

Book Review: The Essential Guide to Knowledge Management by Amrit Tiwana

The Essential Guide to Knowledge Management: E-Business and CRM Applications

Amrit Tiwana, 2001

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“As businesses increasingly realize that knowledge (not capital or technology) is their only sustainable edge, customers their key assets, and channel relationships their fountainhead of adaptability, they are turning to knowledge management and customer relationship management ...” With this fundamental truth, Amrit Tiwana sets the stage for his introduction of a new paradigm which he calls: Knowledge-enabled Customer Relationship Management (KCRM). This new paradigm is achieved by applying the principles of knowledge management in the context of the customer within an e-Business setting.

In Part1, Amrit Tiwana builds a good foundation for understanding the basic concepts and the interrelationship of knowledge management, customer relationship management, and e-Business. At the end of this first part, he outlines the roadmap for implementing KCRM, which is the intersection of these three components. The remaining chapters detail each of the following steps in the KCRM roadmap:

- Strategic alignment of business and technology strategies
- Audit and analysis that help determine the present state of the relationship and knowledge assets of the business
- The process of assembling a boundary-spanning team for the KCRM implementation
- Developing and understanding the technology plan or blueprint
- Ensuring that KCRM systems are built with an eye on long and short term results
- Aligning leadership, change management, and corporate culture with the KCRM strategy
- Evaluating, measuring, and refining the success of the KCRM initiative

The many diagrams, tables, and terminology definitions (“Tech Talk”) are well done. Although some key concepts are repeatedly defined throughout the discussions, the repetition serves as an excellent reinforcement and refresher. Due to the span and depth of material, multiple readings of the text are required to gain a well-grounded understanding of the presented subjects. The material is well organized and it is easy to locate specific information. Each chapter contains an excellent outline at the beginning and concise summary at the end.

The Essential Guide to Knowledge Management should be required reading for every business leader and practitioner who wants their business to succeed in the New Economy. The holistic and detailed approach presented here qualifies as a superb source book for developing and implementing the customized strategy needed by every business for achieving and sustaining competitive advantage in these exciting times.

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