

Erzsébet Noszkay:
A knowledge management system approach^[2]
„Knowledge management – science living with us”



The conference series of the Hungarian Science Festival organised every year for the last ten autumns by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) selected “science living with us” for its subject in 2013. As The President of the MTA, academy member József Pálinkás said in his greeting speech: „... it is about science living with and acting for us. (...) This year’s presentations and programs were focused on the research offering targeted solutions and developments for our social and economic needs.”

As an opening to this high level series of events, the Hungarian knowledge management profession also had something to celebrate: In mid-October the literature of the Hungarian knowledge management specialists was enriched by a new, valuable work by a Hungarian author – Erzsébet Noszkay presented her volume: *The System View of Knowledge Management*.

It makes for exceptional reading. Professor Erzsébet Noszkay is a cooperation liaison representative of the Hungarian knowledge management research establishment and has been working in the entrepreneurial sector for more than four decades as a trainer, advisor and expert. She has a wealth of experience of the workings of large companies as well as of – being the chairperson of the National Association for Crisis Managers – the world of SMEs. Her prosperous professional career is worthy of a book in itself. As an author, she has here undertaken to present the general consequences to be learned of numerous knowledge management system-establishing projects.

It is to be noted that in this respect, even international specialised literature still has a relatively narrow range of comprehensive textbooks, although there are a great number of case studies available. International authors mainly analyse projects and “stories” of given companies, whereas an overall system-based elaboration of the subject is hard to find. Therefore, Erzsébet Noszkay’s publication is an important work at a global level too.

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[2] Pearson Publisher ISBN 978 1 78365 277 8 Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, 2013. (7 a., 137 p.)

To write a book in itself is a knowledge management activity: the author, with the help of her own language tools, as well as with pictures, charts and diagrams sets up a form i.e. formalises her ideas and knowledge to write about a given subject. And if the topic of the volume – as it is in this case – is knowledge management itself, a rare situation is encountered, namely that the issue of examination is to be elaborated by its own tools. It is not an easy task at all but the writer of this book has successfully overcome these difficulties. While she is collecting the subject matters on a new train of thoughts, she is also making a synthesis: she quotes several publications of her own research achievements from the previous years. Through this, it becomes evident even for unqualified readers that a conscious architecture, many years of practical work and parallel executed systematic and scientific research have produced an actual result, namely this book. It is unusual from other aspects as well: the titles of the chapters are not concise; some are several words long and some are even several lines long, describing precisely the essence of the topic. There is no doubt that Erzsébet Noszkay fully intends to transfer her knowledge as efficiently as possible.

First the author presents her readers the basic terms of knowledge management in a light, easily understandable way, then provides them with a short overview about the development history of this territory. The generation notion frameworks discussed here are going to be the basis for further comparisons when the grouping of knowledge management projects and service types are introduced.

She reveals such fundamental questions like the relationship between knowledge management and innovation, as well as analysing in detail the similarities and differences of knowledge, experience and professional communities. At the same time, she also sets up the new guidelines for further investigations and research. For instance – modestly in a footnote – she remarks, „I have to admit that topics and combinatory are to complement aspects of the creative process – the rules of combinatory are empty without topics and the topics without the driving forces of combinatory processes are only static building stones.”

Following a theoretical beginning accompanied by examples, in Chapters 4 and 5, the author continues the book with the most interesting part in my opinion; the methods of employment in practice. In this section, the professor has an actual hands-on approach of how a good knowledge management system can be established. Anyone considering the introduction of such a solution as a manager or proprietor can receive satisfying answers to his questions in an easy to understand way. Based on the author’s experience, she explores from the aspect of opportunities and conditions what methods and application development models are available if the event is part of the corporate strategy, initiated from the top, or if it is to be created by the participants of the organisation organically built up from the bottom.

Chapter four presents in fact the system approach: how the details have to be reached while constantly paying attention to the whole of the organisation, applying the People - Process - Technology tripartite methodological approach. One of the advantages of this scheme is that it is not organisation specific, i.e. it can be equally applied in the same way in the case of SMEs or large companies as well as in that of NGOs or civil organisations and even in that of state or municipal organisations. The general applicability of this chapter's materials provides the users with an important tool as they can make considerations in a unified way at an organisational unit, group or community level, thus the original development intention can be put into service in a unified way everywhere. The examples cited by the author give excellent guidance to all the above-mentioned initiatives

The propositions for practical steps for introducing the knowledge management method can be read in Chapter 5. These steps and the applied method has already undergone numerous tests, so it can be declared that we receive a well-tryed instruction in the way that in the appendix of the book, the cluster of forms to evaluate the knowledge management level of the organisations can also be found. This mapping has a key importance in the course of project planning and preparation, as is underlined by the writer at several points in her work. Basically it is decided here whether the organisation has a chance of carrying out a successful knowledge management project: if the assessment in the examined area is not complete, comprehensive or honest, it is later impossible to implement a successful development strategy.

The volume is available through Pearson Publishing, adding its international textbook publication experience and references to the high quality manuscript. I am convinced that soon a second printing is to be considered as the study and regular reading of the current book can be honestly recommended to all medium and senior managers as well as to company owners



József Somogyi: Nimrod, the mythological father of Hungarians