

Intergenerational Succession within Family Businesses: The Role of Sharing and Creation Knowledge

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Abstract : The purpose of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of the succession process from a knowledge management perspective. By doing that, succession process in family businesses, as an environment for creating and sharing knowledge, was explored. Design/Methodology/Approach: To support our reasoning, we collected qualitative data through 16 in-depth interviews conducted with all decision makers involved in the family businesses succession process in France. These open-ended responses were subsequently exposed to thematic discourse analysis. Findings: Central to this exhibit is the nature and magnitude of knowledge creation and sharing among the actors within the family succession context and how can tacit knowledge sharing facilitate the succession process. We also identified factors that inhibit down the knowledge creation and sharing processes. The sharing and creation of knowledge among members of a family business appear to be a complex process that must be part of a strategy for change. This implies that it requests trust and takes a certain amount of time because it requires organizational change and a clear and coherent strategic vision that is accepted and assimilated by all the members. Professional and leadership skills are of particular importance in knowledge sharing and creation processes. In most cases, tacit knowledge is crucial when it is shared and accumulated collectively. Our findings reveal that managers should find ways of implementing knowledge sharing and creation processes while acknowledging the succession process within family firms. This study highlights the importance of generating knowledge strategies in order to enhance the performance and the success of intergenerational succession. The empirical outcomes contribute to enrich the field of succession management process and enhance the role of knowledge in shaping family performance and longevity. To a large extent, the lessons learned from the study of succession processes in family-owned businesses are that when there is a deliberate effort to introduce a knowledge-based approach, this action becomes a seminal event in the life of the organization. Originality/Value: The paper contributes to the deep understanding of interactions among actors by examining the knowledge creation and sharing processes since current researches in family succession focused on aspects such as personal development of potential, intra-family succession intention, decision-making processes in family businesses. Besides, as succession is one of the key factors that determine the longevity and the performance of family businesses, it also contributes to literature by examining how tacit knowledge is transferred, shared and created in family businesses and how this can facilitate the intergenerational succession process.

Keywords : family-owned businesses, succession process, knowledge, performance

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