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Title	Inter-organizational knowledge transfer in export partnership: <i>Evidence from a Finnish export circle</i>		
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Abstract

Export circle is a publicly financed form of export promotion that involves a group of Finnish SMEs trying to enter a given market area with a shared export manager. An export circle brings together 4–6 firms, who have to jointly allocate resources for their shared export operations. Export circle can bring out opportunities for the companies to transfer managerial knowledge between each other. The purpose of the study is *to understand inter-organizational knowledge transfer in the context of a Finnish export circle*. It can be further divided into three sub-objectives:

- *To describe what knowledge companies can learn from their export circle partners?*
- *To explain what determines the content of transferred knowledge from one partner to another?*
- *To understand what enables the companies to transfer knowledge?*

The literature review is based on previous research concerning learning and knowledge transfer in strategic partnership. The chosen research strategy is a qualitative case study that reviews the issue on the level of export circle. The case export circle was selected on the basis of three preset criteria: *a long duration of cooperation, a high level of company involvement, and no significant inter-firm conflicts*. The research data was collected from all the four participant companies of the case export circle.

The results give evidence that export management –specific knowledge was transferred between companies in the case export circle. The nature of transferred knowledge is witnessed to be explicit and simple. Furthermore, the findings of this study support the idea that a company finds it easier to learn knowledge that is relevant to its current knowledge base. The findings of this study also suggest that independently undertaken joint projects enable partners to transfer knowledge between each other. Moreover, participation to these projects with an entrepreneurial learning mindset is regarded to improve the probability to learn from a partner.

Key words	Export promotion, partnership, knowledge management, SMEs, internationalization
Further information	