistics</td>
<td>Evaluate effectiveness of technology as distribution mechanism</td>
<td>1. By what means is knowledge transferred?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, four data collection methods were employed in this study, including:

- telephone interviews utilising a structured survey instrument, but with opportunity for probing and for opportunistic data collection;
- observation of best practice forums together with commitment report;
- face-to-face interviews with staff in central organisation; and
- review of intranet usage statistics.

Of these four, the telephone interview was the richest data collection process employed. A description of each method used is provided below.
3.4.4 Primary Case Study Instrument – Telephone Interview

This section describes the process for developing the survey questionnaire used for the telephone interview with NMCs. This process is represented in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3: Overview of process for developing survey instrument

Two key factors were taken into consideration in the design of the survey (as shown in Figure 3.3). These factors were: the research questions themselves; along with the client’s objectives for the survey. These processes are described in greater detail overleaf.

3.4.4.1 Development of Questionnaire

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1999) warn researchers that, ‘it is far harder to produce a good questionnaire than one might think’. They cite several authors including Bell (1999) and Oppenheim (1992) to support this view. They suggest that response rates, validity and reliability can be maximised by:

- Careful design of individual questions
- Clear layout of the questionnaire form
- Lucid explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire and
- Pilot testing
These points were taken into consideration by the researcher in the design of the survey questionnaire. The questions that were included in this questionnaire were developed directly from the extant literature presented in Chapter Two, with consideration for the knowledge management processes that had been established in the case study site. (A copy of the study site’s knowledge management process is included in Appendix VI.) Additionally, the client organisation had its own objectives for the survey which were incorporated into the questionnaire design. Their main objective was to use the survey process itself, to communicate and promote best practices from other markets. There were eight key areas explored in the interview with regard to knowledge transfer.

These areas included:

- Best Practice documentation
- Best Practice Intranet
- Best Practice monthly email newsletter
- Best Practice forums
- Seeking input on Other mechanisms for sharing knowledge
- How they heard about best practices/How they like to hear about best practices
- Probing their markets best practices
- Obtaining evidence of knowledge transfer & creation

Barriers to implementation were identified through responses in each question block.

These areas are categorised against each of the research questions in Table 3.4.
Table 3.4: Summary of interview question areas by research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1</th>
<th>Research Question 2</th>
<th>Research Question 3</th>
<th>Org objective for communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution &amp; Communication</td>
<td>What factors impact on knowledge transfer</td>
<td>Indicators of K Transfer</td>
<td>Prompting their participation/interest in program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Documentation</td>
<td>Various questions prompt for information on budget/resource</td>
<td>Using commitment sheets as starting point</td>
<td>Do you have best practices which could be shared?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intranet</td>
<td>constraints, lack of information, cultural biases, other</td>
<td>– seek evidence of transfer, creation and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Newsletter</td>
<td>differences between markets, other reasons for non</td>
<td>impact on business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forums</td>
<td>implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Four options offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do they like to hear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about practices from other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>markets?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A justification for each of the questions asked in the interview with consideration for the objectives is provided in Appendix V.

Many factors need to be considered in the design and structure of questions. Emory and Cooper (1991, pp. 356-359) propose four criteria for assessing whether or not a question should be included in a surveying instrument. These criteria are:

- Should the question be asked?
- Is the question of proper scope?
- Can the respondent answer adequately? and
- Will the respondent answer willingly?

The survey questions in this study were specifically designed with consideration for these points, and in such a way so as not to be leading. This would help to ensure the effects of bias were minimised. (Emory & Cooper, 1991; Neuman, 1994). All questions were placed in an appropriate order with consideration for logical sequencing. According to Emory and
Cooper (1991, p. 370), sequencing is dependent upon the nature of the group being tested. As a guide, they recommend that:

- The question process must quickly awaken interest and motivate the respondent to participate in the interview;
- The respondent should not be confronted by early requests for information that might be considered personal or ego threatening;
- The questioning process should begin with simple items and move to the more complex, and from general items to the more specific. This funnelling technique was also recommended by Minichiello et al 1992; and
- Changes in frame of reference should be minimal and should be clearly pointed out.

A stem query structure was used for each of the question groups within the survey. The stem introduced the topic in general terms, before actually asking the interviewee the question. This technique was used to orient the interviewee to the particular topic and helped improve the information generated in each question.

An introductory script was included at the start of the guide along with other notes throughout the form for the interviewer, to smooth the passage of the interview. This document is often called an interview guide and is a separate document to the interview itself. For this study, the interview guide was incorporated into the questionnaire.

As a final check to ensure that the questionnaire followed both a logical structure and that the questions were not worded in such a way as to bias the results, the survey was checked by a Senior Manager from the client organisation. Using a third party to verify the instrument is an approach recommended by Zima (1991). The instrument was then pilot tested to assess its ‘workability.’ This process is described in the following section.
3.4.4.2 Pilot Testing of Questionnaire

Pilot testing is an important step to be undertaken prior to the commencement of the conduct of the survey. It allows the questionnaire to be tested and refined and can confirm that there will be no problems in recording data. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 1999). In addition, it will enable the researcher to obtain some assessment of the questions validity and the likely reliability of the data which will be collected.

The questionnaire used in the this survey was tested in a face to face interview with a General Manager (GM) from a European NMC who was visiting the Nice office. This interview revealed a need to re-sequence some of the questions and to provide additional guiding instructions for the interviewer for when the respondent hadn’t participated in a particular aspect of the best practices program. With these changes made, the telephone interview survey could commence.

3.4.4.3 Interview Methodology

The survey was conducted by telephone with senior staff, i.e either the GM or Sales Director, from twenty eight (28) European and Latin American markets. In total, thirty one (31) interviews were conducted with thirty six (36) persons. Some interviews had two or three participants from the same market, e.g. Pakistan and Ukraine. For other markets, it was possible to interview several persons within the sales organisation including the General Manager.  This was the case for the BENELUX NMC which included Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg.  The interviews were undertaken over a three-month period from July to September 2002.

Given the large numbers of markets to be interviewed, assistance with the interviewing was provided by a student working in the best practices team. In total, the student called Mary Lovelock, undertook 8 of the 31 interviews. The student was a final year Bachelor of Business student who had had an active involvement in the best practices program. Additionally, they were researching their own thesis on the subject of ‘Knowledge Management: importance of people versus technology’. They conducted their interviews
with markets with whom they had an existing relationship in order to leverage the degree of openness, credibility and trust which comes from this situation. Their involvement in the study also contributed positively to quality control. This was because having two researchers undertaking data collection and analysis activities, greatly reduced the opportunity for systematic bias. Prior to the interviewing phase, guidance was provided on interviewing technique and the first few interviews were monitored to ensure the quality of approach.

Telephone interviews typically lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The length of time taken for the interview was in direct relationship to the level of survey participant’s involvement with, and connection to the best practice program. For example, some participants had had extensive exposure to the program, having participated in a best practice forum and were a regular visitor to the programs intranet site. At the other end of the scale, some participants had never attended a forum, read a best practice paper or looked at the web site.

Throughout the interview, each interviewer applied skills in active listening, reflecting responses, paraphrasing and probing to encourage a rich and fruitful discussion, and an accurate understanding of what was disclosed (Seidman 1998). An interview plan was developed to ensure the quality and consistency of the exchanges, although opportunistic exploration of issues was allowed. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix IX.

The answer collection sheet for the survey was completed during the interview. (A copy of this document is provided as Appendix IV). After the interview, the hand-written notes on this sheet were immediately entered into an Excel spreadsheet to aid in analysis, and impressions were noted in the researchers Personal Log Word document. More information on the use of the Personal Log is provided in Appendix X)
3.4.4.4 Overview of Processes

The ten key steps involved in the design, communication and conduct of the survey are summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Key Steps in design, communication and implementation of case study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Objectives clarified</strong> for survey with organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>Survey designed</strong> with consideration for research questions and client organisation objectives. Survey verified by third party.</td>
<td>Justification for question selection and order is provided in Appendix V. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Communication begins</strong> with central organisation by email to inform them of objectives for and timing of survey. Presentations were additionally made at team meetings with same objectives. Central team was asked if they wished to exclude any markets from survey</td>
<td>A list of those markets excluded from survey is provided in Appendix VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Individual meetings held</strong> with PMMs and MM’s. Feedback sought on motivation of GM and any market peculiarities/challenges. Draft survey design also explained and discussed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Pilot testing of Survey.</strong> Small changes made to sequencing and interview guide as a result of pilot test.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>Communication commences with NMC’s via email</strong></td>
<td>A copy of this initial email is provided in Appendix II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Interviews arranged</strong> with those markets responding to email. Telephone follow-up calls are made to all other markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>Interviews Conducted by phone.</strong> The answer collection sheet for the survey was completed during the interview. After the interview, the hand-written notes were immediately entered into an Excel spreadsheet to aid in analysis and impressions were noted in a Personal log word document. A thank you email was also sent to the survey participant.</td>
<td>More information on the interview methodology is provided in Section IX. More information on the Personal Log is provided in Appendix X.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>Results Analysed</strong> All data collected via interviews, observation, from intranet usage statistics and from reports of commitments made and action taken was analysed at this stage.</td>
<td>The process used for analysing the information collected is described in Section 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Findings and conclusions documented. <strong>Results communicated</strong> to central organisation &amp; NMCs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the process for the conduct of the structured interview now described, it is appropriate to turn attention to the study’s secondary data sources.

3.4.4.5 Secondary Data Sources

Observations

Best Practice Forums were the main structured face-to-face forum for sharing of best practices between markets. The forums were run by region. There were four regions with the Europe Middle East & African and Latin American group. These regions were

- Western Europe (WE)
- Central Eastern & Southern Europe (CESE)
- Middle East and Africa (MEA)
- Latin America (LA)

The forums were facilitated by the researcher who was in an ideal position to observe the behaviour of participants in discussing, debating and committing to adopt best practices from other markets. These behaviours indicated at a basic level the willingness of a Manager to change, and more specifically to consider implementing a practice from another market.

The researcher recognises that the process of observation during the forums was not undertaken in a rigorous way as required by standard research methodology (Emory & Cooper 1991, p. 403). This was because the need to observe behaviour in a structured way was not recognised as important prior to the conduct of the forum. Accordingly, a limitation of this approach was that the process did not include pre-thinking or pre-planning regarding which behaviours to specifically look for, nor was there any systematic note-taking during the forum. Results from the observation process have therefore been based on the memory recall of the researcher. The negative impact of the time lag on
memory recall is noted. However, it must be recorded that the researcher did give consideration to not including their observations as a secondary data source at all. They changed their mind when they realised that not noting the impact of these observations, would in itself be a form of bias as it has influenced the way they analysed the results.

**Face to Face Interview with Central Staff**

Within the central organisation, there were a number of positions which worked directly with the managers of the markets on a day to day basis. These roles, which included Product Market Managers (PMMs) and Market Managers (MMs), were in an excellent position to provide insight into the typical behaviour and motivation of the General Manager in response to new ideas and challenges in their marketplace. This contextual interview was extremely valuable to the researchers in testing the framing of the questions for the interviews with NMCs.

This meeting also provided the opportunity for the PMM or MM to veto some markets’ inclusion in the survey. This action was both practical and politically necessary. This action impacted the size of the population from which to invite participation in the study – but was not considered to be significant.

A copy of the questions posed to central staff is provided on the first page of the survey provided in Appendix III. All notes taken during this meeting were immediately transposed on to an answer collection sheet which was later entered into an excel spreadsheet.

A number of secondary data sources were also accessed as a part of the case study. These sources included:
• **Commitment reports** which were generated by best practice forums. These documents captured details of a market's interest in adopting a practice from another market. Six months after the first best practice forum was held, these documents were updated to reflect the actions taken, and any problems experienced by the market in actioning the commitments they made; and

• **Intranet usage statistics.** All respondents to the survey were asked what was their typical visitation number to the best practice intranet site. This information was cross-referenced against usage statistics from the intranet. It provided useful information in terms of the gap between fact and opinion.

**3.4.4.6 Summary of Data Collection methods**

In summary, four data collection methods were used to collect the data required to answer the study’s three research questions. The methods selected were guided by the research on methodological justification. As a part of the selection process, alternative methods were considered and reasons for their rejection proffered.

The four data gathering methods used are summarised in the Figure 3.4 below. A discussion of the data analysis and interpretation methods used for this study are presented in Section 3.5.
3.5 Data Analysis

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1999) believe that during the data interpretation phase, the researcher is in the greatest danger in terms of logical leaps and false assumptions. It is therefore important to take a number of actions to ensure the quality of the information collected.

One of the first actions is that the researcher creates a full record of the interview soon after its occurrence in order to control bias and to produce reliable data for analysis. To ensure 100% accuracy of capture of information, a tape recorder was considered for the telephone interview but rejected. While there are many advantages to using a tape recorder...
as illustrated in Table 3.5 below, the researchers felt that the overall impact on interviewees openness would adversely affect reliability.

Table 3.5: Advantages and disadvantages of tape recording the interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Allows interviewer to concentrate on questioning and listening</td>
<td>• May adversely affect the relationship between interviewee and interviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows questions formulated at an interview to be accurately recorded</td>
<td>(possibility of ‘focusing’ on the recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for use in later interviews where appropriate</td>
<td>• May inhibit some interviewee responses and reduce reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can re-listen to the interview</td>
<td>• Possibility of a technical problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accurate and unbiased record provided</td>
<td>• Disruption to discussion when changing tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows direct quotes to be used</td>
<td>• Time required to transcribe the tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Permanent record for others to use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that all interviews were not tape recorder, care and attention was paid to accurately transcribing interviewee comments. Immediately after the interview, these notes were input into an excel spreadsheet and a Personal Log word document. More details on the personal log are provided in Appendix X.

After all interviews were completed and all information entered into the various electronic packages, the responses to each questions were analysed. In the first instance this involved identifying the number of similar responses to each question. This is what Guba (1994) calls ‘looking for recurring regularities’. These regularities represent patterns, which can then be sorted into categories. These categories or themes display internal and/or external homogeneity. ‘Internal homogeneity’ relates to the extent to which the
data which to a certain category holds together in a meaningful way, while ‘external homogeneity’ is related to the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear. Gall cited in Leedy (1997, pp. 158-166) suggests a similar approach by suggesting that researchers undertake:

- Interpretational analysis: examining data for constructs, themes and patterns that explain phenomena;
- Structural Analysis: Searching for patterns in the data with little or no inference as to the meaning of the pattern; and
- Reflective analysis: using intuition and judgement to evaluate the phenomena.

On this last point Beard and Easingwood (1989, p. 3) make the following interesting comment that ‘the process of grounded theory development is… a potential quagmire of subjectivity and intuition.’

Findings from this analysis are discussed in Chapters four, five and six. In the next section, additional measures employed to ensure the soundness of the case study analysis will be described.

### 3.6 Ensuring Case Study Quality

Some of the limitations of case study research as was discussed in Section 3.3.2, relate to the requirements of research to conform to the constructs of validity and reliability. Emory and Cooper (1991 p. 180) define ‘validity’ as the extent to which differences found with a measuring tool reflect true differences among those being tested while Neuman (1994, p. 127) defines reliability involves a construct giving the same result each time it is administered. Davidson (2002) is of the opinion that positivist paradigms have elevated questions of validity and reliability to central importance in research.
It is generally recognised that it is easier to ensure the quality of a quantitative research approach than a qualitative one. While there are some challenges in achieving this objective, guidelines and processes have been provided by a number of methodological experts including Eisenhardt (1989), Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 262), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Patton (1990), Silverman (1993) and Yin (1994) to aid the researcher here.

Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed a number of criteria to ensure the highest possible reliability and validity. An explanation of the criteria and an assessment of this study’s processes against some of this criteria is provided in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6: Comparison of Validity and Reliability Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>How achieved in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checking for Researcher Effects on the Case and vice versa</td>
<td>Having two researchers limited the potential for systematic bias. Additionally, clear objectives were stated and use of an interview questionnaire and plan provided a level of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation – multiple methods, multiple investigators, data triangulation</td>
<td>Triangulation was achieved through the use of different interviewers and through the use of multiple data collection methods such as survey, observation and review of intranet statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Extreme Cases</td>
<td>Extreme cases were used to analyse the findings. The extreme cases existed for those markets which had achieved exceptional levels of knowledge transfer. The researcher was keen to understand the conditions which created this situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Feedback from Informants</td>
<td>The interviewer used paraphrasing during the interview to confirm that they had understood the point made by the interviewee, and provided opportunity for additional comments to be made throughout. Additionally a summary of the major findings was sent back to all survey respondents, and a presentation of key findings made to the organisations central staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yin (1994, p. 3) asserts that construct validity requires use of multiple sources of data with key informants; internal validity requires pattern matching and explanation building in the data analysis phase; external validity is facilitated through replication logic in interviews; and reliability is demonstrated by using a case study protocol and data base in the data collection phase of the study. Those recommendations referred to by Yin, which were incorporated in this approach which have not been referred to previously include use of a database and other electronic tools for capturing all information and impressions.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a range of controls to ensure the credibility, transferability and dependability of the research process. These controls include:

- Using in-depth descriptors which show the complexities of variables and interactions;
- Stating theoretical setting and population parameters;
- Identifying the theoretical parameters of the research;
- Accounting for the changing conditions in the phenomenon under study;
- Accounting for the changes in design which reflect understanding of the setting; and
- Showing the links between the data and the general findings and implications

Eisenhardt (1989) makes a valuable contribution to the discussion by outlining three tests that can be applied to ensure case study quality. These tests are that the researcher should:

1. Demonstrate strength of method and evidence grounding the theory;
2. Produce good theory which emerges at the end – and not the beginning of the research. (Good theory as defined by Pfeffer (1982) comprises parsimony, testability and logical coherence); and
3. Reveal new insights from the new theory.

It is proposed that their overall approach and research outcomes provide clear evidence that each of these tests have been met for this research project.
Having reviewed the literatures recommendations for steps to ensure quality in a case study project, the researcher feels confident that they have employed sufficient checks and balances to ensure the rigor of the processes used in collecting and analysing the data.

Mishler (1991) makes a point worthy of note on the importance of remembering that qualitative research has as an objective the discovery of human perspectives, thought and behaviours. Therefore the criteria of trustworthiness is particularly appropriate including: (1) truth value or credibility, (2) applicability, or transferability, (3) consistency, or dependability (4) neutrality, or confirmability (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Perry 1999). This point emphasises the importance of the credibility of the researcher. Further comment in this area is provided in Section 3.6.1 overleaf.

### 3.6.1 Credibility of the Researcher

The credibility of the researcher is particularly important in qualitative research projects (Patton 1990). The investigator is in effect the research instrument, with all the potential strengths and weaknesses which relate to the application of a research instrument (Davidson 2002). Sources of error and bias will therefore include predispositions or prejudices against certain types of ‘data’ and changes in the evaluator as the study progresses (instrumentation effects), as well as straightforward interpersonal incompetence.

The principal researcher was a white Australian female with the assistant researcher being a white, English female. Both researchers recognise the impact that our Anglo-Saxon socialisation and all the biases inherent within it, may have on the way in which we interpret the findings from the study, particularly with regard to the impact of culture on knowledge transfer.
The impact of the researchers’ insider role within the study site on the respondents’ answers needs to be recognised at this stage. There were two factors impacting in this area. Being well known to the survey respondents, and having been the designers of the knowledge transfer process, it was recognised that there was potential for respondents to frame all questions positively so as not to offend the researchers. There was potential evidence of this in the gap that was observed between how often respondents said they accessed the intranet and how often the usage statistics indicated that they did. While the data triangulation method used will help to alleviate this situation, it is recognised that this potential ‘positive bias’ should be taken into consideration in the review of the study’s findings.

From a positive perspective, it needs to be noted at this point that the researchers’ deep knowledge of the organisation, best practices program and close relationship with the respondents to the survey, allowed them to ask informed follow-up questions during the interview. This action would have a positive impact on the quality of the data collection process.

### 3.7 Ethical Issues

In undertaking research involving human subjects consideration must be given to the ethical nature of their treatment. Cooper and Emory state that ‘responsible research anticipates ethical dilemmas and attempts to adjust the design, procedures and protocols during the planning process rather than treating them as an afterthought (Cooper & Emory 1995, pp. 97-98). Fontana and Frey (1994) comment that when humans are the ‘objects of inquiry’ in interviewing, extreme care must be taken to ensure that they are free from harm, either in the form of injury or emotional discomfort.
Those steps taken to protect the respondents to the interview included:

- Inviting participation in the survey, as opposed to mandating it;
- Asking all respondents the same question and treating all respondents in the same manner throughout the research project;
- Asking for their permission to cite them directly for certain comments that they made;
- Not citing them or making them personally-identifiable for all other comments made;
- Reporting back to them the key findings from the survey.

### 3.8 Conclusions: Summary Research Questions and Methodology

This Chapter has outlined the research methodology that was applied to enable the development of responses to the study’s three research questions. More specifically it justified why a case study approach was adopted, and clearly identified the research challenges inherent within this type of approach. Some of these challenges related to ensuring validity and reliability and relate directly to the credibility of the researcher.

With the research methodology described and justified, attention can now be turned to examining the study’s finding. These are outlined in the following three chapters.
CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION - MECHANISMS FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

In chapter two, three research questions were identified for further investigation from gaps in the existing literature on knowledge management. These questions were:

1. **By what means is knowledge transferred across countries and cultures?**
2. **What factors impact on knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?**
3. **What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?**

This chapter presents the study’s findings related to the first of the three research questions, i.e. by what means knowledge is transferred. Chapters Five and Six, report the results in relation to the other two research questions respectively. Chapter Seven draws conclusions from this study, compares the findings to previous research outcomes and describes new models or theories emerging from the findings.

Within the study site for this project, there were three main mechanisms for distributing best practices across countries. These were:

- **Via Documentation.** In a written format via a one page best practice summary or ‘snapshot’, and in a more detailed written format, with a case study or ‘How to do it’. Documentation was distributed in paper format and on CD;
- **Via Technology.** There were two technological components. These were the company’s intranet site called OPERA – which had an area dedicated to hosting documentation on best practices, and a newsletter which was distributed via email each month. The newsletter summarised all recently posted best practice papers and had automatic links to OPERA.
- **Via face to face channels.** The principal face-to-face channel was best practice forums. Other face to face distribution channels included the Knowledge Manager
describing the practice at a regional meeting or another member of the central team discussing the practice directly with the NMC.

The findings with the regard to the effectiveness of each of these distribution and communication channels are outlined in Section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 respectively as is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Knowledge transfer mechanisms at case study site

![Knowledge transfer mechanisms at case study site](image)

4.1 Documentation

Questions one through nine in part one of the questionnaire, relate to the respondents feedback on the best practices documentation. As a first step, it was established whether or not the respondent had read the documentation. Then, the next set of questions sought feedback on the quality and usability of the best practices documentation. The respondents’ responses are summarised in Table 4.1 below.
As shown in Table 4.1, around 60% of respondents had read at least one of the documents. Of this population, there was widespread agreement that the documentation was easy to read, with useful content, and with enough detail to implement. These points are reflected in the following comments from interviewees:

‘The documents were excellent…’ (MEA - 22)
‘Light, basic, easy to implement with the right level of detail’ (CESE - 12)
‘Liked the NMC context area and the Do’s and Don’ts’ (CESE - 25)
‘Liked the fact that they provided contact details’ (WE - 21)
‘Are very detailed…was perfect’ (WE - 2)
‘Liked the fact that you could read the snapshot to get a feel for the paper and then make the decision as to whether or not to read the ‘how to do it.’ (WE – 10)

One market made an interesting comment about reading a best practice paper on paper versus on the screen:

‘Written documentation is essential, as it is easier to share. I prefer reading a paper document to an electronic one on my notebook. However written documentation does not replace face-to-face knowledge sharing’ (MEA – 22)

While the negative comments about the documentation were in the minority, the feedback in this area and suggestions for improvement, were very note worthy. Some of these comments related to language, with the use of English clearly being an issue for some
markets. One respondent from a French speaking market (MEA - 24), commented that the documents were too difficult to read and he would have preferred them to have been written in French. One respondent from a Spanish speaking market had already taken steps to have the best practices presented in Spanish at local team meetings. They commented that while their English was at a level sufficient for understanding the documentation in English, they knew that this was not the case for their staff (LA – 1). Translation into Spanish would therefore be appreciated. This point was supported by another Latin American NMC (LA - 8) who commented that while she could understand the practice in English, it was much easier for her in Spanish. Another respondent commented that the level of English used, was simply ‘too complex’, and another remarked that they would like the ‘how-to-do-it’ papers to be ‘less long-winded’. These comments were particularly interesting in light of the fact that special attention had been directed to writing the papers with simple English.

Another observation from the survey related to a markets desire to chose papers to review based on perceived similarities between markets. Three markets commented that when looking at the best practices it was important to choose those papers from markets very similar to their own in terms of maturity, size and culture. These points are illustrated in the following comments:

‘How mature the market is of the best practice, determines its relevance to us’ (WE – 26)

‘Because of our unique environment, many of the practices are not so useful’ (MEA – 16)

‘I couldn’t relate to the practices from Brazil and Argentina because their markets were too big’ (MEA – 9)

These factors which clearly impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer will be discussed in Chapter Five.
4.1.1 Most popular papers

All interviewees were asked which papers were of most interest to them. Summaries of responses in this area are provided in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Summary of Most Popular Best Practice Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Which markets?</th>
<th>Number expressing interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavia</td>
<td>Manage Key accounts effectively</td>
<td>Greece, Turkey, Ghana, Belgium, Finland, Germany</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Developing effective marketing actions around customer segments</td>
<td>Greece, Argentina, Ghana, Germany, South Africa</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean &amp; Central America</td>
<td>Convert Sabre customers through a high quality blitz</td>
<td>CWA, BENELUX, South Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean &amp; Central America</td>
<td>Save at risk customers through a pro-active customer service blitz</td>
<td>Greece, Morocco, South Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Acquire a top customer through partnership</td>
<td>Argentina, CWA, Scandinavia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Optimise your participation at a trade fair</td>
<td>Greece, Turkey</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Cost effective and creative communication activities for a successful product launch</td>
<td>Greece, Ghana</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>How to effectively enter a new market through a SWOT analysis</td>
<td>Malta, CWA,</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Acquire a major account by uncovering real needs</td>
<td>CWA, Ghana</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCANDIN AVIA</td>
<td>Locking in your customers through development funding</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Client conversion Program</td>
<td>Scandinavia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Cost effective way to serve customers through E-Learning</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Increase customer share through needs assessment</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Using a consolidator customer as a reseller of Pro-web for mutual gain</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 4.2, the two most popular papers came from Western Europe and from two mature markets. The Scandinavian experience in managing key accounts was the most popular paper with the Swiss, Marketing Strategy being the second most popular. Those markets interested in these practices came from across all regions.

4.1.2 Support Requirements in Implementing Best Practices

Questions 10, 11, and 12 in the questionnaire then asked survey respondents if they needed any additional support such as people, budget or more information to implement any of the best practices that they had expressed interest in. Six markets indicated that they would need further assistance in terms of people and/or budget, with seven markets requesting more information. Responses to these questions are provided in Table 4.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Support Type</th>
<th>Markets</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People or Budget ?</td>
<td>CIS, CWA, Ghana, Malta, Peru, Netherlands</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information ?</td>
<td>CIS, CWA, Ghana, Malta, Peru, Pakistan, Greece</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth noting from Table 4.3, that requests for support generally came from the smallest and least mature markets. These markets would have fewer resources than their larger counterparts. In terms of anything else that could be provided to support the markets in implementing the practice i.e. Question 12, one interviewee responded as follows:

‘We need more frequent meetings…to discuss practices’ (LA - 19)

These comments will also be revisited in Chapter Five when factors impacting on knowledge transfer are examined.
4.2 Technology

There were two data sources accessed for exploring the impact of technology on knowledge distribution at the study site. These were intranet usage statistics together with feedback from the questionnaire. Two separate elements of the technology strategy were examined. These were the intranet site within ‘OPERA’, and the monthly electronic newsletter. These findings are discussed in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 respectively.

4.2.1 Intranet Site in OPERA

Part two of the questionnaire specifically sought feedback on the effectiveness of the company’s intranet, ‘Opera’. Questions 14 through 18 covered areas including:

- Ease of Access
- Effectiveness of intranet as a communication and distribution mechanism
- Frequency of Access

This information was combined with and compared to information obtained directly from the statistical reports from the intranet.

Table 4.4 indicates that most respondents, i.e. 68%, thought that intranet was an effective way to communicate best practices, although the current technology did not make it easy to access with only 36% of respondents saying that it was easy to access. Three respondents commented that they were unable to access the site altogether.
4.2.1.1 Ease of Access and Effectiveness

Table 4.4: Summary of responses: easy of access and effectiveness of intranet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Easy to Access</th>
<th>Is Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/But</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the comments made by respondents about the intranet were as follows:

‘Is a logical tool’ (MEA – 22)

‘Is a most effective communication tool that helps streamline the information flow and provides benchmarking options and awareness to changes happening in different parts of the world. In times of globalization this tool is what we need to have’. (CESE – 12)

‘Normally OPERA should be the perfect instrument. But I am always disappointed (speed/access)’ (WE – 2)

4.2.1.2 Frequency of Access

From the survey, forty percent of respondents i.e. 11 persons indicated that they accessed the intranet on a regular basis, i.e. weekly or monthly. A review of monthly intranet statistics from October 2001 until July 2003 revealed that regular access to the site was actually lower than that reported at 25%. This gap between fact and opinion could be attributed to an honest perception that they do access the site more frequently than they do, or from a desire to please the interviewer. Comments on the potential impact of bias resulting from the survey respondents knowing the interviewer have already been made in Chapter Three is this area.
Table 4.5: Summary of Access frequency for Intranet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Access</th>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Intranet Stats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly/Weekly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 20% of respondents who had not yet looked at the intranet provided reasons including:

- ‘I’m new - not done it yet’ (MEA – 9)
- ‘Too busy’ (LA –5 & WE – 26)
- ‘Don’t read info on PC’ (WE – 3)

These factors are of interest and clearly need to be taken into consideration in the design of a distribution and communication strategy.

The intranet statistics revealed that the top four markets accessing the site, (by a long way) were:
1. Finland – (WE)
2. Argentina – (LA)
3. Pakistan – (MEA)
4. Malta – (CESE)

Clearly some markets have better speed of access and/or are more comfortable with this form of knowledge transfer than others.
4.2.2 Newsletter

Questions 19 and 20 sought feedback on the effectiveness of the monthly electronic newsletter as a communication tool. Question nineteen checked to see that the respondent did actually receive the newsletter. Eight Two percent i.e. 25 of all respondents, received the monthly newsletter, fourteen percent (4) did not, (and were subsequently added to the mailing list) and one respondent received it, but never read it. These points are presented in Table 4.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received newsletter and read it</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive newsletter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received newsletter but did not read it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments about the newsletter were generally positive as is reflected in the following remark:

‘Like the fact that we filter info through our newsletter’ (MEA – 22)

4.2.3 Improvements to Technology

Question 18 sought feedback on how OPERA could be improved. Respondents provided feedback on the monthly newsletter and documentation at the same time. This feedback is interesting because it highlights those factors which make a technology distribution and communication channel more effective. A summary of the main recommendations, are provided in Table 4.7 overleaf.
Table 4.7: Summary of Recommendations relating to use of technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>How to Improve OPERA - including comments on Newsletters and Best Practice</th>
<th>No of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Faster Access times</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Translation of materials - Spanish/French</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not aware of search engine - more promotion required.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Want email flashes - announcements when new articles published - to be sent by email</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fewer clicks to get to the information you need/ Subject title must be very clear to minimize clicking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Need to update more regularly</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quicker document downloading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Obtain more content</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>More promotion around the articles/practices - include testimonials from other market</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Include quotes/testimonials in articles - covering what they did - what it did for them - how other NMC's can use this practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Beginning of How to do its - must have 'more selling' - about the value of the practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Twenty Two, sought respondents feedback on potential new services for the future. These services included

- Creation of on-line chat groups
- Provision of more sales tools and guidelines
- Benchmarking – Best practices from other organisations

While there was a level of interest in on-line chat groups (seven respondents expressed interest), there was a level of hesitancy with regard to this new forum as is reflected in the following comment.

‘There must be a driver for the (online) conversations (to work well)’ (MEA – 7)
There was also a level of interest expressed in providing more best-practice sales tools with nine interviewees responding in the affirmative. There were however some caveats to these affirmations as reflected in the following comments:

‘We need more tools tailored for smaller NMCs (CESE - 27)

‘We need the tools to be simpler’ (LA – 19)

While five markets expressed a positive interest in external benchmarking, three markets specifically commented that the value was limited. The reasons for this belief can be identified in the following comments:

‘..it is too difficult to adapt them to our (GDS) environment’ (MEA – 7)

‘..only if they are simple..’ (CESE – 15)

Issues clearly exist with regard to the adaptability and/or transferability of practices from other business environments into their local business context.

A summary of all responses to questions on new technology are outlined in Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Yes but</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-line Chat Groups</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Sales Tools</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Benchmarking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.8, there was a high level of non-responses. This occurred because the researcher did not ask the question as opposed to receiving no response from the interviewee. The decision not to ask these questions occurred if the respondent had had either low involvement in the program to date, or had experience difficulties with
accessing existing technology. It was therefore deemed not appropriate to continue with this line of questions.

4.3 Face-to-Mechanisms

Questions 23, 24, 32, and 33 explored:

- How interviewees heard about best practices from other markets
- How they would like to hear about them in the future
- With which markets they would be most interested in exchanging experiences; and
- How we should run best practice forums in the future.

4.3.1 How Interviewees heard about Best Practices from Other Markets

Table 4.9 below, summarises the responses to the first of these questions.

Table 4.9: How they heard about Best Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Channels</th>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>How did you hear about BPS?</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BP Forums</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera Intranet</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual meeting of all NMCs</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMM/MM – via central staff</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Knowledge Manager</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other NMCs</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through Sales consultancies</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices Booklet</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of replies</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many respondents indicated multiple channels. Face-to-face knowledge mechanisms are rated as the most effective communication channel with 62% or respondents identifying a face-to-face mechanism as the way by which they heard about best practices from other markets. The most frequently cited face-to-face communication channel was the best practice forum. Their popularity is clearly evidenced in respondents’ comments:

‘The most effective way of sharing best practices is through face to face mechanisms…Forums are a good way to brainstorm new ideas’ (MEA – 13)
‘Why are there not more best practice forums now…There is too much talking now at NMC meetings and not enough sharing of experiences’ (CESE – 25)
‘We want more meetings - more opportunities to share experiences with other NMCs’ (LA – 19)
‘I learn a lot about other markets from best practice forums. When Gonzola and Maria are talking - my brain is working/ticking - thinking what can I apply’ (LA – 8)

4.3.2 How they would like to hear about best practices in the future

Table 4.10 shows the preferences expressed for how interviewees wished to hear about best practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Channels</th>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>What are your preferred ways to hear about BPS?</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face Sharing</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP Forums</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera Intranet</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices Booklet</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Knowledge Manager</td>
<td>Face</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videoconference</td>
<td>Face/Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Responses 36 100%
Taking all face-to-face knowledge sharing mechanisms together, 58% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to hear about best practices in the future through these types of channels. One respondent highlighted this point by commenting that ‘direct sharing is the most important.’ Another commented that the best way for them to learn about other practices, is to physically visit the market. They had done this with their entire senior management team.

An interesting point was made about the limitations of technology with two respondents putting caveats on their comments about OPERA by saying that this was a good mechanism ‘if it works’.

4.3.3 Best Practice Forums

From 2000 until 2002, best practice forums were run by region within the markets of Western Europe, Latin America, etc. This was done so that forums could be combined with twice yearly regional meetings, thus achieving objectives of convenience and cost effectiveness. Additionally it was recognised that these communities of markets often had similarities in terms of language, culture, competitive environment and level of market maturity. Within the questionnaire, the effectiveness of the current model for sharing best practices was evaluated, and new models for the future were proposed. As shown in Table 4.11 below, the current arrangement of running best practice forums by region is very popular as is evidenced by the 86% of respondents who said yes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Run forums by Region</th>
<th>Same competitive position</th>
<th>Similar problems to solve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A or don't know**</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.11: How forums should be run in the future*

Markets saying no

| Markets saying no | South Africa | Malta | Malta |
In fact, several markets within Latin America specifically commented that they would feel uncomfortable sharing practices with other regions as is evidenced in the following comments:

‘I would not feel comfortable sharing with Africa and Europe.’ (LA – 8)

‘LA is not as advanced as Europe.’ (LA – 18)

These responses reflect a higher level of group affiliation and cohesion within the Latin American region. The researcher observed behaviours during the best practice forums that led her to make this assessment. These behaviours included higher levels of informal contact.

While the current model for sharing best practices by region is clearly popular, other models were also considered of value with sharing of practices with markets in a similar competitive position and with similar problems to solve, also rating highly at 89% respectively. Question 32 in the survey asked NMC’s which markets they would like to share best practices with. Table 4.12 below outlines their responses.
### Table 4.12: Which markets would like to share with which markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>These markets like to share with</th>
<th>These markets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| MEA    | - Morocco  
         - Pakistan  
         - South Africa  
         - Tunisia  
         - Zimbabwe  
         - Ghana  
         - Egypt  
         - Israel | - Tunisia  
         - MEA  
         - Australia and some European markets, US  
         - Morocco  
         - MEA  
         - MEA & LA  
         - Saudi, Yemen, UAE, QATAR  
         - Other NMCs with same environment and size |
| CESE   | - Greece  
         - CIS  
         - Malta  
         - Poland  
         - Turkey  
         - Ukraine | - Don’t know about what others are doing to make that judgement  
         - Russia, Ukraine, Turkey  
         - Western Europe - Plus neighbours with translation  
         - CESE  
         - Hungary - other countries with same culture  
         - Russia, Romania, Turkey |
| WE     | - Austria  
         - Germany  
         - BENELUX  
         - UK  
         - Scandinavia  
         - Italy  
         - Finland | - Same sized NMC with similar problems  
         - Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria - similar culture, market size and position  
         - Most mature markets  
         - US - (but with care)  
         - Home markets, i.e. Germany, France, Spain  
         - UK  
         - Scandinavian markets and others with the same problems |
| LA     | - Argentina  
         - Paraguay  
         - Ecuador  
         - Peru  
         - Brazil  
         - Caribbean | - Markets with same business reality  
         - LA  
         - LA  
         - LA  
         - US  
         - LA - and those with same business reality |

Several noteworthy findings emerge from question thirty-two. Firstly, the point made earlier about the high comfort level the Latin American markets feel sharing practices within their region is reinforced in these results with four of the six markets surveyed saying they would like to share practices within their region.

Within the MEA region, two of the eight markets surveyed said they would like to share within the region, with an additional NMC indicating that they would like to share not only within MEA, but also with LA. Morocco and Tunisia were very specific in terms of
their preferences for knowledge sharing, with each indicating the other as their preferred market for sharing experiences. These two markets are nearly identical in terms of market position, competitive environment, culture and language. The Egyptian market was also specific in terms of those markets they wished to share with identifying other Arabic countries including Saudi, Qatar, Yemen and the UAE. The clear exception to the trend was South Africa who indicated that they would gain the most value by sharing with markets with the same business culture. These markets were outside of their region and included Australia and several Western European markets.

Within the CESE region, four of the six markets surveyed identified their region or several markets within the region as those with whom they would get most value out of sharing best practices with. Malta was an exception to the trend indicating that they would obtain more value sharing with countries in Western Europe. The Greek NMC showed a willingness to consider practices from other markets but commented that lack of visibility on operations within these markets, made it difficult for them to assess, which markets would be of most value.

Within the Western European region, five of the seven markets surveyed identified countries within their region to share with. Two interesting exceptions included the UK market, which indicated that they would like to share with the US. (It is important to note at this juncture that the survey respondent from the UK was American). The other exception was Austria who indicated that the most value for them could be obtained from sharing with markets with the same problems. These markets could exist within their region, or in other regions.

These findings with regard to the impact of cultural comfort zones, market maturity, and relative competitive position will be revisited in the next Chapter, when factors impacting upon knowledge transfer across countries and cultures are considered.
CHAPTER 5 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION – FACTORS IMPACTING ON KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The second research question identified from gaps in the literature was – *What factors impact on knowledge transfer within an organisational setting?*

In Chapter 2, many factors were identified as having an impact on the effectiveness of any knowledge transfer process. These factors could be related to the type of knowledge being transferred, systems and conditions within the organisation itself, external market factors or directly to the individual. These many factors are illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

*Figure 5.1: Factors Impacting on Knowledge Transfer*

Organisational Factors
- Design of transfer system
- National Culture
- Organisational Culture
- Multiple Channels
- Senior Mgt Support
- Technology
- Push & Pull Factors
- Absorptive Capacity

Knowledge Itself
- Nature of Knowledge

External Factors
- Market Conditions

Individual Factors
- Learning Styles
- Fear of Change
- Psycho Social Filter & trust issues
- Status
- Motivation
Several factors impacting on knowledge transfer have already emerged from the study’s findings in Chapter Four. These factors related to culture, market maturity, and relative competitive position. These will be explored in greater detail within this chapter, along with other factors identified in Table 5.1.

Three data sources were accessed to obtain information relevant to this research question. These sources were the:

- Survey questionnaire.
- Observations at Best Practice Forums.
- Commitment Sheets from Best Practice Forums.
- Feedback from interviews with staff in the central organisation.

Those questions within the survey questionnaire that directly sought feedback relevant to this question are outlined in Table 5.1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions No</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>Which practices were you particularly interested in and Why?</td>
<td>Highlights the criteria that respondents use when looking to accept or reject a best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>What additional support could be provided to help you to implement the practice i.e. people, budget, information or anything else?</td>
<td>Identify whether lack or resources i.e absorptive capacity is an issue in transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &amp; 16</td>
<td>Do you find OPERA easy to access? Any problems implementing Digital Certificates, i.e. security wall?</td>
<td>Determine whether technology is a barrier or enabler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>From which markets are you most interested in exchanging experiences?</td>
<td>Demonstrate openness to other environments and barriers in terms of culture etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Summary of questions used to gather information for Question 2
5.1 Nature of Knowledge being transferred

The nature of knowledge being transferred related to sales and marketing processes and was of varying levels of complexity. The knowledge was therefore both explicit and tacit. Therefore, while a lot of the knowledge could be captured in documentation such as best practice papers, the human factor in communication was important for tacit knowledge transfer.

5.2 Design of Knowledge Transfer System

The design of the knowledge transfer system itself has an impact on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer processes. Within the study site, different channels were created to identify and capture both tacit and explicit knowledge, and a research process was developed to convert tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge so that it could be recorded in best practice documentation. These channels within the knowledge management process at the study site are represented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Multi-channel knowledge management process at study site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 1</th>
<th>STAGE 2</th>
<th>STAGE 3</th>
<th>STAGE 4</th>
<th>STAGE 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Sharing &amp; Distribution</td>
<td>Pushing for implementation</td>
<td>Measuring impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>By WHO</td>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>HOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Best Practice Forums</td>
<td>• Knowledge Manager</td>
<td>• Intranet</td>
<td>• Stage 1 of Best Practice forums</td>
<td>• Stage 2 of Best Practice forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open invitation to share BPs</td>
<td>• GMs and Sales Managers</td>
<td>• Email</td>
<td>• Measuring financial results</td>
<td>• Measuring financial results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sales Consultancies</td>
<td>• Other NMC staff</td>
<td>• BP forums</td>
<td>• In depth telephone survey</td>
<td>• In depth telephone survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the feedback received via the survey, it is known that all channels for knowledge transfer were well received. While many respondents commented that face-to-face mechanisms were the most effective for knowledge transfer, they added that they still needed documentation of knowledge via best practice papers as a support tool for implementation. One respondent commented that they didn’t care ‘..how they heard about the best practice, as long as they heard about it’ (CESE – 20)

5.2.1 Design of Best Practice Forums

Best Practice forums are a key and highly visible element of the best practice transfer program. The forums themselves have an in-built ‘push’ mechanism to encourage the transfer of best practices. This push mechanism has two key elements.

Firstly all participants at the forum are invited to publicly commit to implementing a new sales or marketing practice within their market. After the forum a report listing all commitments made is sent to the Vice-President of the EMEA LA group.

Six months later, all participants attend Stage Two of the best practice forum where they report on how they went in actioning their commitments. Where commitments aren’t actioned, participants are asked to comment on barriers they encountered.

The process uses as a driver, peer pressure with all participants being motivated to be well perceived or regarded by their colleagues and the Vice-President. This factor drives both the commitment process and the degree of implementation achieved. The outcomes from the commitment process are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six, Indicators of Knowledge Transfer across countries and culture.
5.3 National Culture

Findings on the impact of culture on knowledge transfer were drawn from three sources including the survey, commitment sheets from best practice forums, and from the researcher’s observations at forums.

Several questions within the survey elicited information on the impact of culture on knowledge transfer. In Question 8, participants were asked which practices from other markets they were interested in. Table 4.2, which reported the responses from this question, showed that some markets were interested in adopting practices from different countries and cultures. However, the overall numbers expressing interest were relatively low. In the discussions that ensued in the interviews around this question, culture was often cited as a key reason, why one market was not able to implement practices from another country and culture. One respondent commented that:

‘Practices from my region, or from countries with the same culture such as Italy, Spain or Greece, are the most easily adoptable. We could not for example adopt the Scandinavian key account management process because it is not culturally appropriate’ (CESE – 25)

A similar point was made within the Western European region. The Scandinavian market composes six countries including Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The survey respondent from this market, commented that the cultural adaptation of sales practices was even required within their own markets, which had a degree of cultural homogeneity. They cited the existence of a sales incentive scheme in Sweden and not in Norway, to illustrate this point.

The need for a level of cultural familiarity or synchronicity in knowledge transfer was also evident in the reporting of findings to question 32 as to which markets NMC’s would like to share experiences with. These findings were reported in Chapter Four in Table 4.12. It was evident that markets would nearly always choose to share experiences with a market with which they shared similar cultural characteristics.
As the facilitator of the Best Practice forums, the researcher was well placed to observe each participant’s interest in practices from other markets during discussions. All participants had to declare whether each best practice presented could be adopted within their market, adopted with a level of adaptation or would have to be rejected offering reasons for their decision. In this process, some markets showed a reluctance to consider practices from other markets citing cultural context reasons. While some practices clearly are more difficult to transfer than others for cultural context reasons, the researcher felt that culture was sometimes offered as a reason for rejection, when the ‘real reason’ for rejection was more related to the personal credibility of the person owning the best practice. More on this point is provided in Section 5.10, Psycho-Social filters.

5.4 Degree of Similarity in Competitive Conditions and Market Maturity

The impact of cultural similarity on knowledge transfer was discussed in Section 5.3 above. A similar factor impacting on knowledge transfer relates to the likeness of market conditions in terms of competitiveness and maturity. In responding to questions about the future format of best practice forums, survey respondents clearly indicated a desire to share with markets with a similar competitive environment and with a similar level of market maturity. Evidently, the closer the characteristics between markets, the more feasible are the transfer of best practices between them. A summary of the characteristics in each of the four regions, is provided overleaf in Table 5.3. These similarities include language, culture, market maturity, and competitive position. Table 5.3 shows that the Latin American region has the highest level of common characteristics.
Table 5.3: Characteristics of each geographic region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Europe</th>
<th>Central Europe and Easter</th>
<th>Middle East &amp; Africa</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• No common language</td>
<td>• No common language</td>
<td>• Nearly a common language – Arabic for ME &amp; English or French for Africa</td>
<td>• Common language – ex Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• European culture</td>
<td>• Similarity in Govt environment, – in some markets</td>
<td>• Less sophisticated markets with exception of South Africa and Israel</td>
<td>• Latin Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Democratic govt</td>
<td>• Growing market</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Common competitive environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High level of technical market sophistication</td>
<td>• Fewer competitors</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mixed level of technical market sophistication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mature markets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Technology

Technology clearly has an impact on knowledge transfer. There are two aspects to consider here: firstly, the issue of technical infrastructure and capacity. Several countries including Ghana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Puerto Rico (Caribbean) reported inadequate telecommunications infrastructure to support the efficient use of the intranet to access best practices. Two markets indicated that they needed to be in the office at midnight in order to experience an acceptable response time. Additionally, the intranet site itself had experienced a number of problems with regard to security and access. This had made access for all respondents occasionally difficult, with the resulting impact that they were reluctant to visit the site again. This reality is evident in the feedback with only 36% of respondents indicating that the site was easy to access, and 46% saying that it wasn’t easy to access. The most common recommendation for improvement was that the site develop faster access times.

A second issue impacting on the effectiveness of the intranet site was related to the respondents comfort with and inclination for, exploring an intranet site to find information. A telling factor was that eighteen percent of respondent had never visited the site. As a general rule, visitors to the site want to be able to find what they are looking for quickly with a minimum of keystrokes. This fact was evident in the feedback
that was received with regard to how the site could be improved. Several respondents commented that we should more actively promote the search engine, so that people knew how to quickly find the information that they were seeking more quickly. Additionally it was recommended that the site should be modified so that fewer clicks were needed to find the information that was needed. Feedback was also received on the importance of making subject titles very clear so that people could be sure of what they would find ‘under the click’.

Two respondents indicated a complete lack of interest in accessing any information via the intranet. This factor could be attributed to a lack of comfort with this relatively modern form of information sourcing.

5.6 Language

All documentation within the intranet, and all best practice forums are in English in accordance with organisational policy. The use of English, which is a second language for most respondents clearly impacts on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer processes. This is evidenced by the finding that five respondents to the survey indicated that they it would be more helpful for them if documentation was in their own language.

5.7 Absorptive Capacity

Two data sources were used to explore the issue of absorptive capacity. These were the commitment reports from best practice forums and several questions from within the survey. (Questions 10, 11 and 12 in the survey explored whether lack of resources was a factor impacting on knowledge transfer).

During stage two of the best practice forums, participants reported on their success in implementing practices from other markets. Reasons given for non-implementation
sometimes included a lack of capacity to implement new initiatives given existing projects and priorities.

Responses from the survey also indicated that lack of resources was a barrier to implementing practices from other markets. Six markets indicated that they would need extra assistance to implement best practices in terms of people resources or budget. These responses were from the smaller NMCs with fewer resources at their disposal. One respondent commented that it was important that the commitment process at best practice forums occurred before the annual budget submission process, so that sufficient resources could be requested.

5.8 Motivation, Market Forces and Organisational Culture

Individual motivation is an important element to consider when examining factors impacting upon knowledge transfer. Motivation is an element which is both intrinsic to an individual, but which is also affected by external factors such as market forces and organisation culture. Several data sources were used to obtain information on motivation. These included interviews with staff in the central organisation, the observations of the researcher and commitment sheets from, best practice forums, and from questions in the survey.

Feedback from central staff indicated that most survey respondents were perceived to be either motivated or very motivated. This finding is perhaps not surprising given the seniority of the roles surveyed. These findings are summarised overleaf in Table 5.4.
What was particularly interesting about the impact of motivation were comments or caveats made by the central staff when giving their assessments in this area. Several of these comments reflected a level of tension or resistance between the NMC and the central organisation, and a strong desire on behalf of the General Manager (GM) or Sales Director, to ‘manage their own show’. The point being made here that while the GM may be motivated to bring about change, they would often prefer to be the ‘sole drivers’ of the new initiative with no advice or assistance being taken from the central organisation or other NMCs’. This human characteristic or personality trait to want to do things ‘my way’ has previously been reported in the literature by Leonard (1998) and must be taken into consideration in the design of organisational push and pull processes. This human tendency could explain the quote by a Manager from Xerox cited in Chapter two that,

‘You would think that these better practices would spread like wildfire to the entire organisation. They don’t’ (Senior Vice President, Xerox, cited in O’Dell & Jackson Grayson 2001, p. 1)

The transfer process clearly needs to be designed to give the receiver opportunity to customise the practice to make it ‘my own’. This tension factor between the central organisation and the NMC’s provides some insight into one aspect of the organisation’s culture, which must be considered when examining factors impacting on knowledge transfer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Motivation</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivated</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Motivated</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The relative strength of an NMC’s market position also impacts on the motivation of the General Manager, and subsequently on their openness to considering practices from other markets. Some markets within EMEA LA enjoy a 100% market share, while others are fighting for survival. There is a clear evidence of a relationship between the willingness of a market to consider a practice from another market and the level of security and stability that they are currently experiencing in their market. This point will be discussed further in Chapter Six and Seven when the findings related to indicators of knowledge transfer are presented and discussed.

5.9 Experience of Change/ Fear of Change

A further point related to market conditions, is concerned with experience of, and fear in managing change. This wasn’t an area where information was specifically sought through the data collection process. However in reviewing comments made by interviewees, together with the researcher’s own knowledge of the respondents, some interesting impressions and findings emerged. One of these related to the respondents experience of change. Some General Managers and markets have clearly experienced more change than others both at a personal and country level. This fact is apparent in the fact that a GM of one cultural origin is working in a different country. The Ghanaian GM who is Danish, The Greek GM who is Spanish and the South African GM who is German, are good examples. These individuals clearly have experience of change as they have been operating outside their own cultural frame of reference. There are several individual examples in this category. It is the researcher’s assessment that these individuals appeared to be more willing and open to ideas from outside their own cultural reference than those GM’s whose life experiences had been limited to their own country or cultural environment.

Another note worthy point about change already referred to in section 5.8, relates to the impact of market conditions and more importantly market volatility. There is clear evidence that in those markets where business survival is an ongoing struggle as is the
case in Argentina and Israel, the General Manager is forced to look for a broad range of solutions if they are to survive. This is the Darwinian model of change as is reflected in the following anthropological quote:

‘It is not the strongest of the species which survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change’ (Charles Darwin, 1839)

5.10 Psycho-Social Filter

How one person is perceived by their colleagues, in terms of status, intelligence and personal credibility, has a direct impact upon the knowledge transference process. Personal credibility is directly influenced by an assessment of their competence and is also a function of the closeness of the relationship between the two parties. Andrews (2000) described the filtering impact of these phenomena on receiving and sharing knowledge in terms of a psycho-social filter.

From the researcher’s observations of the group processes within best practice forums, it was clear that some participants were assessing/evaluating all practices presented by other market’s through their personal psycho-social filter. An example of this was observed when a practice from another market was rejected for ‘cultural reasons’. In this case the researcher had the distinct impression from the body language and tone of voice of the market rejecting the practice that the real reason for rejection, was the perceived credibility of the market presenting the practice.

Having reviewed the findings with regard to factors mediating the knowledge transfer process, attention will now turn to examining the findings with regard to indictors of knowledge transfer. These findings are outlined in Chapter Six.
The third research question identified from gaps in the literature was – *What are the indicators of knowledge transfer within an organisational setting?*

The data sources used for obtaining information related to this research question were drawn from the:

- structured interview, *(Questions 26 to 31 of the questionnaire related directly to this research question)*;
- commitment sheets from best practice forums;
- feedback from staff in the central organisation; and
- observations from best practice forums.

The presentation of findings with regard to this research question is organised in two sections. The first section looks at evidence of knowledge transfer as reported by the NMCs’ through the best practice forum process. This evidence includes both actions taken and results achieved.

The second section looks at evidence or other indicators of a change in behaviour or attitude with regard to adopting practices from other markets.

### 6.1 Findings from Best Practice Forum commitment process

This section looks for evidence and indicators of knowledge transfer through the best practice forum process. This process asks participants to make commitments to introduce
a new practice, and then to report on their relative success in implementing the practice six months later.

### 6.1.1 Evidence of Positive Attitude at the Planning Stage

While not a measure of knowledge transfer itself, a willingness to try to adopt a practice from another market is a clear initial indicator that a transfer process may be about to commence. The commitment sheets from the best practice forums provide initial evidence of a positive attitude in this regard.

From a review of the commitments made, it is clear that some markets are more positively disposed to adopting from other markets as can be evidenced by both the number and complexity of practices targeted for adoption. As you can see from Table 6.1, the Egyptian market committed to introducing two changes while the Israeli market committed to making ten changes.

**Table 6.1: Examples of commitments made by two markets in MEA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1. Will conduct a market segmentation by sales categories A, B, C &amp; D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1. Conduct a NMC launch (official inauguration) – 200 travel agents – (same idea as Top Travel Awards gala)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Introduce top travel agents awards for categories such as travel agent employee of the month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Identify key decision makers in prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Have an NMC Open Door demo for a day – provide lunch/run product demos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Provide lunch at all training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Undertake a competitor analysis to identify competitors weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Undertake a customer survey using a questionnaire to determine satisfaction with services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Evaluate the feasibility of the adoption of a uniform – meet with NMC staff and test idea with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Develop Commercial visit program – by July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Undertake a direct marketing campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Undertake other marketing initiatives such as advertising and PR campaigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. E-commerce/local provider - re launching 1a Res. products (business to business solutions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.2 Evidence of knowledge transfer at the Reporting stage

Using Best practice forum, commitment sheets as a starting point for discussion in the interviews, the researchers asked all survey respondents the extent to which they had implemented a practice from another market. The findings are reported in Table 6.2 below and overleaf.

Table 6.2: Extract of findings re transfer of practices between markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Practices Committed to or implemented</th>
<th>Where From</th>
<th>Extent of implementation/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Flytour story - thorough approach to winning a new client</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Always try to find out more about customers business. Always try to make a presentation rather than just submitting a written proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>SWAT approach/more closer liaison between sales/customer support</td>
<td>Caribbean/Ecuador</td>
<td>Integration objectives outlined in MBO’S - share common responsibility for customer. Mirroring of staff roles/regular meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Half day basic training program - in response to fact that one week courses falling off</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Course taken from Mexico - and significantly enhanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Testimonial campaign</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Testimonial campaign about to be launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Web site development - use as tool for communication with customers</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>The monitor site through statistics - which customers are looking at which pages - adapt approach/ Send out fortnightly newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Introduce yearly TA event and awards</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Held the award ceremony this year, which was a great success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Develop &amp; use a questionnaire to determine customers needs</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Found problems to be addressed with their help desk - and they have now addressed these issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Conduct an official launch</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Inspired by strong promotional, high profile nature of Pakistani travel awards. Had lazer show - invited OPERA singer. Invited prospects. Have high market growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Introduce top travel agents awards</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Due for introduction end 2002. Will be high profile event as per launch - designed to differentiate Amadeus from Sabre/El Al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Identify key decision makers in prospects</td>
<td>Ghana/Egypt</td>
<td>Adopted as described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Have an NMC Open Door Day</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Provide lunch on training</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Adopted - limit put on how much spent for lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Introduce commercial visit program</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Sales staff not only have sales objectives but also productivity per terminal objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Competitor analysis undertaken</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Looking for points of differentiation - achieved through product offering/tailored training/service offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Undertake a customer segmentation model</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Segmentation for their market introduced - tailored to their requirements with additional overlay of product complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Evaluate introduction of uniforms</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Staff rejected the idea - so not progressed with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Running Roadshow later on this year</td>
<td>SMART/Swiss</td>
<td>To be run later in 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Tried to do airline events</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Had no success yet - couldn't get the interest from the airline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>SWAT approach/more closer liaison between sales/customer support</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Is proving to be very effective in market in winning business and in integrating team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Strengthen relationship with customer through ACD upgrade</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 6 - Results and Discussion – Indicators of Knowledge Transfer
Morocco  Customer Classification model  Tunisia  Influenced in development of customer segmentation/classification/visitiation

Pakistan  Conduct the SWAT analysis  Ghana  Found that the key difference was level of incentives. So they identified key decision makers and incentivised them

Pakistan  Ran an airline event  Egypt  Prompted them to run a special events and to do joint customer calls with airlines/national carriers (1,4,5)

Paraguay  Conduct a sales blitz  Caribbean  Blitz undertaken - kept current customers - grew market slightly. Also accepted invitation from AA to participate in one of their workshops

Peru  Reinforce a team work spirit through regular team meetings  Caribbean  Model of working influenced by Caribbean strong team planning and management approach

Poland  Improve Key Account Management  SMART  Have in place a communication process on a 1/4 ly basis include FAQ's.

Poland  Stay close with airlines  Ukraine  Delayed due to reorganization. Still has plans to implement.

SMART  Incentive Scheme  Bulgaria  Commercial, technical and training people now undertaking visits to prospects and customers together

Switzerland  Marketing campaigns - drink can - and contest  Austria  Results?

Venezuela  SWAT  Caribbean  Client was going to sign - and 2 other follow - until SAA came in and bullied the client

Chile  Change image in Marketplace - demonstrate that we are technological leaders  Argentina  Have just started with their customer newsletter - are also taking ideas from the TAP newsletter

South Africa  Caribbean blitz - applied in Durban  Caribbean  Have in place a communication process on a 1/4 ly basis include FAQ's.

South Africa  Swiss - Newsletter - and other elements of marketing  Swiss  Commercial, technical and training people now undertaking visits to prospects and customers together

Table 6.2 shows that at least 33 practices were transferred. Sometimes the practice was adopted in full, and at other times, just a part of the practice was adapted. In total, from a review of the actions taken by the different markets, there is clear evidence that practices from 15 markets moved to 17 markets.

It is of interest to note where the markets which had implemented a practice from another market, had first heard about the practice. This information would give a clear indication as to the most effective communication channels. As shown in Table 6.3 overleaf, best practice forums were the main communication medium.
Table 6.3: How each market first heard about the Best Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Practice Implemented</th>
<th>Where From</th>
<th>How heard about practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Flytour story - approach to winning a new client</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>SWAT approach</td>
<td>Caribbean/Ecuador</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Half day basic training program</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Informal contact with NMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Testimonial campaign</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Informal contact with NMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Web site development</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Introduce TA award event</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Develop questionnaire for customers needs</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Conduct an official launch</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Introduce top travel agents awards</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Identify key decision makers in prospects</td>
<td>Ghana/Egypt</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Have an NMC Open Door Day</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Provide lunch on training</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Introduce commercial visit program</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Competitor analysis undertaken</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Undertake a customer segmentation model</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Evaluate introduction of uniforms</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Running Roadshow later on this year</td>
<td>SMART/Swiss</td>
<td>Informal contact with NMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Tried to do airline events</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>SWAT approach</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Strengthen relationship through ACD upgrade</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Informal contact with NMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México</td>
<td>Pro-web</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Customer Classification model</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Informal contact with NMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Conduct the SWAT analysis</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Ran an airline event</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Conduct a sales blitz</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Reinforce a team work spirit through regular team meetings</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Improve Key Account Management</td>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Stay close with airlines</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Customer Newsletter -</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>Incentive Scheme</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Marketing campaigns - drink can - and contest</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Informal contact with NMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>SWAT</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Change image in Marketplace -</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>BP forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Caribbean blitz</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Annual Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Swiss - Newsletter</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there was some evidence of transfer across all four regions, the most active regions in terms of adoption of other practices were Latin America and Middle East and Africa. Those markets where practices from other markets were implemented are summarised in Table 6.4 overleaf.
Table 6.4: Those markets implementing best practices from other markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Markets where Best Practices were Transferred to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle East &amp; Africa</td>
<td>Ghana, Israel, Pakistan and South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Argentina, Chile Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central &amp; Eastern &amp; Southern Europe</td>
<td>Malta, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>Austria, Italy, Scandinavia, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to observe that the top three markets for implementing practices from other markets were Ghana, Israel and Argentina. Understanding the reasons why these three markets were such enthusiastic adopters will be explored in greater detail in Chapters 6 and 7 as it will provide insight into the necessary conditions for effective knowledge transfer.

Not all transferred practices worked as well in the new market as in the originating market, although sometimes the practice was taken and significantly improved. Some summary examples to highlight these points are outlined in the Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5: Examples of outcomes from transfer of best practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market From</th>
<th>Market To</th>
<th>Original Practice</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Sales Blitz</td>
<td>Fully employed. Process worked well but was not successful due to monopolistic position of major competitor</td>
<td>Full implementation. No successful outcome to date in terms of new sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Travel Agency Award Ceremony</td>
<td>Ghana used the event to invite prospects as well as existing customers and won x new accounts</td>
<td>Full implementation. Very successful outcome in terms of sales – Won 6 new accounts from 14 prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Customer Visitation Model</td>
<td>Took basic model and enhanced it with goals of increasing customer productivity per CRT</td>
<td>Full implementation. Extended the concept so that sales people not only had sales objectives but productivity objectives per terminal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.5 shows that South Africa took the Caribbean sales blitz process and implemented it in their market. While South Africa was pleased with the way they implemented the initiative, they were unable to achieve any additional sales as a result of this initiative because of exceedingly tough, monopolistic competition.

Next, Ghana took the Travel Agency Award program practice from Pakistan. They took many of the ideas on format from Pakistan, but made a significant change to the invitation list. They used the event not only to reward existing customers, but to attract new customers. This strategy proved extremely successful with six new customers won as a result of their participation in the event.

Israel provides another example of one market taking a practice from another market and significantly improving it. In this case, the improvements were made to the Tunisian market’s basic customer visitation model. This helped Israel increase both sales and customer productivity per travel agency – which was a reverse trend to the market.

The Ghana example provides clear evidence of a measurable impact on business performance. With other examples, it is not always easy to isolate and measure the direct impact of the initiative because there were a number of initiatives all working together to achieve the same outcome.

Many markets interviewed had practices from other markets still at the planning stage. Clearly, there is a time lag effect to consider when looking at transfer of practices across countries. This time lag could be related to the need, to not only customise the practice but to build internal acceptance for it.

Therefore it is important when looking for indicators or measures, to consider all stages of the knowledge transfer process. This would involve considering the initial level of interest shown in another practice, any planning in progress, evaluating what steps were
actually taken and then measuring the impact of these initiatives. These points are highlighted in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Stages of Knowledge Transfer Process

6.2 Evidence of Change in Attitude

Much has been written about the influence of attitude change on behaviour and vice versa (Bandura 1986; Festinger 1957; Fishbein & Azjen 1975). Given that these are often the first steps of a knowledge transfer process, evidence of attitude change is important in the measurement process. Examples of attitude change could be identified within interviewees’ comments. An example follows:

‘I found the presentation by Maria on the Caribbean sales blitzes very interesting’

(WE – 3)

The researcher had the distinct impression that this Western European GM was surprised that they found the practice from the Caribbean and Central American market interesting because they didn’t expect to learn anything from the Latin American region.

It is important to note here that because of the way the regions are managed, markets in Western Europe or indeed in any other region, do not receive much exposure to people or practices from other regions. They therefore tend to develop the closest knowledge of and relationships with, those markets who they meet with most frequently, which are the markets within their region. It is therefore possible that the GM’s comment was prompted purely by previous ignorance.
However, regardless of the interpretation behind the comment what is clear is that there is an emerging interest in practices from other markets.

### 6.3 Behaviour Change

A number of events which occurred after the best practice forums gave the researcher clear evidence that knowledge exchange and transfer was beginning to happen more organically. These examples included the discovery that some markets were continuing the conversation on best practices by phone and email within their mutual markets. These markets were Tunisia and Morocco, and Turkey, Hungary and CIS.

While not a transfer between markets, the researcher was interested to learn that the Argentinean market had translated some best practices into Spanish to present to the local team. Additionally they had introduced internal sharing of experiences and projects between customer service, sales and technical teams and had formally introduced a suggestion box for capturing ideas on ‘getting better’. These actions will help to build an internal country culture of sharing knowledge, which may well transfer to other countries, and will subsequently strengthen the regional knowledge sharing culture.

The researchers noticed that when one market had had their practices documented and distributed, they had a higher level of curiosity about what other markets were doing. One positive outcome from the survey was that many markets were keen for their best practices to be reported in the future. Hopefully as this happens, this will lead to higher levels of interest in practices from other markets, and subsequently higher levels of adoption.

Pulling together the findings from this section it is clear that a range of actions, behaviours and changes in attitude, provide initial evidence that a knowledge sharing culture is being nurtured at various points in the organization.
Chapter Six has reported the findings from the last of the three research questions. The final chapter, Chapter Seven will draw together the findings from the study, will discuss their implications, and will then describe the distinct contribution that the research project has made to the existing body of literature with regard to knowledge transfer across countries and cultures.
CHAPTER 7 - FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarises the findings from the study which were presented in the previous three chapters and draws conclusions by comparing and contrasting the results with extant research. Additionally, this chapter identifies the unique contributions and advances the study has made to an understanding of knowledge transfer in a global organisational context.

This chapter is organised into six sections: Section 7.1 Overview of Major Findings; Section 7.2 Contributions of the Study; Section 7.3 Implications for Policy and Practice; Section 7.4 Methodological Contributions; Section 7.5 Limitations of the Study; and Section 7.6 Future Research Opportunities.

Some of the outcomes from this study confirm findings in published literature, but they provide a different lens of analysis by looking at the research issues within the context of the countries of Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Other findings challenge and advance the existing body of knowledge. Of particular significance are the findings and recommendations made with regard to the impact of individual ‘resistance’ or filtering factors on knowledge transfer, and in the power of language used to describe these influencers. The researcher advocates a change both in attitude and language in this regard, from a deficient industrial perspective to a positive knowledge perspective, which they believe will have a positive impact on knowledge transfer within organisational settings. This represents a significant shift from current thinking with the existing literature describing all barriers to knowledge transfer as entities to be overcome. Additionally the implications of the recommendation to view these barriers or filtering factors from a positive perspective will have significant impact on organisational practices in the knowledge management area.

In summary the other major findings from the research included:

1. The confirmation of the critical importance of face-to-face communication mechanisms for pushing knowledge transfer to knowledge uptake. While other
mechanisms such as written materials or technology are useful for distributing knowledge, for more strategic, complex or tacit knowledge, face-to-face communication is essential. Face-to-face communication is not only more effective for explaining or demonstrating knowledge, but also for ‘selling’ the value of the knowledge or practice and for pushing knowledge acquired to knowledge applied. This is in part related to the importance that individuals place on personally assessing the status and credibility of the person transmitting the knowledge or practice.

2. The recognition of the relationship between the broad factors impacting on knowledge transfer such as organisational factors, external environment and individual characteristics, in a complex and non-linear manner, suggesting that knowledge transfer is a multi-factorial process involving interacting variables to an extent greater than generally accepted hitherto. A simple tool for use within organisational settings has been developed in this regard.

3. The identification of the interplay between different individual specific characteristics or factors such as personal experience of change, experience of working in a different cultural context, ego/personality, and credibility of the person transmitting the practice which influence the decision to adopt or not adopt a practice from another market.

4. The discovery that the most prevalent adopters of practices from other countries had tough market conditions, were very motivated, had previous experience of introducing change, and had worked in a different cultural context. The mix of these individual specific and external influencers again highlights the complexity of factors impacting on and facilitating the knowledge transfer process.

5. The identification of the need for cultural similarity and high levels of homogeneity, in terms of market maturity, market size and competitive position for practices to transfer more often between countries.
6. The recognition that many factors operate to influence and shape the knowledge or indeed to block the transfer of practices between countries, with resistance to other practices possibly relating to an individual’s need for the application of creativity, personal ownership and control.

The third research question focussed on indicators of knowledge transfer. While there was evidence that knowledge transfer had occurred as a result of the best practices program, the results of the study highlighted the difficulties in effectively measuring the knowledge transfer process. It is the researcher’s view that clear and visible measures of knowledge transfer are neither universal nor generic, but rather are to be discerned in a range of indicators across actions, behaviours, attitudes and outcomes in culture-specific settings. A time-based knowledge measurement model was developed to assist in the identification of these indicators.

In summary, the literature review revealed the complex and social nature of knowledge. This study’s findings highlighted the complexity of factors impacting on ‘the knower’ as a receiver of knowledge and clearly reinforced the importance of face-to-face communication as the most effective way for ensuring knowledge transfer resulted in knowledge uptake. Clearly the measurement process for knowledge transfer is not always visible or straightforward and requires the selection of a range of appropriate, cultural-specific indicators.

A more detailed explanation of these major findings, together with other observations and recommendations, follows in Section 7.1.

7.1 Major findings and their relationship to existing theoretical perspectives

This study used an inductive, theory-building research approach to examine issues related to knowledge transfer across countries and cultures. The nature of the research
questions drove the design of the research methodology, which was described in Chapter Three.

This section addresses the study’s findings in relation to the three research questions:

1. **By what means is knowledge transferred across countries and cultures?**
2. **What factors impact on knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?**
3. **What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?**

A description of the findings follows.

### 7.1.1 How knowledge is transferred across countries and cultures

The study initially explored the effectiveness of the organisation’s three main mechanisms for distributing best practices across countries and cultures. These mechanisms were through documentation, via technology and through face-to-face channels. What clearly emerged was that while all channels of distribution and communication were utilised and valued, face-to-face distribution mechanisms were valued the most highly and had the greatest impact upon effective knowledge transfer.

The importance of social relationships in knowledge transfer emerged as being of paramount importance and to a large extent, accounts for the popularity of face-to-face knowledge sharing forums. This could be attributed to the fact that it is easier to develop a relationship with a person in a face-to-face setting. While people could get most of the information about a practice via a document, it was clear that they needed the reassurance of connecting with, and personally assessing the qualities and credibility of, the person who created the practice. This was an important first step before making the decision as to whether they would adopt the practice. This point underlined by a comment by one respondent from a Western European market who said that they liked the fact that the documents provided contact details. These findings are consistent with those already reported in the literature by Davenport and Prusak (1998),

Important learning from the study also emerged in terms of style, and language of documentation for a community whose first language is not English. It was evident that translation is important for some markets if the communication and transfer process is to work well. A similar point was made with regard to the language of communication at best practice forums. For the Latin American markets it is clear that several markets would find the forum significantly more effective in Spanish. This is not surprising given that all markets except Brazil within the Latin American region, communicate formally and informally in Spanish. For all other regions, the language of communication between countries would nearly always be English.

Regarding technology, the findings from this study highlight some challenges in using this modern form of distribution and communication. Firstly, it is not a preferred communication mechanism for many people with only 25% of respondents looking at the site on a regular basis. Secondly, the technology needs to be fast, with the users’ being able to quickly identify the information that meets their needs with a minimum number of key strokes, for it to be effective.

Technology is clearly an enabler of communication and distribution as opposed to a driver of change, as is evidenced by the fact that most people implemented a practice after they had contact in person with the owner of the practice, and not from having read the document on the intranet. This finding is consistent with the work of Davenport and Prusak (1998), Hackett (2000) and O’Dell and Jackson Grayson (1998). The web site is however an excellent first port of call, for people interested in practices from other markets and plays an essential role in raising awareness of other practices in a geographically dispersed organisation.
7.1.2 Factors that impact on knowledge transfer

Several other themes emerged from an analysis of the findings with regard to the second research question. Firstly, there are many factors impacting on the effectiveness of knowledge transfer processes. Clearly, just because knowledge exists, and we have access to it, and it conforms to our standards of ‘good’ knowledge or ‘proven best practice’, does not mean that it will automatically influence activities or behaviours. Many factors operate to limit or pare down the knowledge, and to block the transfer between countries of knowledge-based practices. At a broad level, these factors relate to the nature of the knowledge being transferred, the external environment, the organisation and to the individual. This study’s findings revealed that there was a level of complexity and non-linear interconnectivity within and between these factors, which confirms that knowledge transfer is a complex, multifactorial process relying on a number of interacting variables. This finding builds on the work on Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) but provides a more comprehensive framework for considering the impact of these influencers.

It is useful to analyse these findings by initially considering those factors which relate both to the nature of the knowledge itself, and to the ‘knower’ or potential recipient of the new knowledge. One aspect of the nature of knowledge is its relative complexity. In the study, the nature of knowledge being transferred via the best practices program was evaluated as being both relatively complex and strategic in nature. It therefore had tacit as well as explicit elements to it, requiring social contact for knowledge transfer to occur effectively. Respondents affirmed this point very strongly in the study. This point reinforces the initial findings of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) about the importance of social contact for effective knowledge transmission.
7.1.2.1 Factors relating to the individual

There is a matrix of factors influencing an individual’s interest in practices from other markets. For example, they are directly influenced by: their own experience of change; their experience of working in a different cultural context; ego/personality; relationship with and perception of staff in the central organisation; the perception of the credibility of the person ‘owning’ the best practice; and total life experiences. When individuals make decisions they reference their previous experience, contextual information, grounded intuition, and personal values. The point here is that there is an interplay of different ‘individual specific’ factors influencing the decision to adopt a practice from another market.

7.1.2.2 Factors relating to the organisation

Another set of factors impacting on knowledge transfer is related to the organisation itself. The first of these, absorptive capacity, had a clear impact on knowledge transfer in the study. Universally, it was the smaller, less resource-rich markets that indicated that additional assistance in terms of people or budget was required to implement new practices. These markets clearly had a more limited capacity to juggle current priorities and projects to accommodate new initiatives from elsewhere.

National or country culture was a significant factor impacting on the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer process. The need for cultural similarity in knowledge transfer emerged frequently as important. The key issue to consider here is whether or not this cultural factor or filter is a good or bad influencer. At the heart of the matter may be the issue of risk. From a positive perspective, General Managers or Sales Directors are employed to utilise their deep knowledge of the market to make decisions about the suitability of introducing new practices or initiatives to improve sales performance. With a higher degree of cultural fit, they may be confident that there is a lower risk, greater context specificity, less change required and a higher probability of success in introducing a new process or initiative. From a negative perspective, being highly ethnocentric may foster a caution or risk aversion that blinds individuals to new opportunities and ideas from other countries. Thus while culture is a clear factor impacting on knowledge transfer, it may not be a negative one.
7.1.2.3 Factors related to the External Environment

A number of factors in the external environment also emerged as significant in impacting on knowledge transfer. These factors include relative competitive environment and market maturity. The survey respondents clearly indicated that for practices to transfer between two countries, there needs to be a high level of homogeneity between them in terms of market maturity, market size and competitive position. Simply put, the greater the similarities between the two countries the higher the chance of a successful transfer of practices.

7.1.2.4 Characteristics of most prevalent adopters

An analysis as to why some markets were such prevalent adopters revealed useful findings with regard to the interplay between external and individual factors. Two General Managers (GMs) within MEA and one within LA were all prevalent adopters of practices from other markets. These three countries were in different parts of the world and were therefore operating in different cultural contexts. They also had different competitors and different positions of market share. The researcher’s observations are that all had tough market conditions, in terms of either economic environment and/or strong competition. These external conditions had forced the NMC to implement a range of new practices to survive. All had therefore significant experience of introducing change. At an individual level, each of the three GMs for these markets were rated by their internal colleagues as being very motivated. Another noteworthy factor related to the ethnic origin of the GM and their personal experience in operating outside their cultural framework. All three GM’s had had experience in working in a different country and cultural context. They therefore had personally been in a position where their cultural assumptions and framework may have been challenged.

7.1.2.5 Need for Ownership, Control and Personalisation

If the GM’s from these three markets can implement practices from markets with a different cultural context, market maturity, competitive position and market strength, then it begs the question that perhaps some of the reasons offered for rejection of a practice, relate more to another but unstated factor. It is proposed that resistance to
other practices could be related to a need for creativity, personal ownership, and control.

This idea has emerged following consideration of two factors. Firstly, comments made by some respondents revealed a level of general resistance to adopting practices from other markets. Secondly, the literature on what constitutes a good job and motivates knowledge workers provided a useful theoretical context. The literature in this area such as Drucker (1998) and Allee (1997) suggests that knowledge workers obtain their sense of fulfilment from their work through the creation of new ideas, the opportunity to display initiative and from working autonomously. Clearly a practice adopted from another person does not involve the same level of creativity and ownership, and is therefore not valued as highly as an idea which they have developed themselves.

The implications of this hypothesis are that the way knowledge transfer programs are designed and communicated should be oriented towards allowing for a high level of customisation and personalisation so that the creative, autonomous and control aspects of work are still inherent. Leonard (1998, p. 62) describes this personal orientation as one of signaturisation. In explaining this concept, Leonard highlights the emotional attachment that people have to their mindsets and to the way they solve problems. This mindset may have been developed over many years and is one with which they strongly identify, both personally and professionally. It is likely that in their experience, this mindset has been a key to their success. The key learning here is that people should not be denied the opportunity to utilise their signature skills by being asked to adopt practices from other areas ‘as is’. Rather, they should be encouraged to take a practice from another area as a seed of an idea or building block only – and then to utilise their own deep knowledge, experience and problem solving skills to adapt and customise it to their local circumstances/environment.

7.1.3 Indicators of knowledge transfer

A key finding with regard to research question three was the difficulty in obtaining clear and visible measures of knowledge transfer. This is because knowledge, and therefore knowledge transfer, are not always clearly visible ‘objects’. (A model which
describes the visible and invisible elements of knowledge transfer is provided in Section 7.2.) Additionally, it is not always easy to isolate and measure the direct impact of the implementation of a practice when there were several practices or initiatives all working together to achieve the same objectives. However, having said this, the study was able to identify a range of indicators which when taken together, give a relatively clear picture as to knowledge transfer effects. The key recommendation emerging here is to look for a range of indicators across actions, behaviours and attitudes.

The best practice forum process itself provided several useful indicators. These indicators included a commitment by a participant to try to introduce a practice from another market. This action was evidence of a positive attitude and disposition towards practices from outside their market. A second, and perhaps more important indicator was evidence of actions taken with regard to these commitments and later on, results achieved or the impact of these actions. A third indicator that could be observed in the group processes at the forums, was the general level of resistance displayed in discussions on practices from other markets. This was particularly evident when markets offered reasons for rejecting a practice for implementation.

A model to capture both attitude and behaviour changes as well as outcomes is provided in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1: Stages of Knowledge Transfer Process

A more detailed model is provided in Section 7.2
7.2 Contributions of the Study

With the major findings from the study summarised in Section 7.1, it is appropriate to direct attention to comparing these findings with the existing literature in the area.

In Chapter One it was noted that, while the importance of knowledge creation and knowledge management is widely recognised as vital to an organisation’s ongoing competitiveness and success (Hackett, 2000; Nonaka 1998; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Sveiby, 1997), there has been limited systematic study of knowledge creation and transfer in organisations (Devinney, Soo & Midgley, 2001; Dixon, 2000). Much of what has been reported in the literature is anecdotal in nature. This study has therefore provided much needed, qualitative research to fill this gap, and has added an interesting dimension by looking at the issues of knowledge transfer in an organisation operating across Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

The following section is organised with a discussion of contributions to the literature under each of the three research questions.

7.2.1 Means of knowledge transferred

Many authors have attested to the importance of face-to-face communication and social interaction in knowledge transfer, particularly for tacit knowledge, as was confirmed in this study (Alvesson 2001; Festinger 1957; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Dixon, 2000; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2000). This study has clearly affirmed how important face-to-face communication is for knowledge to be converted to action. This is consistent with the insight by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), that knowledge needs social processing.
The growing interest in the literature for communities of practice as a knowledge-sharing mechanism (Wenger 2002; Mc Dermott & Snyder 2002; Perkmann 2002) was also supported by this research project with many respondents indicating a desire to share knowledge in a face-to-face forum with people sharing the same market characteristics and business challenges. These identified populations can be clearly recognized as communities of practice.

The use of technology as a communicator or enabler rather than as a driver for change, was supported by Davenport and Prusak (1998). Hackett (2000) made a similar point by highlighting the limitations of knowledge management efforts for organisations who relied too heavily on a technological knowledge distribution strategy.

### 7.2.2 Factors impacting on knowledge transfer

Several authors have made contributions in this area (Dixon 2000; Hackett 2000; Prusak & Davenport 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Ruggles 1998; Szulanski 1996). Each cite a different order of influence of factors which mediate knowledge transfer. Additionally, their methodologies indicate that they obtained their research information from different populations e.g. often U.S. senior management, rather than the European/Latin American middle to senior management participant population targeted as a part of this program. The major exception to this is Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) whose studies were undertaken in Japan. These realities make it difficult to compare findings and to generalise in this area. However, with these limitations understood, some comparative analysis follows.

Davenport and Prusak (1998) and Hofstede (1997) discussed cultural differences impacting on knowledge transfer, although this factor was not considered in isolation to individual credibility issues. This point was highlighted in the anecdote of the difficulty of the transfer of knowledge from tunnellers in New Zealand to Boston (Davenport & Prusak 1998, p 99). In this circumstance, knowledge transfer was only possible when the two parties were physically brought together. These findings support this project’s outcomes regarding the influence of culture on knowledge transfer, and the interplay of
this factor with a range of individual dynamics such as assessment of personal credibility. This finding was also supported by Andrews (2000).

Dixon (2000, p. 169) asserted that different types of knowledge require different transfer processes and that the identification of the most effective transfer systems involves asking the following questions:

- Who is the intended receiver of the knowledge in terms of similarity of task and context
- How routine and frequent is the task?
- Is the knowledge tacit or explicit?

While Dixon’s model of knowledge transfer does have some relevance because it considers three factors known to impact on knowledge transfer, it is thus judged simplistic and limited in application. Specifically, the model fails to consider a range of important external factors, organisational cultural factors and factors intrinsic to the individual as has been described previously in this report.

Szulanski (1996) identified a lack of absorptive capacity, a lack of motivation to adopt the practice, inadequate information, credibility between the source and the recipient, and causal ambiguity as some of the top reasons why knowledge transfer does not work well. These findings are very relevant when compared to those within this research project. For example, in terms of absorptive capacity, it is clear that a lack of human and financial resources is a barrier to implementing practices for smaller NMCs in the study.

A lack of motivation to adopt a practice is a finding of interest. From this study it is clear that being motivated, does not necessarily translate into being motivated to adopt a practice from another market. Some of the reasons offered for this lack of motivation including a lack of credibility and causal ambiguity, are supported by this study. However, the researcher proposes that the resistance to adoption could be more related to a need for creativity, personal ownership and control, which are factors identified by
Leonard (1998) and which the researcher believes need to be taken into consideration in the design of organisational programs and systems to foster knowledge transfer.

At this juncture it is relevant to share an observation about the language used within existing literature with regard to the many factors impacting on knowledge transfer. For example, much of the literature describes ‘barriers to knowledge transfer’ or ‘resistance’ to ideas and practices from other areas. It is the researcher’s view that the predominantly negatively-framed language within the literature, and possibly in use within organisations, could create resistance or counter productive responses to knowledge transfer efforts. As has already been mentioned, organisations employ Managers to utilise their experience and deep knowledge of their local environment and market to make decisions with regard to new initiatives. It would not be desirable for them to pursue every new idea or initiative which comes along or to override their judgement based on years of experience as to what would be an effective new practice. Accordingly any individual resistance to adopting a practice from another market should be viewed from a positive filtering perspective and not from a negative one. Further comment on this point is provided in Section 7.3.

Another significant finding from the study was that the most prevalent adopters of practices from other markets had tough market conditions, were very motivated, had significant experience of introducing change and had life experience in a different cultural context. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have already identified the impact that external conditions of fluctuation, crisis and chaos have as positive drivers for change. This finding is also given support by the literature on change management (Dunphy 1982) Existing literature with regard to what are the factors for a successful expatriation experience also support this study’s findings with regard to experience of change and of working in a different cultural context (Karpin 1995; Davidson & Kinzel 1995).

Taking all the findings together, it is the researcher’s opinion that there is a relationship between the broad factors impacting on knowledge transfer such as organisational factors, external environment and individual characteristics, in a complex and non-linear manner, suggesting that knowledge transfer is a multifactorial process involving interacting variables to an extent greater than generally accepted hitherto.
7.2.3 Indicators of Knowledge Transfer

'The controllers are completely obsessed with financial indicators. We are trying to convince them that knowledge is increasingly important as an indicator of success, but it will be enormously difficult for us to put a value on something that cannot be measured by the standards of financial control.' (Company Director in a diversified multinational concern) (Probst, Raub & Romhardt, 2000)

As mentioned in Section 7.1.3, a key finding from the study was the difficulty of obtaining clear and visible measures of knowledge transfer. Thinking about these difficulties has led to the development of a simple ‘iceberg’ model, which highlights the often invisible nature of knowledge.

*Figure 7.2: Model of observable and non observable knowledge*

In the model above, the visible and non-visible elements of knowledge are represented. From the model, knowledge can be observed through words, behaviours and actions. What cannot be observed are attitudes, intuition, values, emotions and ideas that are under development or have yet to be communicated through words or actions. This model illustrates that it isn’t always possible to observe the adoption of new knowledge. This is because there is often a time lag or gestation period for knowledge to convert to action. This gestation period can be influenced by a range of factors including pride, fear of taking a risk, a lack of absorptive capacity, lack of sufficient...
knowledge about the credibility of the source, or a need to customise and personalise
the knowledge and therefore to make it one’s own (Davenport & Prusak 1998, Leonard
1998). Kanouse and Jacoby (1988) make a telling point about the slow transfer of
knowledge from the non-visible to the visible in their comment ‘there are good reasons
to believe that behaviour change is a much rarer event than the acquisition of
knowledge.’

Within the existing literature, most models of knowledge measurement are related to
measuring an organisation’s total knowledge assets as opposed to the impact of
knowledge transfer. Models developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992) and Edvinsson
and Malone (1997) provide good examples in these areas. While not a model or
measurement tool, many anecdotes of the impact of knowledge transfer abound in the
literature with some firms such as BT attempting to measure the impact of knowledge
management systems on efficiency improvement and user satisfaction. (Stanley 2001).

The difficulty of finding useful measures for knowledge transfer is well reported
and Romhardt (2000, p. 246) comment that the evaluation of knowledge assets is
hampered by the extreme difficulty of assigning cause to effect and assert that
knowledge can only be recorded indirectly.

The literature indicates that it is difficult and limiting to consider quantitative measures,
which while easy to collect, i.e such intranet statistics, are not accurately indicative of
knowledge transfer. Perkmann (2002) recommends a case study approach, such as that
used in the present study, as a more useful way to measure the impact of knowledge
transfer while Probst, Raub and Romhardt (2000) believe that an approach that seeks to
understand causal relationships and to look for indirect measures such as indicators is
more appropriate.

The outcomes from this study taken together with findings from the literature, have
highlighted the importance of considering a range of actions, behaviours, attitudes and
results as indicators of knowledge transfer over a period of time. Some definitions of
these terms follow. An action is simply a conscious step or decision taken to achieve an
outcome. A behaviour is a way of acting or being, generally observable, but the term
may be used to refer to imputed mental events. An attitude is a predisposition to feel, think and act in a certain way, in relation to an object or set of objects. Behaviours and attitudes are closely linked as an attitude can be evident in behaviour and behavioural patterns sometimes reflect certain attitudes. An outcome is simply the result of an action. These indicators are outlined in Table 7.1 below.

**Table 7.1: Indicators and measures of knowledge transfer over time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Short Term (3-6 months)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Medium Term (6-12) months</strong></th>
<th><strong>Long Term (1-3) years</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usage of intranet increases (actions)</td>
<td>Evidence of the adoption and adaptation of practices between markets (outcomes)</td>
<td>Increased sales (outcomes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest shown in markets to implement practices from other markets in discussions (attitudes and behaviours)</td>
<td>Evidence of the nurturing of an informal knowledge sharing culture between countries (actions and behaviours)</td>
<td>Increased customer retention (outcomes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and complexity of commitments made to implement a practice from another market (actions)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence that markets are getting quicker at introducing change (actions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On this basis, it is proposed that both of these models of knowledge and knowledge transfer advance the body of knowledge in this area by highlighting the invisible nature of knowledge and knowledge transfer, while at the same time providing some tangible visible indicators of knowledge transfer through a comprehensive framework capturing actions, attitudes, behaviours and outcomes/impacts. Typical examples of the indicators at the case study site are provided in the model to assist other practitioners.

**7.2.4 Summary of Findings & Theoretical Context**

This section summarises the findings and major contributions that have been previously described. A summary of all findings related to each research question and their theoretical context is provided in Table 7.2 below.
### Table 7.2: Summary of major contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Description of Finding</th>
<th>Ref R. Question</th>
<th>Confirmation, advancement or challenge</th>
<th>Theoretical reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Face-to-face knowledge transfer mechanisms, such as best practice forums, were the most preferred and most effective for knowledge transfer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Alvesson (2000); Davenport and Prusak (1998); Devinney, Soo and Midgley (2001); Dixon (2000); Festinger (1957); Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Technology needs to be fast, easy to access and easy to use to be effective – but is just an enabler of communication and distribution, and not a driver for change</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Davenport and Prusak (1998); Hackett (2000); O’Dell &amp; Jackson Grayson (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge transfer in any format is less effective when communication occurs through a participant’s second language</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Davenport &amp; Prusak (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>People like social interaction in knowledge transfer because they can assess the credibility of the source</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Andrews (2000), Davenport and Prusak (1998); Leonard (1998); Szulanski (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Many factors operate to influence and shape, or indeed to block the transfer of practices</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Davenport and Prusak (1998); Hackett (2000); Szulanski (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is a relationship between the broad factors impacting on knowledge transfer such as organisational factors, external environment and individual characteristics, in a complex and non-linear manner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advances existing findings</td>
<td>Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>There is an interplay between different individual specific characteristics or factors influencing the decision to adopt a practice from another market</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advances existing research</td>
<td>Gamble (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Absorptive capacity has a clear impact on knowledge transfer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Szulanski (1996); Hackett (2000); Davenport and Prusak (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The need for cultural similarity in knowledge transfer emerged as important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Hofstede (1997); Davenport and Prusak (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>For practices to transfer between two countries, there needs to be a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Dixon (2000);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Description of Finding</td>
<td>Ref R. Question</td>
<td>Confirmation, advancement or challenge</td>
<td>Theoretical reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The most prevalent adopters of practices from other markets had tough market conditions, were very motivated, had work experience in a different cultural context and had significant experience of introducing change</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995); Davidson and Kinzel (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Resistance to other practices could be related to a need for creativity, personal ownership, and control.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advances existing research</td>
<td>E.I.U (1998); Leonard (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Clear and visible measures of knowledge transfer are not universal or even generic, but rather are discerned in a range of indicators across actions, behaviours and attitudes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Confirms existing findings</td>
<td>Perkmann (2000); Probst, Raub &amp; Romhardt (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A change in language relating to individual filtering factors from a negative to positive perspective should contribute to the breaking down of barriers to knowledge transfer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advances existing findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.3 Implications for Policy & Practice

Several significant findings have emerged from this study. This section converts some of these findings into a usable tool, model or advice for knowledge management practitioners. There are four recommendations made in this regard.

The first two recommendations for policy and practice relate to the probability that a Manager will adopt a practice from another market. As was reported previously, it was evident from the study’s findings that the most prevalent adopters of practices from other markets had tough market conditions, were very motivated, had significant experience of introducing change and had life experiences in a different cultural context. These findings have been used to develop:
1. A tool for assessing the probability that a Manager will be open to adopting a practice from another market; and to provide
2. Advice regarding strategies and criteria for selecting and developing Managers with openness to practices from outside their cultural context.

An explanation of these recommendations is provided in Section 7.3.1 and Section 7.3.2

### 7.3.1. A Tool for Assessing Managers openness to knowledge transfer

Pulling together the findings from the study, it is possible to develop a tool for assessing the likelihood that a manager will adopt a practice from another market, environment and culture. This tool is presented in Table 7.3.

*Table 7.3: Tool to assist measure the likelihood a manager will consider a practice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volatility of Market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of push factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for absorption capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of face-to-face mechanisms for facilitating uptake of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of other cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of introducing change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rating*

- Intra-country specific
- General Applicability
Using a score of 5 as the highest rating and 1 as the lowest, a rating can be made for a Manager against each of the characteristics. These individual scores will highlight problem or deficient areas. The scores for a number of Managers can also be totalled showing which individuals will be more likely to adopt a practice from another market. Where low scores on certain factors flag areas requiring attention, appropriate organisational interventions and experiences can be designed to improve this situation. For example, if the organisation lacks sufficient face-to-face sharing opportunities for groups of staff for whom knowledge transfer is important, then these opportunities need to be created. The same principal applies for absorptive capacity, and so on.

Lines have been drawn on the tool to identify those factors which have general applicability to knowledge transfer situations, with those factors more directly related to knowledge transfer across countries and cultures specifically identified. Guidelines on how to use the outcomes from the tool with regard to the selection and development of managers are provided below.

### 7.3.2. Strategies for Selecting and Developing Managers

To encourage a higher transfer of knowledge and practices across countries, it is important to recruit and then develop managers with this objective in mind. The tool described above creates a ‘map’ that may assist in this regard. From a recruitment perspective, questions relating to a candidate’s experience of working in a different cultural context, volatile environments and in driving change, would all provide useful indicators of their interest in knowledge adoption from outside their own cultural context. From a development perspective, should this type of experience be lacking in current and potential managers, appropriate development opportunities can be created by way of new roles, job swaps, short term targeted assignments and action learning projects.

### 7.3.3 Model of Influencing Factors and Indicators

The study’s findings revealed the large number, complexity and interconnectivity of factors impacting on knowledge transfer. Reflecting on these findings, it is useful to
think of the challenge of achieving knowledge transfer across countries and cultures, as a journey. The knowledge is carried on this journey by an individual who is influenced by a range of external and organisational factors, as well as having been influenced as a carrier of knowledge, by their own life experiences. Their life experiences can be positive or negative as reflected by the various hills and valleys on the journey. As the journey continues, the knowledge is altered, pared down, added to and customised. As knowledge is converted into action, there are a number of indicators that this transfer has occurred. This journey, and the indicators of knowledge transfer are depicted in Figure 7.3.

**Figure 7.3: Model of Knowledge Transfer Across Countries and Cultures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Term (3-6 months)</th>
<th>Medium Term (6-12) months</th>
<th>Long Term (1-3) years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usage of intranet increases (actions)</td>
<td>Evidence of the adoption and adaptation of practices between markets (results achieved)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Number and complexity of commitments made to implement a practice from another market (actions)</td>
<td>Evidence that markets are getting quicker at introducing change (actions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

![Diagram of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures](attachment://knowledge-transfer-diagram.png)

- **Individual factors**
- **Organisational factors**
- **External factors**

**Influencers**

- **Behaviours**
- **Attitudes**
- **Actions Taken**
- **Results Achieved**

**Indicator Categories**
7.3.4 Organisational attitude, language and process development

A further recommendation with regard to organisational language and policy stems from previous comments relating to the use of negatively-framed language, within the existing literature. It is likely there are several related negative consequences of this situation. Firstly, as language reflects attitude, any communication about the value of knowledge transfer will perhaps unconsciously reflect the attitude of bias towards individual filtering factors. This could then in turn lead to further resistance and less transfer of knowledge. Secondly, the researcher strongly believes that if individual filters are valued and respected, and staff are encouraged not to adopt a practice from another market but to examine the basics, and then adapt and customise it then there will be higher levels of knowledge transfer.

As indicated in Table 7.4, current language usage in the literature describes barriers to knowledge transfer very much from a deficient perspective. Examples of this language from Szulanski (1996) include ‘lack of motivation, inadequate information and lack of absorptive capacity’. This language very much reflects an industrial perspective of organisations. The researcher advocates a change in attitude and language in this regard. It is reasonable to assert that a change, firstly in attitude towards these filtering factors, followed by a change in language, will positively impact on the design of organisational policy and programs created to encourage knowledge transfer.

Table 7.4: Comparison of language used for knowledge transfer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Perspective</th>
<th>Knowledge Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old View</td>
<td>New View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers/Resistance</td>
<td>Lack of absorptive capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation to adopt the practice</td>
<td>Inadequate information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 7 - Findings and Conclusions

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7.4 Methodological Contributions

The study demonstrates the value to be gained from the application of more than one method of data collection from the same set of subjects. By using a combined approach of observation and structured interviews, the methodology allows a more useful interpretation of the data as if in a triangulation design.

7.5 Limitations of the Study

The representative nature of the survey group, together with the broad data collection methods employed, were key strengths of the study approach. However, the researcher perceived a key limitation of the survey group to be the lack of participation by two of the largest and most mature markets. These markets were Spain and France. Staff from these organisations have had a limited involvement in the best practice transfer program, and appear not to be positively disposed towards the adoption of practices from other markets. Investigating the reasons why would have been of significant interest.

The limitations of case study research and the steps taken to ensure the quality of all processes used were outlined previously in Section 3.6. In terms of the measures of quality related to research outcomes as defined by Eisenhardt (1989), it can be asserted that good theory, new insights, and areas for future research emerged at the end of the study, and not at the beginning. These new areas are outlined in Section 7.6 Future Research opportunities.
7.6 Future Research Opportunities

Several areas emerged during the analysis of the findings and from the existing literature, which the researcher believes, are worthy of further investigation. These areas relate both to the impact of various individual and organisational factors on knowledge transfer. Firstly, those areas relating to individual factors include cultural characteristics, motivation, personality, adult learning styles and generational factors. A brief description of each of these areas is provided below.

Culture clearly emerged as a major influencer on knowledge transfer in the study. A relevant area of further investigation would involve examination of the impact of specific behaviours and attitudes typically associated with each culture on the other. Interesting questions to be explored in this area include the extent to which some cultural characteristics have a higher openness to considering practices from other markets.

Motivation is another area worthy of further research. In the findings it was reported that motivation does have an impact on knowledge transfer. However, there is not necessarily a linear relationship in this regard, with some people being motivated in their jobs, but not necessarily motivated to adopt a practice from another market. It is likely that further research is necessary to clarify this point.

A related and curious factor concerns the impact of personality on knowledge transfer which was alluded to but not discussed in any depth in this report. In the findings it was reported that there was some evidence of a level of tension between the central organisation and the local marketing companies. The researcher has already proposed that this could be attributed to a GM’s desire for ownership, control and personal creativity. Another potential area worthy of further study could be the impact of ego and or personality on knowledge transfer.

Again, reflecting on the reasons behind the level of tension between the central organisation and the NMCs, it might be wondered whether the existence of a generation
gap between the two groups has an impact on knowledge transfer. The researcher’s own knowledge of the organisation indicates that staff in the central organisation are generally aged 25 to 40, with General Managers generally being aged 40 to 65. The question emerges as to whether this generational gap has an impact on knowledge transfer.

Another area of investigation worthy of attention concerns the manner in which adults learn, especially with regard to culture. A deeper understanding of different adult learning styles, may provide useful input into the design of formal knowledge transfer processes.

The second general area suggested for further investigation relates to organisational culture. This could be quite a broad area covering factors related to, for example, levels of trust, openness, how people work together and tolerance for mistakes. As a part of this study it would be important to consider the impact of leadership and more specifically the impact of leadership style on openness and trust.

### 7.7 Closing Observations

This study has strongly affirmed existing findings within the literature with regard to the critical importance of face-to-face interaction in knowledge transfer. It is clear that while other distribution channels such as technology and written material play a role in making knowledge available, it is the social interaction that provides the catalyst for transferring knowledge i.e., moving knowledge from a passive state to action. This is because face-to-face communication provides so much more than words or information alone. Through voice, gestures and body language the receiver is able to assess the credibility of the source and to develop their innate sense of the reliability and credibility of the sender. This is an important first step in the knowledge transfer process. It is eminently clear that the decision to take a practice from another market is not made in an emotionally neutral state and that this factor must be taken into consideration in the design of organisational knowledge management systems and processes.
The existing literature points to a broad range of factors impacting on knowledge transfer. This theory building research project has developed a model and tool, which pulls these factors together into a cohesive form, and highlights the complex and non-linear interconnectedness between them.

Additionally, the study has observed limitations in the existing literature in terms of the language used for discussing barriers or resistance to knowledge transfer. It is suggested that the language currently used in the literature is influenced by an attitude that sees factors limiting knowledge transfer from a negative perspective. This attitude implies a resistance to knowledge transfer, as something to be overcome or defeated. Such an attitude is likely to impact negatively on the words and actions of people trying to drive change processes, and may also have the effect of creating further resistance. A clear alternative is to respect the personal filtering and decision making processes that all Managers possess – and to encourage them to take the seeds of the ideas within the practice and to tailor it to reflect their unique market circumstances.

The study has also laid the groundwork for future research which can only assist in building our understanding, of the complex issues which impact on knowledge transfer across countries and culture.
LIST OF APPENDICES

1. Disciplinary Clusters in Organisational Learning (Andrews 2000)
2. Initial letter to respondents
3. Survey Questionnaire
4. List of Markets and Persons Participating in Survey
5. Justification for research questions
6. Markets excluded from survey and those not responding
7. Knowledge Management Process at case study site
8. Example of a Best Practice Snapshot
9. Interview Plan
10. Personal Log
APPENDIX 1

DISCIPLINARY CLUSTERS IN ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

This table is not available online. Please consult the hardcopy thesis available from the QUT Library

Dear Cornel,  

(Personalised letters)

RE: Your feedback on Best Practice Sharing Process

This is just a short note to let you know that we will be calling you in the next two weeks to arrange a time to have a ten minute chat with you in order to obtain your feedback on the sales best practice program.

As you are probably aware, over the last two years we have been using a number of processes to identify, share and push for the implementation of best practices in sales throughout EMEA LA. Some of these initiatives have included Best Practice Forums and use of the NMC Sales Best Practices Exchange in OPERA to publish best practice paper.

We now think it is a good time to assess our learning from the program and get your ideas on the most effective way that the program should be developed in the future - to ensure that it gives you value.

We are still committed to finding, documenting, sharing and pushing for the adoption of best practices in sales wherever we can find them. And we are also keen to learn more about any barriers you experience in learning about, and then implementing best practices from other markets.

We also need your feedback on OPERA as a mechanism for sharing best practices and on the best practice documentation that was distributed at the GM meeting in April.

Whew - well so much for my short note. That is probably enough for the moment. Either Mary or myself will be in touch shortly by phone.

Cheers

Tracy
APPENDIX III – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Region

2. NMC

3. Person Called:

4. Position:

5. Number of people in their sales organisation

6. Number of people in their marketing organisation

Date: Time:

Interviewer:

Background notes on experience of best practice forums and accessing the NMC Sales Business page in OPERA - use in context of introduction

Notes from Discussion with PMM/MM

7. Attitude of GM to Change?

- Very Motivated (VM)
- Motivated (M)
- Not Motivated (NM)

Who should I call in the NMC as a part of this survey?

8, 9, 10, 11. What do they perceive to be the top two priorities in this market in the sales and marketing area? (This will depend upon their current market positioning). For example, market share increase, customer retention etc
Based on our discussions with PMM/MM - what Best practice papers might be most relevant for their markets needs?

Summary of Organisations Objectives of Survey - For reference.

**First objective** - Increase awareness of best practices from other NMC’s & KM program

**Second objective** - Follow logic of sales process from Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MEASURING the extent of, and impact of best practice implementation. Identifying where changes and improvements have been made. (also level of interest in best practices from other markets.) Including where possible the impact on sales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2   | Identify **BARRIERS** to implementation  
2.1 Motivation to change  
2.2 Language  
2.3 Absorptive capacity - i.e. other priorities/lack of time, lack of resources, lack of expertise  
2.4 Culture  
2.5 Lack of Knowledge about best practice |
| 3   | **Access to OPERA - as an effective distribution and communication of BP’s**  
3.1 Evaluating their experience of, and interest in accessing OPERA to find best practices in sales  
3.2 Identifying barriers to accessing OPERA  
3.3 Identify and promote interest in and value of monthly Newsletter  
3.4 What other ways should we communicate |
| 4   | **BEST PRACTICE PAPERS THEMSELVES**  
4.1 Identify how they found out about best practices? I.e. Distribution to paper at GM meeting, BP forums, via the web etc  
4.2 Obtain feedback on best practice papers - how do they perceive them. Are they well structured, easy to read to facilitate implementation. Identify support needed to implement best practices  
4.3 Obtain feedback on format of BP forums in future - and other BP initiatives |
| 5   | **PUSH FOR MORE IMPLEMENTATION.** Use the survey process itself to promote other best practices - thereby continuing the push for the adoption of best practices. |
| 6   | **IDENTIFY OTHER BEST PRACTICES** in the NMCs. |

This survey will be a success if we:

- Able to obtain specific, valid feedback as to the real extent of implementation
- Obtain honest specific feedback as to the usefulness of the best practice forums, OPERA and best practice toolkits as mechanisms for identifying, sharing and distributing learning
- Identify key ways to take BP and KM program forward
PART 1 - AWARENESS PHASE of Elements of Sales Focus Program

1. *Can I just check - Did you receive copies of the Sales Focus Program Package including:*
   a. Best Practice Snapshots?
   b. Best Practice Detailed papers?
   c. Sales Executive Toolbox?
   d. Sales Manager Toolbox?

Which were distributed at the EMEA LA GM meeting in Nice in April? *(ref 4.1)* *(If no ask if they would like for us to send them a toolkit pack and move to part 2 - question 22).*

2. *Were they distributed within your organization? Do you need any additional paper copies?* *(Not sure that this question is correctly positioned - will need to renumber at end).* *(Old number 21)*

3. *Did you have the opportunity to:*
   a. Read the Sales Executive Toolbox Yes/No
   b. Read the Sales Manager Toolbox Yes/No

4. *Did you implement or plan to implement any tools from the salesforce toolboxes?* *(Yes/No)*

5. *If yes - Which ones?*

*For more information, do not hesitate to contact - salestoolbox@amadeus.net*

*OK - I now want to look at the best practice papers.*

6. *Did you have the opportunity to:*
   a. Read the BP Snapshots? Yes/No
   b. Read detailed papers Yes/No
   c. *If no, was there anything that we could have done to entice you to read them?*

*If yes to either of the questions above then ask the following questions*
7. What was your overall impression of the documents in terms of content and presentation. For example - Did you -
   a. Format easy to read? Yes/No
   b. Find the content useful Yes/No
   c. Enough detail to facilitate implementation Yes/No
   d. Other?
   e. What would you suggest to improve the documents?

8. Were there any practices that you were particularly interested in? If so, which ones? Why? (ref 1) Note Market and practice

9. Were there any practices that you were particularly interested in? If so, which ones? Why? (ref 1) Note Market and practice
   
What additional support could we provide to help you to implement this practice in your market? (ref 2.3)

10. People or budgetary resources to implement practice? Y/N

11. More info - via contact with other NMC's who have already implemented the practice. Y/N

12. Anything else?

13. Are there any other areas sales, marketing or other areas where you would like to see best practices reported?
Part 2 - Interest PHASE - including accessing OPERA -

14. How often do you access OPERA? Weekly, Monthly, Occasionally, Never? (ref 3.1) *(If never, move to 19 - and ask in a general sense).*

15. Do you find it easy to access? (ref 3.2) - Y/N

16. (I'm guessing that) you have managed to receive a digital certificate? Y/N

17. For you, is the OPERA intranet an effective way to communicate best practices? (ref 3.1& 3.2) - Y/N

18. In your opinion - how could it be improved?

Newsletter Question

19. Do you receive the monthly - What's New Newsletter which outlines what is new within the NMC Sales page in OPERA?

20. If Yes, do you like the format, - *if no go to next question*

21. If no, can I add you to the list for the monthly? (ref 3.3)

New Service for the Future

22. We are considering a number of other services for the future? Could you give me your opinion as to whether you think they will be valued by NMC"s.

a. On-line chat groups/creation of communities around problems to be solved (ONL)

b. Provision of more sales tools and guidelines etc(TOL)

c. Best practices from external organisations (EXT)

d. Others?
Part 3  General Communication and Sharing Processes

23. Generally, how do you hear about best practices from other NMC's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you hear about other NMC's best practices?</th>
<th>How would you like to hear about best practices in the future?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• EMEA LA GM meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• From discussions with staff in other NMC's</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge Manager describing Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From a PMM or MM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• From someone else in your organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Best Practice Forums</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NMC Exchange in OPERA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Monthly Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Other ?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

24. What are your preferred ways to learn about other markets most effective practices? (refer to table above).

Best Practices in Your NMC

25. Do you think that your NMC has some proven/effective practices in the sales and marketing area that other NMC's could benefit from learning about? Who should I speak to, to learn more about this practice.
Part 4 - Desire & Action Phase - Implementation of Best Practices

Instructions for interviewer - Make link here to respondents previous responses to questions about best practice interest and implementation. Refer to best practice implementation sheet before proceeding with these questions. If they have not been to a best practice forum - then skip questions 35-39 and turn page.

For example, I understand that at the x best practice forum, y displayed an interest in implementing z best practice. (Wait to receive confirmation from the respondent)

26. Could you now provide me with details on the extent to which a best practice that you had heard about from another market influenced you in the implementation of another similar practice in your market?

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>27. Which practice</th>
<th>28 Which market from</th>
<th>29 Extent of implementation</th>
<th>30 Results/Impact - Sales or customer retention</th>
<th>31. Any enhancements made - Any other learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g. competitor SWOT -</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**About Best Practice Forums specifically**

Preamble - In the past we have used best practice forums as a key mechanism for identifying, sharing and encouraging the adoption of best practices in sales. In the past, best practice forums were run by region and were generally attended by GMs or Sales Directors.
We are currently evaluating whether we should continue with this format and would value your feedback:

32. **From which other markets are you most interested in exchanging experiences with?**

33. **Should we run them in the future by:**

   a. By region - in the same format that we have used in the past - Y/N
   b. By markets in a similar competitive position
   c. With similar problems to solve
   d. By job level
   e. Other ideas
# APPENDIX IV - LIST OF MARKETS AND PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Role Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BENELUX</td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Director Sales &amp; Business Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BENELUX</td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BENELUX</td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Account Director, Director Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CWA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>Sales Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM, Deputy GM and Training manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>Deputy GM</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Dir-Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM, Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>START</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
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<td>Turkey</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM/Sales Dir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>GM &amp; Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Lovelock</td>
<td>GM</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## APPENDIX V – JUSTIFICATION OF THE QUESTION CONTEXT

List here questions – themes and intentions of the questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Research Question/s</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NMC</td>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Personal Called</td>
<td>Identifier info</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Identifier info</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No of people in sales organisation</td>
<td>Contextual info</td>
<td>Useful when considering issues of absorptive capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No of people in marketing organisation</td>
<td>Contextual info</td>
<td>Useful when considering issues of absorptive capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Attitude of GM to Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❐ Very Motivated (VM)</td>
<td>What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td>Third party asked – not an appropriate question to ask respondent directly. Question asked of staff in central organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❐ Motivated (M)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❐ Not Motivated (NM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What do they perceive to be the top two priorities in this market in the sales and marketing area?</td>
<td>Important contextual background information. Could demonstrate that I was informed. Better position researcher for probing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Did you have the opportunity to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Read the Toolboxes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Checking that they had been received and read before I asked further question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Read the BP snapshots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Read the detailed papers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What was your overall impression of the documents in terms of content and presentation. For example - Did you -</td>
<td>Nice safe place to start – with easy questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Format easy to read?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Find the content useful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Enough detail to facilitate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. Other ?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Improvements for documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4. By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5. What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Research Question/s</td>
<td>Justification</td>
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<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Were there any practices that you were particularly interested in? If so, which ones? Why?</td>
<td>What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures? By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures? What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td>Hofstede (1997), Hampden-Turner &amp; Trompenaars (1993). Dixon (2000) referring to Buckman laboratories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &amp; 16</td>
<td><strong>Intranet as communication mechanism</strong></td>
<td>What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures? By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures? What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How often do you access OPERA? Weekly, Monthly, Occasionally, Never? (ref 3.1) Do you find it easy to access? - Y/N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For you, is the OPERA intranet an effective way to communicate best practices? - Y/N In your opinion - how could it be improved?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19, 20 &amp; 21</td>
<td>Email Newsletter Do you receive the monthly - What's New Newsletter which outlines what is new within the NMC Sales page in OPERA?</td>
<td>By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures? What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX V – JUSTIFICATION OF THE QUESTION CONTEXT**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Research Question/s</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If Yes, do you like the format, - if no go to next question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>If no, can I add you to the list for the monthly? (ref 3.3)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>New Service for the Future</strong></td>
<td><strong>By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We are considering a number of other services for the future? Could you</td>
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<td></td>
<td>give me your opinion as to whether you think they will be valued by NMC&quot;s.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-line chat groups/creation of communities around problems to be solved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of more sales tools and guidelines etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best practices from external organisations Others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>How did you hear about other NMC's best practices?</strong></td>
<td><strong>By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EMEA LA GM meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• From discussions with staff in other NMC’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge Manager describing Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• From a PMM or MM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• From someone else in your organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Best Practice Forums</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• NMC Exchange in OPERA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monthly Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref</td>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Research Question/s</td>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>How would you like to hear about best practices in the future? Or</td>
<td>By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are you preferred ways to learn about other markets most effective practices?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26,</td>
<td>Could you now provide me with details on the extent to which a best practice that you had heard about from another market influenced you in the implementation of another similar practice in your market?</td>
<td>What are the indicators of knowledge transfer across countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27,</td>
<td>From which other markets are you most interested in exchanging experiences with?</td>
<td>What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28,</td>
<td>Should we run forums in the future by:</td>
<td>What factors impact on knowledge transfer countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29,</td>
<td>• By region - in the same format that we have used in the past</td>
<td>By what means is knowledge transferred countries and cultures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,</td>
<td>• By markets in a similar competitive position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>• With similar problems to solve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• By job level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX VI – MARKETS EXCLUDED FROM SURVEY**

Markets requested *not to contact* by PMM or MM:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEA</th>
<th>CESE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gulf States</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QATAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Due to the following reasons:**

- Too new- recent market entry
- Other pressing priorities
- Current HR issues

Markets contacted for an interview but not responding to request to be part of the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEA</th>
<th>CESE</th>
<th>WE</th>
<th>LA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Knowledge Management Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 1</th>
<th>STAGE 2</th>
<th>STAGE 3</th>
<th>STAGE 4</th>
<th>STAGE 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Sharing &amp; Distribution</td>
<td>Pushing for implementation</td>
<td>Measuring impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>BY WHO</td>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>HOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Best Practice Forums</td>
<td>• Knowledge Manager</td>
<td>• Intranet</td>
<td>• Stage 1 of Best Practice forums</td>
<td>• Stage 2 of Best Practice forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open invitation to share BPs</td>
<td>• GMs and Sales Managers</td>
<td>• Email</td>
<td>• Measuring financial results</td>
<td>• Measuring financial results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other NMC staff</td>
<td>• BP forums</td>
<td></td>
<td>• In depth survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• CD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• KM sharing practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Other central staff sharing practices</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VIII – EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE SNAPSHOT

SMART: EFFECTIVE GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF MARKET THROUGH A ROADSHOW

THE CHALLENGE
With travel agencies dispersed across Sweden, SMART had to find the most efficient and cost effective way to visit and provide support to as many of their customers as possible, while raising the profile of SMART, meeting prospects and selling additional products.

SUMMARY
There is a lot that can be learnt about running a high impact marketing and sales event like a travelling roadshow as SMART has done for the last few years. The Roadshow for 2000 was particularly special as SMART, together with Swedish Railways, organized a combined ‘railshow-roadshow’ targeted at travel agencies throughout Sweden.

The characteristics of their winning approach included an analysis and segmentation of client needs and interests’ detailed planning, communication and follow-up.

This paper outlines how SMART did it, including: what they achieved; and details of their learning from the experience.

OBJECTIVES
• Raise the profile of SMART & Swedish Railways on the market
• Launch new products (e.g. Rail product) / Sell existing products
• Provide product training and useful tips and hints
• Meet with customers in an ‘interesting’ environment in order to further strengthen the relationship and build customer loyalty and
• Arrange additional customer visits while in the area.

THE APPROACH
• Define objectives for event
• Plan in detail, towns to be visited, format for the event
• Communicate these plans: both externally and internally(via invitations, meetings etc)
• Use customer segmentation to tailor workshops directing customers/prospects according to their profile & interests
• Train staff to be Generals during the show (explained in more detail in the paper)
• Carry out the roadshow (workshops from 9h- 21h each day for 3 weeks)
• Give out momentos of the event (photos in practice)
• Collect feedback from participants – evaluate.

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED!!
• Tremendous visibility of the the SMART brand - with the event attracting the attention of 45 journalists
• Sold 35 Value Pricers and 5 SMART itineraries
• Met with over 800 customers and prospects in a 3-week period
• Customer event rated at 4.2

Market Context
• Large geographic market with customers spread across
• Market share shrinking as a result of direct distribution
• Market potential bookings: 45 Mio (SMART incl. Sweden)

NMC Facts
• Market share: 80%
• Staff: 220

DO’s
• Use a partner if possible to share costs and maximize impact
• Segment customers for workshops design & attendance
• Communicate extensively - Internally/ externally
• Follow-up on invitations
• Train and brief generals thoroughly
• Keep event to twice a year but increase the number of customer visits
• Measure & monitor results

Practice Support tools
• ‘Memories’ brochure handed out to all participants
• Visuals in the paper showing how the train was setup.

You can FIND MORE DETAILS on this best practice:
• On the Sales & Marketing Best Practices CD - with lots of other great sales and marketing practices
• In the NMC Sales Best Practices Exchange in OPERA under Put Strategy into Action - Run an effective Marketing Campaign

Christina Karlegran
Marketing & Communication Manager
APPENDIX IX – INTERVIEW PLAN

To ensure that each interview facilitated the gathering of a richness of information relevant to the research questions, an interview plan was prepared. This section outlines what this plan or guide contained, along with the research justification for its use.

According to King (1995) and Minichiello et al (1991) an interview guide lists the topics which should be covered during the course of the interview. It should be developed with consideration for the research literature and from the researchers own knowledge. This latter point was particularly relevant for this study as the researcher knew the organisation and knowledge management program intimately, and generally knew the survey participant and their market well. Additionally, the researcher undertook pre-interview research into the market and into the General Manager’s attitude and experience of change.

The overriding philosophy guiding the structure of questions in the interview, was to prompt interest in practices from another market. To achieve this, it was recognised that the questioning process needed to follow the AIDA sales approach (Amadeus Sales Training Documentation, 2002). The acronym AIDA stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action. This approach means that the researcher must

1. Raise **Awareness** (of the practice)
2. Prompt the market’s **Interest** in it
3. Generate a **Desire** to implement the practice
4. **Facilitate the occurrence of Action**

An outline of the interview protocol follows.
Introduction to Interview

Thank you for making the time available to speak with me. I appreciate that you are very busy.

As you may be aware, I am responsible for facilitating the identification, sharing and pushing for the adoption of best practices in sales and marketing between the NMCs. Our team, (the Strategic Projects team) is dedicated to exchanging knowledge in the sales area between NMC’s. Our objective is to support the NMC’s to improve sales and marketing, by supporting the introduction of best practices.

As I mentioned in our email, we are currently undertaking a telephone survey to evaluate the effectiveness of our knowledge sharing efforts. Particularly in areas including: The best practice toolkits, the best practice forums and the NMC Sales business page in OPERA. We are also looking for new ways to improve the program for next year.

Now we understand from our background research, that key sales/marketing issues in your markets are:  (State understanding of key issues – Prompt for confirmation)

Is that correct? Are there any other key sales and marketing issues in your market?

I'd like to start by obtaining your feedback on the Best Practice toolkits and program - 'How to do its' and 'Snapshots?'

With the context for the interview clearly explained, the researcher then moves through each of the blocks of questions. The first block is concerned with obtaining feedback on the best practice documentation. For each of the question sets, it was important to first validate that the respondent was familiar with the subject being discussed such as the documentation, best practice forum or the intranet site before moving on to the detailed questions.

There were eight key blocks of questions. These blocks were questions related to obtaining feedback on:

- Best Practice documentation
- Best Practice Intranet
• Best Practice Monthly email newsletter
• Seeking input on Other mechanisms for sharing knowledge
• How they heard about best practices/How they like to hear about best practices
• Probing their markets best practices
• Obtaining evidence of knowledge transfer & creation
• Best Practice forums

Barriers to implementation were identified through responses in each question block.

(A full copy of the interview questionnaire is provided in Appendix III with the justifications for questions being provided in Appendix V)

Throughout the interview, the researcher would restate what they had hear the respondent say not only to demonstrate that they were listening, but to check that they had understood the meaning correctly. Throughout the interview new items or perspectives often emerged. When this occurred the researcher capitalised on the opportunity which presented in terms of ‘flexible and opportunistic data collection that allow additions to questions during interviews during the series of interviews’ (Easterby-Smith 1994, p. 532; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991).

Closing the Interview
Once all questions had been asked and responded to, the interview was wrapped up in the following way:

Thank you so much for your time. In terms of follow-up from our discussion I will now
- Add your name to the monthly newsletter list
- (Anything else)

In terms of the survey outcomes - Once we analyze the results - and then have made decisions as to what we will do with the program as a result of what we have learned - we will communicate with you via the WHAT's New newsletter.
APPENDIX X – PERSONAL LOG

A personal log was used as a part of the structured interview process. This section outlines what the literature says about the value of a personal log, and describes how this tool was used to enhance the quality of data capture and analysis in this study.

During all telephone interviews extensive notes were taken. On the day of the interview, all hand written notes on the answer collection sheet were transcribed into two documents. One document was an excel spreadsheet that captured answers to closed questions, and allowed a short synopsis of open questions, the other a word document called a Personal Log. To ensure that none of the richness of the dialogue was lost, the personal log captured not only direct quotes from participants, but the researchers observations and feelings about the respondents answers to the questions.

This approach has received endorsement from noted experts on Qualitative methodology including Minichello. Minichello et al (1991) identified three main criteria for writing an effective personal log. These criteria were that the researcher:

- Writes all thoughts and impressions in the log;
- The personal log should be frank, and there is no predetermined length; and
- The notes must give a full account of the people, the situations and the decisions made during the interview

As can be seen from the above statements, the researchers actions conformed to the recommendation of Minichello.

In terms of the practicalities of the logs, each entry commenced with the date of the interview, the name of the person being interviewed and their role. Careful attention was paid to capturing the interviewees’ exact words and to noting their level of interest and involvement in the best practice sharing program.
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