“Strategic relevance AND DEPLOYMENT of knowledge in organizational contexts”

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Knowledge is becoming ever more relevant – no matter what the context. Particularly in a business competitive context, however, knowledge is increasingly recognized to be a key potential source of competitive advantage for firms seeking to position themselves strategically. Successful competitive positioning, however, does not happen by chance; it requires deliberate and purposeful exploitation of knowledge as a strategic resource within organizational contexts.

In this series of lectures we examine knowledge and its strategic relevance in an integrated organizational context. We will begin by reviewing several key underlying premises that provide the rationale for such a view on knowledge: (1) that knowledge is a means, not an end in itself; its strategic purpose, role and contribution to the firm’s establishment of competitive advantage must be clear and compelling; (2) that even the most elegant and sophisticated KM tools and methods are essentially meaningless in the absence of a clear and compelling strategic knowledge rationale; and finally, (3) that knowledge is inextricably embedded and entwined in a number of critical organizational elements: these include the enterprises intellectual assets, mechanisms and processes. Knowledge-relevant organizational processes include, for example, learning, transformation and innovation. These organizational phenomena are inextricably coupled; moreover, they occur in organizational contexts that are typically complex and ambiguous. Precisely herein, however, lays the ultimate challenge of ‘managing’ the enterprise’s strategic knowledge for competitive advantage.

This lecture series consists of 5 sessions of approximately 2.5h in which we will systematically explore the strategic relevance of knowledge in organizational contexts by introducing and applying a selection of useful concepts, frameworks and approaches that address this overarching theme. Key sub-themes will include: (2) key concepts, notion and definitions related to knowledge and its strategic manifestations, roles and positioning within the organization; relevance for competitiveness, (2) the notions of knowledge purpose and ‘*actionability*’; (3) critical linkages between knowledge, organizational learning, change and innovation; (4) mechanisms of knowledge explication – strategic sense-making and thinking and their relevance for strategic decision-making; (5) mechanisms of organizational knowledge exchange and transfer within the organization: exploration of the relevance of the fundamental knowledge dichotomy; (6) mechanisms of knowledge operationalization within the organization; and (7) a brief introduction to the strategic valuation of organizational knowledge assets.

*About the tutor:*

George Tovstiga is Professor of Strategy at EDHEC Business School (Paris, France) and Visiting Research Professor at ITMO University. A dual national of Canada and Germany, his research and teaching focus on competitive strategy and strategic innovation. He has published widely on these topics. Aside from his academic activities Tovstiga is a consultant to multinational corporations in the areas of strategy, innovation and technology management; he is a member of the board of the Technopark® Zurich – one of Europe’s leading high-tech science and innovation establishments. Tovstiga holds a doctorate in Engineering Sciences from the ETH Zurich (Switzerland).