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Title	A study of knowledge in organizational context – Building a model of mental information processing tasks from a case study of a front-end information process in a young high technology company		
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Abstract

This thesis seizes yet again the age-old question “What is knowledge?” and seeks to form an understanding of knowledge as a phenomenon; this time from the perspective of management and organization. This is done through a case study where a particular process within a case company is examined. The aim is to create a theoretical model and widen the perspective of the case study further to be applied universally in management and organization. To achieve this, three research questions were formulated: 1) What is the role of knowledge in the company's front-end activities? 2) What kind of sub-phenomena can be detected from the interview material? 3) What managerial implications are there to be drawn from this research?

The thesis is a qualitative case study. A set of 11 semi structured interviews that were conducted prior to the thesis work was used as the primary research material. Grounded theory method was applied in the analysis process, which included open coding, a metatable and mindmaps. However, the final conclusions were formed during the writing process as is typical for the Grounded theory method.

The results from the analysis of the interviews are presented in four sections; first two of which address the first research question identifying two different but interconnected roles of knowledge: 1) knowledge used as a *cognitive skill*; and 2) knowledge serving as an *information source*. The two latter sections take on the second research question and characterize two emerging sub-phenomena of knowledge from the study material, namely *availability* and *reliability* issues connected to knowledge in the company's front-end process. Based on the results a model of mental information processing tasks was built. The model is two dimensional and illustrates how the need for both *expert knowledge* and *abstract thinking* vary in different information processing tasks. The model is then applied to the data from the case, and its managerial implications on knowledge in organizations are discussed.

Understanding knowledge is important in an organization where the success of the company is directly dependent on the employees' knowledge. Improving the application of knowledge inside the company is a challenge that the management in such organizations face. Furthermore, the importance of knowledge is more likely to increase than decrease in the future. For this reason, there is a continuous demand for academic research and discussion on the topic.

Key words	Knowledge, information, knowledge management, cognitive skills, Grounded theory
Further information	