
Foreword by *John Van Beveren*

Over a decade ago I made a call for new models, tools and techniques for knowledge management in different contexts, specifically the health sector. I didn't expect that such a call would one day result in the production of such a significant body of work that is contained within this book.

The content of this book and its value can be described in many ways. The most succinct descriptor that I can think of to describe it is as a major research project undertaken by contributors who are experts on knowledge management within certain contexts to scrutinize a normative model within those contexts.

It is more than an anthology or a review of the literature. This book contains a central thesis to systematically outline in which situations which elements of the idea of knowledge management are relevant and preferable and in which situations they are not. In my opinion, this is a very ambitious and brave undertaking. The editor and authors should be commended for the work contributed to this handbook and results produced.

This book is suitable for many people interested in knowledge management and their approach to reading it may vary depending on their need and context of interest. Researchers and scholars are likely to be the types of people who will read this book from cover to cover. Most organizational actors, I suspect, will read specific chapters, out of Part II. To these people, I suggest that they take the time to read Part I (the first three chapters) first, to fully appreciate why the chapter relevant to their specific context was written.

Each of the chapters in Part II could be read independently and provide valuable insight to the reader. The most value would be gained, though, from understanding that the contingency model of knowledge management presented throughout this book may help to identify whether knowledge management techniques and tools need or should be implemented within a particular context. Chapter 23 contains a table that summarizes the 'fit' of the seven C's of the normative model to the various contexts. I recommend that readers peruse this final chapter to fully appreciate the effort made to fulfil the aims of this book. The table may also be used to make comparisons across contexts and assist the reader to identify other chapters and hence contexts that may be of interest to read to explore whether there are similarities and/or differences worth noting.

I hope that current and future researchers in the field of knowledge

management appreciate the effort and results of the research behind this book and that they see this body of work as insightful and valuable. The model provides an effective framework for future research in various new and emerging contexts. Such research, if undertaken, can be compared against the findings of the research contained within this book and against each other.

I believe the editor and authors of this book have made a valuable contribution to the future development of research in the knowledge management field that will hopefully provide clarity in many ways. The vision behind the research contained in this book is to explain the incongruencies between recommendations contained in different studies and this is now somewhat achievable if the approaches suggested in the book are adopted. Reduction and removal of incongruencies will not only assist researchers but also help organizational actors and practitioners in identifying the key elements for knowledge management that are relevant and preferable to be adopted to achieved desired outcomes in their contexts.

This book is an essential addition to the library of anyone who is involved in the field of management. It is now a valuable addition to my collection and is a very useful reference to work that I am involved in today.

John Van Beveren
Lawyer