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Impact of e-commerce management to e-skill trainings programs

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Abstract

Always growing of Internet technologies presents complicated opportunities and challenges to organizations and guiding them to develop new E-skills programs roles and practices. Academic researchers and business associations worldwide, conducted several studies of e-skills development programs, which emphasized on clarifying managers' skills and competences, but there isn't an overall outlook on today's requirements for e-commerce management. Different companies have different points of view on what the e-commerce manager's roles and functions are. Some businesses believe that e-commerce management includes marketing functions; others dedicate it to IT functions or web design and web development. In fact, e-commerce managers are in charge of all related aspects of their business, from financial perspective to website maintenance. Moreover, managerial decisions play a substantial role in organization's performance efficiency and competitiveness in the irregular electronic era. So it is crucial for business owners to be aware of latest e-skills to get their business started successfully or either to help it develop. This paper studies why and how e-commerce managers are trained to deploy IT infrastructures for their business achievements. Particularly, as e-commerce introduces new ways to international business in which even small firms can operate as global rivals, this article aimed to have a brief overview about e-commerce management and e-skill training in current business?

Keywords: E-commerce, business needs, business schools, electronic commerce, managerial e-skills

Introduction

Nowadays e-business is considered as a standard in industry. Enormous extension of dot-com businesses makes e-commerce as a vital component and heart of global economy in the twenty-first century, which its impact is undeniable in almost all organizations and segments. However, national wealth and different technological capabilities like information infrastructure and Internet access expenses different countries in the degree of Internet usage and e-commerce adoption, more people around the world increasingly tend to buy, sell, transfer or exchange products, services, and/or information through the computer mediated network and Internet. It was reported that the money transactions which shoppers spend online is almost doubled each year. The presence of e-commerce is also leading to important changes in the way business is operated. Manuscript received December 27, 2011; revised January 30, 2012. R. Yazdanifard is with the Center of Post Graduate Studies, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Cyberjaya, Malaysia. A. Zargar is with the department of Human Resource Management in Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Cyberjaya, Malaysia.

As a result, e-commerce firms could save 5%–10% or more in their business costs. Such changes are developing the way companies gain wealth and create shareholder's value. Furthermore, e-commerce allows companies to simply make their businesses effective, increase customer service and provide digital services and products. So that, organizations consider e-commerce upland downs as giving strategic opportunities to boost their ordinary situations and acquiring competitive advantages to reach their organizational goals more effectively and efficiently rather than other rivals. But the point is that investing in e-commerce alone cannot bring sufficient improvements to business performance, especially if there is no coherence with the firm's environment and strategic objectives. As a reason, enterprises have to improve their technology, change and knowledge management capabilities, and that's why the need to receive added support from academia like universities, researchers or knowledge transfer agents.

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So that, this study tends to show that e-business impacts on firms 'performance is influential just when accompanied with strong managerial supervision. As one of the top chiefs within an organization, a manager is the architect and central power of the firm's ability for competitive improvements. She/he has to blend different sets of competences to navigate the organization in the right direction. Therefore-commerce management as a controversial issue has attracted a lot of attention in all countries worldwide and brings universities the huge responsibility of satisfying the demand of labor market and industry to cultivate those who entering the workforce and those from the existing workforce with the needed e-skills. As a matter of fact, anew-commerce manager is not just a programmer, a marketer, oar web developer, but she/ he is the one who has sufficient knowledge about each of those functions as well as managing the employees who those careers belong to them. Thee-commerce manager have to well understand the IT tasks and responsibilities, web site creation, and marketing sectors, interacting between different departments to facilitate website creation and promote successful e-commerce dimension of their business. This article has been written in seven sections. The first part outlines the managerial e-competences and skills, which are highly demanded by e-commerce workplaces today. In the next section, the most influential managerial characteristics that make differentiation between traditional management programs and e-commerce needs will be debated. In the third part, previous and recent academic approaches toward the fulfillment of e-commerce needs and career space is going to discuss. Forth section includes some practical evidences of implementing e-commerce in business schools' curriculum, that the cases' strong points will be remarked. The last two parts are dedicated to discussion.

E-commerce needs of management skills

E-Commerce growth experiences dramatic rates these days, which has resulted in equally growing demands for knowledgeable employees in the same area. There are also some difficulties and barriers to e-commerce that need managerial skills to be properly overcome. Providing entraining for managers and key personnel can significantly help organizations to overcome their most likely barriers such as the safety and privacy, legal and the technological obstacles. As it was reported, industry has "hundreds and hundreds of jobs that cannot be filled because of the skills shortage". The most desirable positions are related to Internet and e-commerce. Recent statistics show that Europe's growing shortage of competent and skilled E-commerce experts is influencing the effectiveness and competitiveness of most businesses. The UK industry labor alone demanding 110,000 new professionals who is greater than the present supply. As a matter of fact, today as well as even the economic crisis time, many companies around the world are increasingly competing to employ experts who are qualified in information technology and business management, professionals with comprehensive understandings of both technical and business capabilities. In this between, technical trainings seem more important in building e-commerce applications, e-commerce website security, e-transactions and e-commerce system administration, whereas managerial/ business trainings play noticeable roles in financial investments and planning,

change management and human resource management. Interestingly, the analysis of new researches indicate that out of nearly one thousand available job positions, 60% were technical and 40% were managerial offers. These positions are mostly demanded by functional sectors like healthcare, telecommunication and finance, which requested for specialized experts with the acceptable knowledge foe-business and e-commerce. According to what has been already mentioned, an e-commerce manager of the 21st century has to be able to face the workplace's needs in anointer-, multi- and trans-disciplinary way. Business and IT intersection expecting experts with various experiences, multidisciplinary understanding and technological knowledge- "hybrid professionals", who can manage resources and utilize the ultimate potential of the available technology, as well as showing company's ability toiling technology-strategy, organizational changes, and redesigning the process of using IT in improving firm performance. In this way, companies can attain more value from e-business opportunities and managerial e-skills would-be the significant competitive factors especially when competition becomes more intensive and companies have to modify their working processes and competitive strategies.

E-commerce academic approaches

Whereas, e-commerce big-bang found most academic institutions not able to answer the needed programs and courses, Internet economy driving the tremendous raise in the whole world and make business schools accept the responsibility to prepare business professionals for this recent situation. Coming up with this demand, universities have seen an apparent ascension in e-business programs to defeat this dullness. US top business schools are good instances to support this idea. China also focused on e-commerce management by deploying the information technology to meliorate the traditional way of work and management. But, during the past years and according to the high and growing demand for e-commerce education, which is gradually turning from technical to managerial skills, the controversial question is that what are universities doing to meet this demand? How are these future-commerce employees being prepared? Should e-commerce be a detached academic subject, program, major, or it should be joined to other business courses? Where e-business programs are on target and are they appropriately fill the needed gaps on the one hand, according to the empirical researches of this paper, there have been courses in e-commerce offered in many schools and departments, ranging from crash courses, regular courses, concentrations, full degree programs (undergraduate, graduate or certificate programs), or even founding new Schools within the University. Based on recent analysis, among total of 391 different-commerce courses 52 (13.3%) undergraduate and 339(86.7%) graduate courses were identified, which we rearranged into 24 categories. More detailed study on the courses provided by business schools shows that there are two common specializations in e-commerce curricula. One is e-business career with concentration on the business aspects, whereas the other is a career focusing on IT and Web-based systems technology. In addition, some universities are introducing "Techno MBA" programs merging business training with IT management and Information system straining. These programs usually

contain one module one-commerce that can be a preliminary course, and various other modules related to the field of e-commerce.

On the other hand, high importance of e-commerce and e-business education encourages industries to make effective with academic sector. As a matter of fact, U.S. businesses have been willing to back up initiatives at all levels. Not just US but many other developed countries around the world like Korea, England, and most of European countries support this model and idea. The only point is that, selection of a model by willing businesses depends on that School, related faculties and administrator's viewpoint and their orientation towards e-commerce and e-business. Supporting this fact, an European research indicates that between 1998 and 2002, the Career Space initiative consisted top universities, ICT firms and various shareholders such as British Telecom, Cisco Systems, IBM Europe, Intel, Microsoft Europe, Nokia, Nortel Networks, Philips Semiconductors, Siemens AG, Telephonic S.A. and Thales, In addition, the European Information and Communications Technology Industry Association (EICTA), the Convention National Societies of Electrical Engineer of Europe (EUREL), the E-skills National Training Organization (NTO UK), and many other associations to take part in this leading activity ^[15].

Discussion

E-commerce is the heart of the contemporary economy worldwide. It is a standard that completely changes businesses from their working rules and regulations, business partners or even organizational culture to their market share, variety of their products and services or the way they have chosen to deliver them. In other words, e-commerce brings a new generation of business functions and communications to organizations. Considering its undeniable advantages like more customer, wider target market, easier communications and effective marketing, electronic business has some serious disadvantages like information, money security or legal problems, which have made serious obstacles to network organization's success and consequently raising the demand of e-commerce organizations to qualified managers who can strategically use their in hand resources in order to survive in this never-ending competition. Thus, these controversial-business issues open a new door in business education with the aim of cultivating managers to overcome these-challenges and use them as competitive advantages in return. It made universities and academia to carefully revise their offering programs based on e-commerce intensified global competition and industry needs to meet the crucial demand of professional and e-competent managers. The managers are trained to overcome both internal and external barriers from the technical as well as managerial point of view. Individuals with the high capability of creation and modification of their business major infrastructure, their company website- the most vital means of communication in E-business environment- and its components including-commerce hardware & software. The persons who have a good understanding of their business transactions, Organizational structure, present and future plans, etc. All mentioned essential aspects of managing an e-commerce firm increasingly drive the industry demand to hire competent Professionals to help organizations facilitate their way of transforming or starting an electronic business. And

in fact academic education is the most popular solution, which can appropriately meet the organizations' need and in the best way respond the increasing demand of interested applicant of this field. Therefore, business schools create and offer various e-commerce programs, trainings and consultancies. It should be considered that, because e-commerce has dynamic nature, business schools have a more critical role in this economy evolution, since they should constantly supervise the workplace changes and revised, improve and implement their programs respectively.

Conclusion

In the digital economy generation, e-commerce is a necessary and integral part of businesses today. It may seem complicated, confusing and intimidating to implement but its closely tied to the success of organizations in today's marketplace. As a matter of fact, ubiquitous implementations of e-commerce introduce complicated changes to the way businesses were conducted. In comparison with traditional commerce, managers confront with such problems like extra costs resulted by changing IT belongings' version, staffs 'resistance to comply with this new environment, e-commerce economy rules and regulations, etc. Therefore, the importance of revising traditional management programs based on e-commerce criteria should be discussed and see how much value e-commerce can add to the whole organization if it is given the appropriate focus, budget and consideration. Additionally, e-commerce growth make tremendous claim of skilled professionals in small and large organizations which all demand competent managers from technical, managerial and financial point of view, who arable to overcome upcoming problems and mutually deploy them as competitive advantages. In this era of transforming to electronic and network businesses, successful managers are ones who recognize the things must change, and provide themselves by learning new ideas and skills to exploit these changes whereas competitors may see change as only a threat. Therefore, this is the place that business education system represents its key role in fulfilling the industry and labor market's needs. In this regard, business school's faculties and administrators did so many researches to identify industry demands and develop them in their new curricula. In this around the world design and offer various programs to prepare managers' mindset to recognize the opportunities in the available global marketplace. These programs primarily focus on training students with skills and knowledge are required in order to do well in electronic environment.

Summing up with all mentioned opinions, discussions and argumentations, it is recommended that in order to provide sufficient academic program which effectively meets both overall and fundamental industries needs, the interaction between academia and business should be maximized. For instance, universities can entertain industry events, and firms may offer elective programs and informative seminars to increase students' knowledge about related job opportunities and professional positions. Companies also have a significant role in improving the programs' value and learning process by permitting their professions to be a part of teaching activities. They should have provided universities with eager professions who have a fruitful e-commerce experience, desired to share their knowledge with

students, and learn along with students. Finally, we suggest graduates and managers to learn at every opportunity. E-commerce has dynamic nature so they should be aware of latest changes, their shortcomings and plan to fill the gap.

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