

# “Knowledge Management is key in today’s world, says conference”

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### Knowledge management is key in today’s world, says conference

By Safaa Abdoun  
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CAIRO: The ever-expanding knowledge base in today’s world raises questions of credibility, therefore knowledge by itself is not important but knowledge management is crucial, explained Egypt’s Minister of State for Administrative Development Ahmed Darwish at a conference Tuesday.

There is a need for knowledge but knowledge in a structured manner in order to be used efficiently, he said in the conference titled “Knowledge Management a Catalyst for Innovation.”

As organizations today view knowledge as their most valuable and strategic resource, they are realizing that in order to survive in the modern ‘knowledge era’ they must explicitly manage their intellectual resources and capabilities through developing a strategy for managing and leveraging knowledge, said the conference statement.

But what is knowledge management?

“Knowledge management is a discipline concerned with helping individuals, teams and organizations more collectively and systematically

create, store, share and apply knowledge to achieve or even exceed their objectives,” explained Ron Young, the chief knowledge officer for Knowledge Associates International in the UK, and speaker at the conference.

“We have always managed our knowledge throughout history but the key new words here are ‘collectively and systematically’ we have never been able to do this before,” he added.

Darwish pointed out the importance of knowledge matter on the governmental level between the different bodies. “There needs to be a network of communication in order to exchange knowledge to benefit the citizen and make the services more accessible to them,” he said.

He cited cooperation and communication between the Ministry of State for Administrative Development and the Ministry of Social Solidarity of which the product was the electronic ration cards.

He also mentioned cooperation with the Ministry of Education last summer as parents were applying for their children at schools. Typically students would have to submit with their applications a birth certificate that was issued at

the Civil Services Authority.

However, this year the Ministry of State for Administrative Development agreed with the Ministry of Education that the birth certificate is no longer a requirement.

“More than 1,550,000 students went to school this year, so if we managed to save around one million visits to the Civil Services Authority to issue a birth certificate, this is about one million working hours we have saved for the country as the parents did not need to leave their work to run this errand,” he explained.

The minister, however, raised a few questions in relation to knowledge management, including ways to avoid the monopoly of knowledge by some people within an organization. “As knowledge is power, some people hold on to the knowledge in order to secure their position in the organization,” he explained.

Moreover, the minister asked if there information that can’t be recorded, for example why doesn’t the organizational chart tell you who has the information?

He also asked for ways to recruit employees that are able to create and disseminate information. Finally, he asked for a way to measure our ability of

knowledge management.

The conference was held by the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) and sponsored by a number of bodies including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Industrial Development Authority, Egypt Air and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

“In the 21st century, the world has a growing interest in the role of knowledge and information in the economy and knowledge has become the most important component in economic growth and development,” said Maged Othman, IDSC chairman.

“New terminology has come up reflecting this interest, there is ‘knowledge society’, ‘knowledge revolution’ and ‘knowledge economy’ to the extent that we can say that the capabilities of any society today is related to their knowledge-related activities,” he said.

The event brought together experts in knowledge management from all over the world who spoke about the subject in a number of contexts. From the United Kingdom, Director and Co-Founder of Knoco Ltd, spoke about knowledge management implementation.

“Knowledge is the ability to take action based on information,” he said, “‘knowledge management’ is a management system that you would apply to realize the value of your company’s knowledge.”

Although many organizations today may have all the knowledge management technology available, they are only effective when there is a team overlooking it, as well as a demand from the people who are seeking knowledge.

Moreover, Milton pointed out that organizations can’t simply adopt any knowledge management system and apply it. “It needs to fit the organizational structure, culture and working habits,” he said, adding that what may work at a company in the UK won’t necessarily work at the same company in Egypt for example.

On the other hand, Peter Heisig from Cambridge Engineering Design Center, explains that “Knowledge management aims to support the creation of new knowledge [hence] invention and innovation.”

For example, in Japan, knowledge management initiatives are mostly focused on knowledge creation activities in order to promote more creativity and innovation.