Knowledge Management in the tourism and leisure industry
with the case study of the Austrian National Tourist Office
within the European market

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Date of transmission: 16th of May 2007
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II List of Abbreviations

ANTO Austrian National Tourist Office
B2B Business to business
B2C Business to customer
CEM Customer Experience Management
CRM Customer Relationship Management
ECT European Cities Tourism
ETC European Travel Commission
KM Knowledge Management
MIG Market Intelligence Group
NTO National Tourist Organisation
UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organisation

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Acknowledgements

This thesis was a long journey with ups and downs and special people who joined me to go on until the end. Thanks to my parents who supported me from the very beginning of the journey. My boss Alfred Cossmann (Benelux Director Austrian National Tourist Office) who made it possible for me to study part time and let me take off work to follow my studies as well as my colleagues Joke, Lili, Ruth and Paul. I am grateful to the Austrian National Tourist Office and the Austrian Federal country “Steiermark” from which I was granted financial help. The necessary kicks and the ultimate motivator who supported me on the hilly trip is Rüdiger. I am grateful to have completed this journey with you. Thanks - to all of you.
1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Knowledge management is a vital area of management in different industries. The term is very widespread and used but only few people know what knowledge management (KM) really means and what the positive output can be.

The tourism and leisure industry has a big service and human focus with experts who work, act and plan purely on their instincts rather than on definite knowledge. To “catch” this knowledge and to organise it in order to work with it more constructively and improve performance, products and services are the main obstacles and goals of knowledge management. What is the right way to analyse, collect, organise, use and control touristic knowledge? Do the existent touristic structures (human, technological, processes) even allow a management of knowledge? The Austrian National Tourist Office forms the center of examination and the problem statement will be answered in consideration of national tourism organisations.

1.2 Goal

With this thesis approaches and impulses for knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry (national tourist organisation level) under consideration of common knowledge management theories, knowledge management tools, intercultural management and benchmarks of important players on the European tourism market will be presented. The knowledge management practices of the ANTO will be compared to the practices of other tourism organisations. Recommendations including findings from the theory and benchmarks will then be formalised into practical helps for knowledge management practices in tourism organisations.

1.3 Research Methodology

The theory of knowledge management, tools, intercultural management, tourism industry, intellectual capital statement was conducted through secondary research (literature, books, online, reports). This part of research and data collection started in August 2006 and was ongoing until January 2007.
For the research section of the thesis (benchmark of KM) qualitative research, namely in depth interviews, with four national tourism organisations was chosen (Austrian National Tourist Office, Netherlands National Tourist Office, France National Tourist Office, Switzerland National Tourist Office). The interviews were based on a questionnaire (see appendix) and took place in March/April 2007 in Brussels and focussed on knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry. Data was gathered in order to elaborate on the problem statement. A conclusion including recommendations forms the final step.

1.4 Structure

The first section starts with an introduction of the tourism and leisure industry, knowledge management basics and the link to intercultural management. The third chapter covers the most relevant knowledge tools, techniques and concepts and rounds off with a recommendation how to pick appropriate knowledge tools for an organisation. In the fourth chapter knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry, first on the European market and then at the Austrian National Tourist Office, are described. Chapter five includes the research section, assessing knowledge at ANTO Belgium with the help of an intellectual statement and in-depths interviews will present best practices of three other tourism organisations. The concluding chapter six summarises the findings and gives recommendations and a future outlook for knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry.
Tourism and knowledge management basics

2.1 Introduction of the tourism and leisure industry

According to McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie (1995), “Tourism may be defined as the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments, and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors”.

McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie (1995) describe that tourism comprises activities, services and industries that deliver a travel experience: transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activity facilities and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that are travelling away from home. It encompasses all providers of visitor and visitor related services. Tourism is the entire world industry of travel, hotels, transportation and all other components, including promotion, that serves the needs and wants of travellers.

The tourism and leisure industry consists of various parts:
Ø Accommodations include all forms of lodging (e.g. hotel, motel, camping, resort, pension, motor home, etc.) and all types of food and beverage services (restaurants)
Ø Shopping encompasses any form of retail purchase (e.g. souvenirs, arts and crafts, clothing, groceries)
Ø Other activities comprise services such as entertainment, sports, sightseeing, local tours, cultural events, festivals
Ø Transportation includes all forms by land, air or water

To quote McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie (1995), the demand for travel, lodging, food, shops, entertainment and other tourism services has created the need for tour operators, travel agents, airlines, accommodations, tourist organisations that supply tourist needs. These economic activities sum up as the tourism and leisure industry.

1 McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie, 1995, 10
2.2 Organisation of tourism and leisure industry

According to McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie (1995) tourism organisations can be classified:

- **geographically**: international, regional within the world, national, regional within the nation, state or provincial, regional within state or province, and local categories
- **by ownership**: such as government, quasi-government, or private
- **by function or type of activity**: such as regulators, suppliers, marketers, developers, consultants, researchers…
- **by industry**: such as transportation, travel agents, tour wholesalers, lodging
- **by motive**: profit or non-profit

The following organisations build up the hierarchy of tourism organisations:

**World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**

McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie (1995) state that the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) with its headquarters in Madrid, Spain, is the most widely recognised tourism organisation. Its main purpose is to represent all national and official tourist interests and to promote the global tourism development. Individual countries, states, and provinces have their own tourist promotion and development organisations.

**European Travel Commission (ETC)**

The European Travel Commission (ETC) is a non-profit organisation with its headquarters in Brussels. The ETC was founded in 1948. Its members are the national tourism organisations (NTOs) of thirty-seven European countries, including all EU member states, as well as Croatia, Iceland, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkey and the Ukraine. The national tourist organisations of all sovereign states in Europe are eligible for full membership of the ETC. Regional cross-border organisations and tourism-related bodies may join as associate members.

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2 McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie, 1995, 71-75
3 McIntosh/Goeldner/Ritchie, 1995, 71-75
**National Tourism Organisations (NTO)**

NTO’s are responsible to promote and market national tourism and to spread the main tourism strategy further to its regions, tourist offices and all tourism related service providers. NTO’s represent the nation in tourism matters in their respective country representations and promote tourism.

**Regional Tourism Organisations**

Regional tourism organisations build the link between national tourism organisations and their local partners (tourist offices, hotels, pensions, entertainment providers, food and beverage places etc.). They provide necessary inputs for tourism promotion, inform about tourism attractions and services. They are concerned with bundling of regional tourism services and products and the tourism development in their respective region. The main goal of regional tourism organisations is to attract tourists to their specific geographic region.

**Convention and visitors bureaus (city/local level)**

The local visitors bureaus are the smallest form of tourism organisation and are responsible to promote tourism in the specific city. They also promote the tourism and leisure products to the higher tourism organisations (regional level). A visitor’s bureau represents and promotes its city/local area: hotels, restaurants, attractions, local transportation, etc.

### 2.3 Knowledge Management Basics

A differentiation between the various forms of knowledge starts the knowledge management basics:

- Ø explicit
- Ø tacit
- Ø individual
- Ø collective
Bouncken/Pyo (2003) describe explicit knowledge “is open to codification in documents, books, databases, and reports. Formal processes like a methodological language offer mechanisms to transfer explicit knowledge.”

Tacit knowledge quoted by Bouncken/Pyo (2003) “is very complex, involves viewpoints, intuition, deeply grounded statements, meaningful behaviour, and values that people develop through experience”. Tacit knowledge contains cognitive elements (e.g. schemes, beliefs, paradigms) and technical elements (e.g. skills and know-how for specific actions).”

Bouncken/Pyo (2003) state that “individual knowledge can be perceived as sources individuals use for their actions and cognitions whereas collective knowledge contains commonly held knowledge.”

Knowledge held in organisations can be defined as “organisational knowledge” which is originally collective knowledge, combined with individual know-how and skills commonly shared by employees. The creation of new knowledge, its dissemination throughout the organisation and the embodiment in products, services and systems also falls into the definition of organisational knowledge.

Knowledge management comprises various elements used by organisations for the identification, acquisition, development, accumulation, retrieval, distribution and the controlling of knowledge. The main goals of knowledge management are the achievement of specific results (e.g. shared intelligence), improved performance, competitive advantage or higher levels of innovation and the creation of new products and services.

Knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry which is greatly services oriented has a high potential of organisational knowledge to manage.

5 Bouncken, Pye, 2003, 32
6 Bouncken, Pye, 2003, 33
7 Bouncken, Pye, 2003, 32-35
The importance of this very common and modern topic has to be understood by management and employees. This understanding takes time, money and efforts to change the organisational thinking. The created value and winning margin a company can obtain when successfully applying its knowledge into new products and services will be worth the disbursements.

2.3.1 Knowledge goals and knowledge strategy

Before starting with knowledge acquisition, generation, distribution, retrieval and accumulation, the right knowledge goals and strategy help to determine the direction a company wants to go to.

Knowledge goals can have different focuses:

- Inter-company or intra-company knowledge (e.g. installation of intranet)
- Customer related knowledge base
- Better communication with other industry minded companies
- Benchmark with other tourism companies
- Trend scouting

Bouncken/Pyo (2003) state that after defining a knowledge goal a company can establish a knowledge strategy. One of the main goals of a knowledge strategy is the enhancement of knowledge transfer within the company, with its customers and with other companies of the same industry.\(^8\)

2.3.2 Knowledge Identification

Identifying what knowledge exists in a company is a difficult task. The existence of tacit and explicit knowledge and the normal fluctuation of employees are obstacles to overcome.

There are different possibilities to find out about knowledge in a company:
1) Conduct a survey of existing knowledge
2) Determination of required knowledge

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\(^8\) Bouncken, Pye, 2003, 33-35
Possible techniques of knowledge identification are interviewing employees, analysing customer databases, starting knowledge circles, meetings to exchange information, observation of service operations. According to Bouncken/Pyo (2003) it is very important to observe service operations where tacit knowledge becomes apparent and observable. Service research also helps to establish mechanisms to learn and distribute knowledge. In companies the observation and comparison of performances are often done with benchmarks. One compares the economic and service performance (setting standards to compare) with a similar company. Benchmarks can also include knowledge standards consisting of internal/external technical and human elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human elements</th>
<th>Technical elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal elements</strong></td>
<td><strong>Technical elements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meetings of knowledge workers, communication</td>
<td>intranet, company used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through phone/chat/forum, workshops, newsletter,</td>
<td>software and usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best practice forum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External elements</strong></td>
<td>website,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service counter, information</td>
<td>delivery chain of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability of personnel, sales</td>
<td>and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Knowledge standards benchmark (Source: author’s graphic representation)

2.3.3 Knowledge acquisition and development

To quote Bouncken/Pyo (2003) “knowledge acquisition and development are closely related because of their aim to improve knowledge generation. Knowledge acquisition concentrates on external knowledge retrieval from e.g. customers, external expert or tourist offices, and often enhances the assimilation of previously unnoticed trends. Knowledge development focuses on the internal processes to increase knowledge and enclose activities that span from creating new insights and concepts to the generation of new behavioural patterns and service operations.”

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9 Bouncken/Pyo, 2003, 35-38
10 Bouncken/Pyo, 2003, 36, 37

8
Bouncken/Pyo (2003) also state that knowledge acquisition and development can be best achieved through personal interactions, internal and external networking. It can create new insights and new behavioural patterns can be learned.

2.3.4 Knowledge accumulation, retrieval and distribution

According to Bouncken/Pyo (2003) “knowledge accumulation is concerned with the collection and the retrieval of knowledge in databases (codification) or from people (personalisation).”

Factors that facilitate the distribution of knowledge include:

Ø The ability to access knowledge company-wide that gives advise and orientation of values, norms, specific projects
Ø The ability to access and use knowledge management tools (database, best-practice, intranet etc.)

Bouncken/Pye (2003) describe that for the enhancement of knowledge accumulation, retrieval and distribution, it is essential to transfer knowledge between top-management (horizontal) and between top-management and staff (vertical).

2.3.5 Knowledge controlling

Stating Bouncken/Pye (2003)”controlling devices help to evaluate the fulfilment of knowledge goals and guides the adoption of knowledge goals, strategies, development, accumulation, retrieval and distribution of knowledge.”

Controlling is as important as the other knowledge management elements because only through the evaluation of activities, success or failure can be measured and compared over time. Development and fine-tuning of the knowledge management activities can be achieved through controlling and measurement.

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11 Bouncken/Pyo, 2003, 37
12 Bouncken/Pye, 2003, 38-39
Knowledge measurement and controlling can be taken into consideration of various dimensions. To quote Freund (2005) “knowledge management is of great significance, the more as the measurement of knowledge can contribute to the total value of a company.”

Value can be added in five dimensions:

1. **Financial**
   The knowledge effort results in direct cost savings or an increase in revenues.

2. **Innovation**
   By effectively developing, sharing and applying knowledge, organisations are better able to quickly develop and introduce new products and services. In a fast developing and changing environment innovation is a must to survive and stay in the market.

3. **Processes**
   Knowledge should be embedded in most processes, e.g.: product development, marketing and sales activities, customer service. Knowledge management can help to make these processes more effective and efficient.

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13 Freund, R.J., 2005, 3-4
4 Customers
Better understanding what the customer needs and wants will help to optimise the offered products and services. Knowledge therefore can help to create customer capital. Sharing knowledge with customers also helps to build customer intimacy and relationships

5 Human (employees)
Employees are considered to be knowledge workers. Effective knowledge management for employees means to create an organisation in which they can develop and use their talents. It provides a working environment in which work makes fun and where people can learn and share with their colleagues, partners and customers.

2.4 Epistemological input in knowledge management – resources from intercultural studies

According to Jacob (2003) “intercultural management is concerned with the effective functioning of diverse groups of people. Diversity can arise because of variations in ethnicity and nationality but also because of variations in corporate culture.”

Today intercultural management is concerned with ensuring that managers are socialised into the appropriate values of the organisation. These managers have to develop an understanding of their consumers and their workforce. This means understanding the cultural context of the markets they function in and the locations where they have divisions. To state Jacob (2003), intercultural management is very much linked to organisational behaviour and places a strong emphasis on skills development. Professionalism requires continuous upgrading of skills. According to Kanter (2003) it has become fashionable for companies to articulate a desire to become “learning organisations”.  

In this context a connection can be found to knowledge management. Organisational learning and the development and enhancement of individual skills and attributes are major concerns of intercultural management.

14 Jacob, N., 2003, 1-10
15 Kanter, R.M., 2003, 16
As described by Jacob (2003) the following intercultural objectives link to knowledge management:

- The culture of an organisation should have a learning orientation
- A learning organisation should be constantly seeking superior modes or management. It should have capabilities for learning from other cultures.

Especially the intercultural differences of the Eastern and Western cultures have always been of major interest to researchers. This is also true for differences in knowledge management. The following sections show various views and recommendations what can be learned from the other culture.

2.4.1 Findings of “Geography of thought” by R. Nisbett

The first view of interest is based on the book “The geography of thought” by R. Nisbett (2004). The title already reinforces the thesis that thoughts are different depending from which geographical part of the world one is coming from – either West or East.

The author’s research was conducted around different areas (childhood, language, debate, skill development, social structure, environment, etc). Easterners learn from childhood on that their social environment, their family and later on their work environment and team they work is of great importance. Within a group and through relationships with others they can live up to their social role. The social network and harmonious social relations is important in their lives. Formal logic and a dislike to debate but finding the middle way are further characteristics found by Nisbett. Seeing the big picture, relationships between events and the context of situations is what Easterners are brought up.

Westerners have a high individual focus, they are brought up to be “single warriors” and there are less social interrelationships but a high priority to distinctiveness and uniqueness. Formal logic and the urge to debate and find the truth are important to Westerners. The focus is set on individuals, object orientation and trying to find rules for categories and objects. Westerns tend to have a narrow view compared to Easterners.

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16 Nisbett, R., 2004
The main findings of Nisbett can be summarised in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Western</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on relationships, social routines</td>
<td>Focus on individual, object oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of situations important</td>
<td>Objects and attributes of situations important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, community, village – social</td>
<td>Individual focus – little interaction with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>network important</td>
<td>others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonious social relations</td>
<td>Distinctiveness and uniqueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills can be developed by hard work</td>
<td>Skills someone has or has not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest to formal logic</td>
<td>Formal logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to debate</td>
<td>Debate to find the truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No rhetoric structure</td>
<td>Structured language and rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big picture seen</td>
<td>Narrow view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to find relationships between events</td>
<td>Try to find rules for categories and objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Comparison of Eastern and Western views  
(Source: Nisbett, 2004, author’s graphic representation)

2.4.2 Findings of “The knowledge creating company” by Nonaka and Takeuchi

The second and famous view about the different ways of looking at knowledge is by Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1995). The authors compared Japanese and Western models of knowledge. Generally speaking, in Western firms knowledge is characterised in a reductionist mode as a commodity: something formal, controllable, quantifiable, explicit and systematic. In Japan the emphasis is on tacit, as opposed to explicit, knowledge: not visible or easily expressed, highly personal, hard to formalise or emulate, deeply embedded in individual subjective perception and experience, ideas, values, beliefs and emotions.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), the main differences between Japanese and Western organisations can be summarised as followed:
Japanese Organisation | Western Organisation
---|---
Group based/autonomy | Individual based/autonomy
Tacit knowledge oriented | Explicit knowledge oriented
Strong on socialisation and internalisation | Strong on externalisation and combination
Emphasis on experience | Emphasis on analysis
Frequent fluctuation from top management | Less fluctuation from top management
Redundancy of information | Less redundancy of information
Requisite variety through cross-functional teams | Requisite variety through individual differences

Table 3: Comparison of Japanese and Western organisations
(Source: Nonaka /Takeuchi, 1995, author’s graphic representation)\(^{17}\)

2.4.3 Lessons learned from intercultural studies on knowledge management

According to Jacob (2003), “the shared meanings that a cultural group uphold are often very deeply felt at an emotive level. Just as it is difficult to envisage a world subscribing to a single religion, it is unlikely that the world will become a monoculture. The need for skills in intercultural management is going to remain and become more important”.\(^{18}\)

Westerners tend to emphasise explicit knowledge and focus on individuals, whereas Easterners emphasis tacit knowledge and are more group-oriented. Weaknesses and strengths are obvious on both sides and one can learn from each other. Western companies should start paying attention to the less formal and systematic side of knowledge and begin focusing on highly subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches that are gained through experience or the use of metaphors or pictures. Eastern companies on the other side need to make better use of advanced information technology, software capabilities to manage explicit knowledge throughout the organisation. Western companies need to amplify or crystallise knowledge at the group level through dialogue, discussion, experience sharing, and observation.

\(^{17}\) Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995, 199
\(^{18}\) Jacob, N., 2003, 238
Japanese companies need to build up stronger capabilities at the individual level, not only at the top but throughout the organisation.

The basic idea is to get influences from each other and try improving a company’s knowledge management system. People born and raised in a culture cannot be changed but can be motivated and trained to work differently.

Based on the findings advice for Western employees and management working with individuals from different cultural heritage is summarised as follows:

Ø **Openness of mind**
Openness is the key to success in intercultural management.

Ø **Appropriate expatriates**
An organisation needs to discerningly select employees with widened cultural horizons and has to ensure that the employees’ skills and abilities are being developed.

Ø **Close personal contact amongst employees facilitates knowledge bases**
Fostering team work and joint product and service development. This diversity in thought processes fosters a cross-fertilisation of ideas and ultimately, the creation of new knowledge. More people – more ideas – new knowledge. Teamwork should be awarded: “best team of the month”.

Ø **Communication of knowledge throughout the organisation**
Knowledge should be available throughout an organisation – in every division. No duplicate efforts should be made. The need for speedy communication of knowledge is of utmost importance in a global company.

Ø **Common content of communication**
Communication through an organisation with various market offices needs to reflect the local culture

Ø **Simultaneous membership in more than one group**
Working with and in multicultural teams should be an ongoing work experience, also creating teams where people have different backgrounds and positions.
Intercultural working means working with people of different backgrounds, different ideas, different intellectual paradigms and different approaches to thinking.¹⁹

Ø Knowledge creation – products/services with applications in many cultures
When developing and creating new products and services the market and culture should be very well researched and the differences made clear in the different applications.

Ø Network products and services
A global organisation should offer the same products and services in its different divisions though it’s clear and easy to understand for the customer. But also the network idea of offering a special product in divisions which geographically are close together or the same target group is strongly present (e.g. Benelux-offer).

Ø Knowledge of the local language and external environment
One of the many factors that enable an expatriate to communicate better with local national employees and partners is the local language. Communication in the same language also opens the door to important networking partners in the external environment.

Ø Holistic way of working
More use of holistic helpers, e.g. support of job rotation, management training in all levels and departments of the organisation, more use of mind-mapping for idea finding.

Ø Cultural training
When meeting people from each side of the World (East-West, vice versa) one can keep the thoughts of cultural differences in mind to better understand the others action. In business it would help to train employees who are doing business with Eastern countries about their culture and way of doing business (vice versa). Cultural training can be included in standard employee training sessions.

¹⁹ Jacob, N., 2003, 157
3 Relevant Knowledge Management tools, techniques and related concepts

“A knowledge management tool is a resource for planning knowledge management projects (e.g. projects that promote sharing and use of knowledge such as ideas, expertise, best practices).”\(^{20}\)

From various knowledge management tools, techniques and concepts the most important and relevant ones for companies and their users are explained in the following sections, also with real-world software examples in order to know which tools are available on the market. At the end of the chapter advice how to pick the appropriate tools and how to make a choice is given.

3.1 Tools

3.1.1 Intranet

An intranet is “a private computer network that uses Internet protocols, network connectivity, and possibly the public telecommunication system to securely share part of an organization’s information or operations with its employees.”\(^{21}\)

Sometimes the term refers only to the most visible service, the internal website. The same concepts and technologies of the Internet such as clients and servers running on the Internet protocol suite are used to build an intranet. HTTP and other Internet protocols are commonly used as well, especially FTP and e-mail. Briefly, an intranet can be understood as "a private version of the Internet", or as a version of the internet confined to an organisation.\(^{22}\)

*Advantages of an intranet:*

Ø Workforce productivity: Intranets can help employees to quickly find and view information and applications relevant to their roles and responsibilities

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Ø Time: With intranets, organisations can make more information available to employees on a "pull" basis (e.g. employees can link to relevant information at a time which suits them) rather than being deluged indiscriminately by emails

Ø Communication: Intranets can serve as powerful tools for communication within an organization, vertically and horizontally

Ø Web publishing allows 'cumbersome' corporate knowledge to be maintained and easily accessed throughout the company using hypermedia and Web technologies. e.g.: employee manuals, company policies, business standards

Ø Business operations and management: Intranets are also being used as a platform for developing and deploying applications to support business operations and decisions across the internet worked enterprise

Disadvantages of an intranet:

Ø Publication of information must be controlled to ensure only correct and appropriate information is provided in the intranet

Ø Appropriate security permissions must be in place to ensure there are no concerns over who accesses the intranet or abuse of the intranet by users

Example of intranet software:

_Intranet connections_ (http://www.intranetconnections.com/)\(^{23}\)

“Intranet Connections” places priority on implementing successful, easy to use intranet solutions and providing exceptional customer service. It offers a web-based intranet service. Features include a contacts, bulletin board, document library, and issue tracking.

### 3.1.2 Information Retrieval

Information retrieval is the “recovery of information, especially in a database stored in a computer.”\(^{24}\) Two main approaches are matching words in the query against the database index (keyword searching) and traversing the database using hypertext or hypermedia links.


Keyword searching has been the dominant approach to text retrieval since the early 1960s; hypertext has so far been confined largely to personal or corporate information-retrieval applications. Evolving information-retrieval techniques, exemplified by developments with modern internet search engines, combine natural language, hyperlinks, and keyword searching. Other techniques that seek higher levels of retrieval precision are studied by researchers involved with artificial intelligence.²⁵ Web search engines such as Google and Lycos are famous information retrieval applications.

3.1.2.1 Search engines

A search engine is “a program that searches documents for specified keywords and returns a list of the documents where the keywords were found.”²⁶ Although “search engine” is really a generic class of programs, the term is often used to specifically describe systems like Google, Alta Vista and Excite that enable users to search for documents on the World Wide Web and USENET newsgroups. Typically, a search engine works by sending out a “spider” to fetch as many documents as possible. Another program, called “indexer”, then reads these documents and creates an index based on the words contained in each document.

Each search engine uses a proprietary algorithm to create its indices such that, ideally, only meaningful results are returned for each query.²⁷

Search Engine examples²⁸

Ø Major search engines such as Google (www.google.com), Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) (which uses Google), AltaVista (www.altavista.com), and Lycos (www.lycos.com) index the content of a large portion of the Web and provide results that can run for pages

Ø Specialized content search engines are selective about what part of the Web is crawled and indexed (http://www.searchCRM.com)

Ø Ask Jeeves (www.ask.com) provides a general search of the Web but allows you to enter a search request in natural language, such as "What's the weather in Seattle today?"

Ø Special tools and some major Web sites such as Yahoo let you use a number of search engines at the same time and compile results for you in a single list

Ø Individual Web sites, especially larger corporate sites, may use a search engine to index and retrieve the content of just their own site. Some of the major search engine companies license or sell their search engines for use on individual sites

3.1.2.2 Data-Mining

Data mining, also known as knowledge-discovery in databases (KDD), is “the practice of automatically searching large stores of data for patterns. To do this, data mining uses computational techniques from statistics and pattern recognition.”

Google (www.google.com)

According to the Web Guide for Readers of Knowledge Management, Business Intelligence, and Content Management by Jessica Keyes, the Google Search Appliance is a hardware and software product designed to offer large businesses the productivity-enhancing power of Google search. It's a corporate search solution as simple and powerful as Google itself. The advantages of Google Search Appliance are an easy set-up, little ongoing administration, cost-effectiveness and being a very helpful tool for an everyday work.

3.1.3 Data warehouse

According to Wikipedia “a data warehouse is the main repository of the organisation's historical data, its corporate memory.” A data warehouse contains the raw material for management's decision support system.

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While operational systems are optimised for simplicity and speed of modification (online transaction processing, or OLTP) through heavy use of database normalisation and an entity-relationship model, the data warehouse is optimised for reporting and analysis (online analytical processing, or OLAP). Frequently data in data warehouses is heavily denormalised, summarised and/or stored in a dimension-based model but this is not always required to achieve acceptable query response times.\textsuperscript{32}

Formally a data warehouse can be defined as follows:\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Subjects-oriented, meaning that the data in the database is organized so that all the data elements relating to the same real-world event or object are linked together
  \item Time-variant, meaning that the changes to the data in the database are tracked and recorded so that reports can be produced showing changes over time
  \item Non-volatile, meaning that data in the database is never over-written or deleted, but retained for future reporting
  \item Integrated, meaning that the database contains data from most or all of an organisation's operational applications, and that this data is made consistent
\end{itemize}

The term data warehouse architecture is primarily used today to describe the overall structure of a business intelligence system. Other historical terms include Decision Support Systems (DSS) or Management Information Systems (MIS).

\textit{Advantages of a data warehouse.}\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Enhances end-user access to a wide variety of data
  \item Business decision makers can obtain various kinds of trend reports e.g. the item with the most sales in a particular area / country for the last two years
  \item A data warehouse can be a significant enabler of commercial business applications, most notably Customer Relationship Management
\end{itemize}


Concerns of data warehouse:\(^{35}\)

- Extracting, cleaning and loading data is time consuming
- Data warehousing project scope must be actively managed to deliver a release of defined content and value
- Problems with compatibility with systems already in place
- Security could develop into a serious issue, especially if the data warehouse is web accessible

Example of data warehouse software:

*The Data Warehousing Institute* (http://www.tdwi.org/\(^{36}\))

The company focuses on the deployment of data warehousing strategies and technologies. The site provides links to case studies, expert advice, vendor directories, publications, white papers and data warehousing events.

3.1.4 Content Management

Content management (also called document management) is \textit{“the process of managing documents through their lifecycle - from inception through creation, review, storage and dissemination all the way to their destruction.”}\(^{37}\)

Example of content management software:

*EMC* (http://software.emc.com/\(^{38}\))

Enterprise content management software helps organizations create, capture, manage, and archive the vast amount of digital content that exists across the enterprise. Content or unstructured information includes text documents, email, reports, XML, pictures/images, audio and video files, and transactional data.

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3.1.5 Portals

A portal is “a site featuring a suite of commonly used services, serving as a starting point and frequent gateway to the Web (Web portal) or a niche topic (vertical portal).”

Web portal services often include a search engine or directory, news, email, stock quotes, maps, forums, chat, shopping, and options for customisation. These are only some of the most frequently offered services; large portals often include dozens or hundreds of bundled services. A portal may also be a vertical market site that offers the same services as a general-purpose site, but to a particular industry such as banking, insurance or computers.

Examples for e-commerce portals are:
EBay: www.ebay.com
Amazon: www.amazon.com

3.1.6 Communities of practice

To quote Etienne Wenger “a community of practice (CoP) is a network of people who share a common interest in a specific area of knowledge or competence and are willing to work and learn together over a period of time to develop and share that knowledge.”

Etienne Wenger first came up with the term ‘community of practice’ and he defines them as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis." According to Wenger, learning is a social activity and people learn best in groups.

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Communities can vary widely in their characteristics. Some exist for years while others form around a specific purpose and disband once that purpose has been achieved. Members may be very similar. Some may be small and localised while others will be geographically dispersed ‘virtual communities’ that communicate primarily by telephone, e-mail, online discussion groups and videoconferencing etc.

Communities of practice differ from the usual notion of a team or work groups in a number of fundamental ways:\footnote{Wenger, E. “communities of practice” [On-line]. Available: http://www.ewenger.com/pub/index.htm, 11\textsuperscript{th} of May 2007}{42}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Voluntary membership
    Whereas teams and workgroups are formed by management, membership of a community of practice is voluntary.
  \item Specific focus
    Teams and workgroups are formed to focus on a specific objective or activity, while communities of practice are not necessarily; they may have some stated goals, but they are more general and fluid.
  \item No expectation of tangible results
    Teams and workgroups are required to deliver tangible results.
  \item Existence defined by group members
    Teams and workgroups are disbanded or reorganised once they have achieved their goals, while communities of practice last as long as their members want them to last.
\end{itemize}

Communities of practice exist in some form in every organisation – whether they have been deliberately created and labelled as such or not. The challenge for knowledge managers is to support them in such a way that they make a positive contribution to creating and sharing organisational knowledge.\footnote{Wenger, E. Definition “communities of practice” [On-line]. Available: http://www.ewenger.com/pub/index.htm, 11\textsuperscript{th} of May 2007}{43}
3.1.7 Personal Knowledge Management tools

“Personal knowledge management (PKM) is a concept that has grown out of a combination of knowledge management and personal information management (PIM) and cognitive human abilities.” More particular, the personal knowledge management is focused on helping an individual to be more effective in his/her work. While the focus is the individual, the goal of the movement is to enable individuals to operate better in groups and in corporations as well. These personal knowledge management tools are also part of the second generation of the Web-based services, the so-called Web.2.0.

Web.2.0. refers to Web-Based services, such as social networking sites, wikis, communication tools, and folksonomies that emphasise online collaboration and sharing among users.

3.1.7.1 Weblogs

A blog is “a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.” Blogs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual although some focus on photographs (photoblog), sketchblog, videos (vlog), or audio (podcasting), and are part of a wider network of social media. The term "blog" is derived from "Web log."[48]

Weblogs, although often described as online diaries, are an interesting trend: they are personal journals on the web, and as such they represent the breadth and depth of human interest and knowledge.

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Not only do blogs allow millions of people to easily and instantaneously publish ideas to websites, most weblogs incorporate interactive features that let others easily comment to those sites, thus transforming the static web into millions of dynamic conversations. Weblogs are increasingly making their way into the professional communications arena. Companies are beginning to use weblogs as an internal tool for knowledge sharing.\(^{49}\)

Examples of a weblogs:

*America Online journals* \(^{50}\)

Part of the AOL service features

3.1.7.2 Wikis

“A wiki is a website that allows the visitors themselves to easily add, remove, and otherwise edit and change available content, typically without the need for registration.” \(^{51}\) This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for mass collaborative authoring. The term wiki also can refer to the collaborative software itself (wiki engine) that facilitates the operation of such a Web site, or to certain specific wiki sites, including the computer science site (the original wiki) WikiWikiWeb and online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia.\(^{52}\)

3.2 Techniques

To quote Wikipedia, “a technique is a way of efficiently accomplishing a task in a manner that is not immediately obvious or straightforward.” \(^{53}\)

3.2.1 Workflow

Workflow is “the automation of a business process, in whole or part, during which documents, information or tasks are passed from one participant* to another for action, according to a set of procedural rules. *participant = resource (human or machine).”\(^{54}\)

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\(^{50}\) America Online [On-line]. Available: http://peopleconnection.aol.com/journals, 6\(^{th}\) of February 2007


Workflow software products, like other software technologies, have evolved from diverse origins. While some offerings have been developed as pure workflow software, many have evolved from image management systems, document management systems, relational or object database systems, and electronic mail systems.

**Benefits related to the use of workflow:**

Ø Improved efficiency - automation of many business processes results in the elimination of many unnecessary steps

Ø Better process control - improved management of business processes achieved through standardizing working methods and the availability of audit trails

Ø Improved customer service – consistency in the processes leads to greater predictability in levels of response to customers

Ø Flexibility – software control over processes enables their re-design in line with changing business needs

Ø Business process improvement - focus on business processes leads to their streamlining and simplification

Example of workflow software:


HandySoft software automates and monitors business processes; captures and enforces best practices; ensures regulatory compliance; and reduces risk. The software is used to design, analyse, automate, monitor, and optimise business processes.

### 3.2.2 Mind mapping

A mind map is “a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to and arranged radially around a central key word or idea.” It is used to generate, visualise, structure and classify ideas, and as an aid in study, organisation, problem solving, and decision making. It is an image-centered diagram that represents semantic or other connections between portions of information.

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By presenting these connections in a radial, non-linear graphical manner, it encourages a brainstorming approach to any given organisational task. A mind map is similar to a semantic network or cognitive map but there are no formal restrictions on the kinds of links used. The elements are arranged intuitively according to the importance of the concepts and they are organized into groupings, branches, or areas.\(^{57}\)

Mind maps have many applications in personal, family, educational, and business situations, including note taking, brainstorming, summarising, revising and general clarifying of thoughts.

Example of mind mapping software:

Visual Mind is a software that improves your thinking and information management. It is used for storing and organising information, thoughts, ideas and knowledge.

### 3.2.3 Brainstorming

"Brainstorming is a method used to create new ideas by suspending judgment."\(^{59}\)

Example of brainstorming software:
*ParaMind Software ([www.paramind.net](http://www.paramind.net))\(^{60}\)*

The software creates idea combinations that are directly related to the idea that one types on the screen. It works on subjects from creative writing to law to marketing and even scientific inventions.

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\(^{60}\) ParaMind Software [On-line]. Available: www.paramind.net, 5\(\text{th}\) of December 2006
3.3 Related concepts

3.3.1 Customer Relationship Marketing

Customers and guests as the core element of the tourism business and getting to know what they like, how they take their travel decisions, who they are, and getting their knowledge visible is the basis of the customer relationship marketing idea. Generally speaking customer relationship marketing is the external part of knowledge management a company working in a product and services industry permanently should perform.

By definition, CRM defines “a company's customer-oriented business philosophy, where the efficient mechanism of cooperation with the client penetrates all the company's processes. CRM is the whole system (processes) supporting customer relationships through the whole cycle, which aimed at achieving the main goal: creation of the workflow for attracting new customers and developing existing ones.”

Customer relationship marketing is purely about the interaction with customers/guests across different channels and product groups, e.g. by enhancing coordination among guest calls, website visits, and direct sales.

According to Agarwal/Pietraszek/Singer (2006) many companies track their customers online and in-house purchases (e.g. hotel reservations, preferences, special wishes). Important is the connection of these interactions – “online” and “offline” systems have to be connected in order to get to know what the customer/guest wants/likes/dislikes. In a big company with different sales areas/geographical areas a customer relationship program can help to feed this program with necessary customer information. The big effort is the coordination and investment across functional areas and business unit boundaries. The human component of involvement and motivation plays an important role. A good CRM program is only as good as it is used properly and regularly by its users (employees). Management has to be involved to motivate and live the company culture of the importance of such a program.

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Informing, reserving, buying and educating oneself online through catalogues/sales brochures and gaining knowledge about different products and services is an important point of interaction where relationship management can be used. Especially the technique of “cookies” – memorising the customer’s online behaviour, preferences is used and helpful for companies. One popular example is the online bookshop “Amazon”. While informing or buying online, the system stores the information and shopping behaviour and whenever there are new products in the field of information the system automatically sends the customer recommendations. However, this kind of system could also be annoying for customers.

Summarising, the following table shows the advantages, disadvantages and opportunities of a CRM:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving customer experience</td>
<td>Connections between online and offline interactions with customers (gap)</td>
<td>Motivating front line staff to use CRM system for a better performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing cost of sales, marketing, customer service</td>
<td>Different geographical areas and business units</td>
<td>Rising revenues and reducing costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capturing unstructured information and transforming it into structured information</td>
<td>Possible disagreement and non-understanding of employees</td>
<td>Forming and creating tailor made products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Building a „relationship“ with the customer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: CRM advantages, disadvantages and opportunities (Source: author’s graphic representation)

Example of a CRM system for the tourism industry:
Terrasoft (http://www.terrasoft-crm-software.com/industries/tourism/)
Terrasoft is a leading supplier of integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions, offering services to companies of different sizes and industries.

Tasks to be completed with the system include:

Ø Customer preferences (climate, season, age, income), customer associations
Ø Permanent price updating
Ø Forming printed documentation on different languages
- Customer segmentation and focused marketing campaigns
- Automatic service price calculation
- Quick search for hotels, transportation and other services
- Creating statistical and analytical reports on the company sales

CRM contains the word “relationship” which is related to communication with individuals. Besides the technical part of a CRM, the human side and the way people communicate with each other to care and to foster their relationship demonstrates a link to intercultural management and intercultural relationships. According to Jacob (2003), “intercultural relationship building is facilitated when both the individuals involved are culturally sensitive. The mutual desire to respect each other’s cultural heritage, and to seek common human grounds for relating with each other, ensures that the relationship develops in a positive fashion. It also ensures that feedback is given and received in an atmosphere of comfort and the giving and receiving of feedback is an important aspect of any communication.”

Intercultural relationships are built on the premise of mutual give and take. It is important to be educated about the other culture, views, and ways of understanding but also to educate the other in turn.

3.3.2 Customer Experience Management

To quote a Jump Wood report (Edition June/July 2006) “Customer Experience Management (CEM) is about creating and delivering an optimal experience as seen through a customer lens, while still addressing a company’s core objectives. And it is increasingly playing a critical role in helping organisations evolve their short-term, tactical marketing campaigns into sustainable, customer retention and relationship strategy for longer-term profitability.”

The report further describes that the consumer demand for travel services has never been stronger or more varied.

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63 Jacob, N., 2003, 81
This is true for the B2C side but also on the B2B side of tourism industry (more marketing/event/consulting agencies and companies are fighting their place in a vivid industry). However, perhaps the biggest change that has taken place in the travel industry in recent years has been the evolution of what ‘customer experience’ means and its significance to travel marketing. Important is the travel organisations’ ability to understand customer expectations and deliver on them accordingly.

According to the Jump Wood report, the experience begins the moment customers are first exposed in any meaningful way to a product or service. As for when it stops, ideally it never should – once they are a customer, the objective should be to make them a customer for life. Thus, their experience is simply one in a linked series of experiences built upon data and insight, earned trust, and added value.

![Figure 2: Customer Experience Management](Source: Jump Wood Report, June/July 2006)

Every interaction offers the opportunity to increase a consumer’s engagement with an organisation, it also represents an opportunity for the consumer to lose faith in the organization’s ability to deliver the right experience. How does a marketer avoid this situation? The answer is to approach marketing as a relationship-building exercise, the binding thread being an ongoing, two-way, value-based conversation.

The measure of relationship success between a consumer and a marketing organisation is the degree to which each party’s needs is satisfied. What marketers must strive for is an interactive and mutual value exchange with customers.
By creating a value-based conversation that grows organically over time, each party gets what they need and the foundation is developed for a profitable lifetime relationship (Jump Wood Report, June/July 2006).\(^{65}\)

### 3.3.3 E-Learning

Electronic-learning first appeared over 20 years ago. It consisted of mainly text-based "book-on-a-screen" type resources that were both ineffective and unpopular with learners. Today E-learning programmes are designed to integrate with other delivery methods to create a powerful blended approach to people development. Other common names for E-learning include computer based learning, web based learning or multimedia based learning. Electronic learning is the use of the internet and other digital technologies to create experiences that educate human beings. It combines communication, education, information, and training and is a core element of a successful e-business strategy.\(^ {66}\)

**Benefits of E-learning:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ø</th>
<th>Accessibility (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by everyone, at short notice, course material online)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Flexibility (adaptable to the needs, different forms of learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Reduced costs (no accommodation and travel costs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Measurement (automatic training records, up-to-date analysis of who is learning what)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Disadvantages of E-learning:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ø</th>
<th>Critical context of education – lack of human interaction, own time management/responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Negative attitude towards online distance education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Fraud: Many online degrees are not valid or accredited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Employment: Not all work industries acknowledge online degrees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Various E-learning forms and examples are:

Ø Education brokers (http://www.brokered.net)
Ø University networks (www.oncampus.de)
Ø Virtual university (http://www.vu.edu.pk/)
Ø Traditional university with E-learning offer (http://learn.berkeley.edu/)
Ø Mega/distant university
Ø Corporate university

3.3.4 Best practice

“A best practice is a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result. A commitment to using the best practices in any field is a commitment to using all the knowledge and technology at one’s disposal to ensure success.”

3.4 Evaluation of KM tools, techniques and concepts

To ensure that an organisation gets the best possible knowledge management application, it is necessary to organise a team of experts to do thorough research on the applications available and to make the right recommendation for senior executives to decide upon.

Facts to be considered for assessing knowledge tools and techniques:

Ø What existing tools does the company already have?
Ø What tools exist on the market: features, costs, scalability, and suitability to the company?
Ø Definition of the company requirements: what does the company need and what should be facilitated through these tools
Ø Size of the company: number of employees, number of offices
Ø Can the existing and new tools be combined (integration of software)?
Ø Are the tools easy to use and understandable for employees
Ø Training programs for employees for better understanding

Ø No overload of tools: “keep it simple and stupid” and fostering of human and personal tools (brainstorming, mind-mapping, blogs)
Ø Based on what the organisation requires and the funds it is ready to invest, a sensible and practical decision has to be made

To ensure a successful tool implementation, the following key factors should be considered:
Ø Existence of a plan as to how to introduce new tools
Ø Ensuring commitment from both management and personnel
Ø Fostering communication to increase the involvement and commitment
Ø Increasing the understanding of problems/success factors and refining ideas based upon lessons learned
Ø Manuals and “frequently asked questions” should be available on the intranet
Ø Phone and email “help desk”

4 Knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry

Due to the complex nature of tourism, its related providers and its way of organisational levels, the information and knowledge transfer is of utter importance. The heterogeneous nature with its intangible goods and services puts special attention on the way tourism knowledge can be managed and organised.

The tourism system mainly consists of the following areas, which cooperate/network but also compete with each other:

1) Agency
2) Tour Operator
3) Carrier
4) Incoming System
5) Hotel
6) Regional and national tourism organisations
The tourism industry is a knowledge-based industry. Like in every organisation there is
a clear information overflow, hard for clients to pick the right holiday package available
from numerous travel agents at similar prices. Lots of products and services, information
and market partners are available. A big advantage for tourists is the
freedom of choice and for tourism providers a variety of partners being available. But
both, tourists and travel partners have the task of evaluation to fulfil. Who has the best
and nicest product, who really offers what comes close to the customers’ wishes and
needs?

As Bouncken/Pyo (2003) describe, the nature of tourism products and services are
human beings providing the guest a “moment of truth”, special experiences and a warm
and charming feeling they should not forget quickly after their holiday. Feedback of the
consumed tourism services follow after the consumption and services are mostly
experienced and trust based. The knowledge intensity in tourism processes is the
increasing importance of trust in relations between the acting elements.\textsuperscript{68}

According to Bouncken/Pyo (2003) there are three forms of trust\textsuperscript{69}:
1) Personal trust (the trusted is an individual)
2) Institutional trust (the trusted is an institution)
3) Ontological trust (the reliance on one’s own cognitive maps, built up by
experience)

In the tourism industry, the knowledge intensive services and relations need trust build
over time. Bouncken/Pyo (2003) state that trust as being part of the implicit knowledge
of persons and organisations is a core competence in this industry. Sources of trust can
be for example the reputations of travel agencies, suppliers and the personal
recommendation by trusted friends, colleagues, and partners.\textsuperscript{70}

Examples for slogans with the value basis “trust”:
Soccer World Championship 2006:

\textsuperscript{68} Bouncken/Pyo, 2003, 50-55
\textsuperscript{69} Bouncken/Pyo, 2003, 50-55
\textsuperscript{70} Bouncken/Pyo, 2003, 50-55
“Die Welt zu Gast bei Freunden” - “A time to make friends”

Germany smartly chose this slogan and not only convinced soccer fans but also outside the stadiums people could convince themselves of Germany as a good host and interesting country. The used word “friends” with its positive, welcoming and trusting meaning created a positive image and appreciation for Germany. Successful attractions and events besides the world championship games created trust and satisfaction in people.

Carinthia (region of Austria):
“Urlaub bei Freunden” – “Holidays with friends”
“Friends” is again used as welcoming trigger to make holidays in one of Austria’s regions. This slogan intends to make people feel at home, as they were on holidays with their friends. Trust is the basis again of the used slogan, friends are trusted and know where to go on holiday and enjoy oneself.

4.1 Categories of knowledge in the tourism and leisure industry

Different categories of knowledge can be found when looking at the various jobs and employees working in the tourism field:

![Figure 3: Categories of tourism knowledge](Source: Data from Bouncken/Pye 2003, author’s graphic representation)
Task-specific knowledge

According to Bouncken/Pye (2003), “task-specific knowledge contains the specific procedures, sequences, actions and strategies to fulfil a task.”

Both, explicit and tacit knowledge is used to fulfil companies’ goals.

Examples are front and back office operations which are codified in manuals but also need to be learned by training. The way call center employees talk to guests, give them information; manuals help with used phrases but on-the-job training is necessary to internalise the knowledge.

Task-related knowledge

According to Bouncken/Pye (2003), “task-related knowledge contains individuals’ shared knowledge not of a single task, but of related tasks, e.g. the form of teamwork in the firm.”

Not a single task but the network thinking of different tasks and how they are combined and interwined help a team/group of employees to internalise similar working values. Examples of task-related knowledge are shared quality standards, standardised products, services used in different offices of one company (e.g. same layout of bills, guest requests, offers to clients) and values, norms and beliefs (corporate culture components).

Transactive memory

Bouncken/Pye (2003) state that transactive memory “includes decentralised knowledge of the other organisational members’ cognitive models.”

The main understanding of this form of knowledge category is the realisation of each others knowledge, preferences, weaknesses and work values. Examples are yellow pages (finding the right expert for a certain knowledge needed).

Guest-related knowledge

The tourism products and services are formed round its customers; therefore the knowledge about guests is the core of the business. Examples are socio-demographics, preferences, expectations, culture etc.

71 Cannon-Bowers and Salas, 2001, 197
72 Bouncken/Pye, 2003, 55-60
73 Bouncken/Pye, 2003, 56
Knowledge about guests should not only be based on demographic information (age, income, education, status or type of occupation, region of country and household size) but also on psychographics. Included are people's lifestyles and behaviours — where they like to go on holidays, the kinds of interests they have, the values they hold and how they behave.

As discussed before, intercultural aspects and differences are also of great importance. A deeper understanding of who the guests are in order to better tie up the right package as well as the offered services and better suit their needs and wants is important.

**Customer/supplier – related knowledge**

This knowledge is basically treated the same way as the guest related knowledge – the difference here is to look from a business perspective towards the customers and suppliers (e.g. regional tourist offices, hotel chains, tourism consulting companies, event management companies, catering companies etc.)

**Market – related knowledge**

Market related know-how (size, population, culture, habits etc) is important for every organisation. The operating markets might vary enormously to the key market and the offered products and services will have to change and need to be adapted accordingly.

**Network-related knowledge**

In what kind of network does the organisation operate? What are the competitors and what kind of organisations might be helpful to establish and promote the organisation? This external linked knowledge is sometimes underestimated but of importance for the long-term success of an organisation and needs to be put into consideration of an organisations management levels. Especially in the tourism and leisure industry relationships with other players are extremely important.

These knowledge elements help a national tourism organisation to better market and offer different products and services to their customers and position itself on the market.
The management of customer relationships and experiences is also part of the knowledge management concept. Customer relationship management and customer experience management are a crucial part of every company’s way of doing business (consciously or unconsciously performed). The root of these management techniques is the single customer being the key to performance success or failure.

4.2 Knowledge Management within the European tourism market

The European Travel Commission (ETC) sees itself as a virtual organisation marketing Europe as a tourist destination in global markets, primarily by means of the internet. The three principal focuses of the Commission's work are electronic marketing, market intelligence and operational excellence. ETC seeks to provide added value to members by encouraging exchange of information and management expertise and promoting awareness about the role played by national tourism organisations (ETC Website).

ETC currently promotes and markets “Destination Europe” around the world through its operations groups in the United States, Canada, Asia (Japan) and Latin America (Brazil). ETC also plans to extend its activities to emerging markets such as China, India and Russia.

Vital to ETC activities are its Market Intelligence Group and New Media Group. The Market Intelligence Group commissions and produces market intelligence studies, handbooks on methodologies and best practice, and facilitates the exchange of European tourism statistics on the “TourMIS” web platform.

The New Media Group provides information and expertise about the use of digital media by national tourism organisations, produces the “New Media Review”, and organises an e-Business Academy once a year. The work of all operations groups is carried out on a voluntary basis by experts from member NTOs.
4.2.1 Market Intelligence

The year 2006 was designated to be the “year of market intelligence” in the ETC underlying the importance of the topic knowledge management within the European tourism industry. “Market Intelligence” is a separate department in the ETC and has the following organisational structure, goals and main tasks:

4.2.2 Organisational structure

As described on the ETC corporate website, the members of the ETC Market Intelligence Group (MIG) comprise the Research Directors of the 37 National Tourist Offices who are members of ETC. The MIG provides an active forum for the sharing of market intelligence, as well as for the commissioning of new research which is to the benefit of ‘Europe’ as a whole. Active collaboration with partners such as the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), European Cities Tourism (ECT), the Tourism Unit of the European Commission, and commercial companies enables the Research Group to lever its limited budget and maximise its research output. The Research Group holds its Annual Market Intelligence Meeting in February every year. The resulting “Programme of Market Intelligence Activities” is steered throughout the year by the Market Intelligence Committee consisting of volunteers from the research departments.

4.2.3 Goals and activities

The future of Europe's tourism industry, the economic environment in which it operates and the role of e-marketing were the main aims of ETC's First Executive Summit which took place in Vienna, Austria on 17 October 2005 (ETC corporate website).

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The following goals were declared at the Summit:\textsuperscript{76}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Development and application of information technology, in particular to guard against dominance of the field by non-European competitors
  \item Development of the statistical framework and methods
  \item Market and cultural intelligence
  \item Knowledge-based services and product development
  \item Quality standards
  \item Development of strategies to respond to long-term changes in demographic structure and working habits, as well as short-term fluctuations in demand caused by terrorism, armed conflict and natural catastrophes
  \item Promotion of the exchange of best practices and expertise
\end{itemize}

The key market intelligence activities in 2006 comprised (ETC corporate website):

\begin{itemize}
  \item Launch of www.visiteurope.com Portal
  \item Publication of various studies and reports (e.g. survey on the Position and Image of Europe on the Chinese Travel Market
  \item Handbook on Forecasting Methodologies and on Market Segmentation Methodologies
  \item Redesign and upgrade of the E-Library
  \item Support to the development of the exchange of European Tourism Statistics
\end{itemize}

\textbf{4.3 Knowledge Management at the Austrian National Tourist Office}

\textbf{4.3.1 Organisational Structure}

The Austrian National Tourist Office (Österreich Werbung) is the national tourism marketing organisation for the country of Austria. ANTO receives its base funding by the Austrian Federal Government (75\%) and the Austrian Chamber of Commerce (25\%), but also acts as a fee based marketing agency for Austrian tourism interests (ANTO Website, 9\textsuperscript{th} of May 2007).

ANTO operates 31 worldwide offices and representation, responsible for tourism marketing in 45 countries. Every year 1500 marketing activities are being implemented, ranging from advertising, public relations efforts, event marketing, trade shows and travel trade efforts, online promotions and more (ANTO Website, 9th of May 2007).

Worldwide Staff: 220
Shareholders:
75% Austrian Federal Government
25% Austrian Chamber of Commerce
President: Dr. Martin Bartenstein, Minister for Economics, Republic of Austria
CEO: Dr. Petra Stolba

The company’s strategy stresses the importance of knowledge management and is quoted as followed (ANTO Website, 9th of May 2007):

The Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) sees itself as an agent for innovation for Austria’s tourism and leisure industry. The work is based on:

Ø Strategies that promote growth
Ø Products attuned to market demands
Ø Customer-focused activity

4.3.2 Goals and activities

According to ANTO (Website, 9th of May 2007) the main strategic goals until 2011 are the following:

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Strategic goals (for the next 3 years until 2011)

Leading brand „Holiday in Austria“

Ø Deepening of the branding and development of linkage between the destination and the tourism related companies
Ø Broadening of the brand through highlights, e.g. cultural highlights
Ø Use of storytelling for transmitting emotional values in vision and text
Ø Continuation of the „best-of“ strategy with highlights

Innovation support for product and service development

Ø ANTO as think tank
Ø ANTO supports service/offer design and development (hotels, companies) and product development (destinations) as a consultant for trends and innovations
Ø Through cooperation with support partners ANTO transmits impulses to tourism companies
Ø To highlight the Austrian service quality (synonym: charm) as important characteristic of distinction

Internationalisation

Ø 75 % of overnight stays come from 3 source markets; a market differentiation is necessary
Ø Qualitative growth in saturated markets / quantitative growth in growth markets
Ø Goal: growth path for international arrivals should increase by 3% during five years (Ø1995 - 2005: 1 % p.a.)

Cooperations with network partners

Ø Joint negotiations for task sharing between the different levels which operate in tourism marketing
5 Knowledge Management assessment at ANTO and best practices

5.1 Intellectual Capital Statement

With the help of an intellectual capital statement the existent knowledge and the way knowledge management is conducted at the ANTO is being assessed. To quote the Danish Ministry of Science (2003) “an intellectual knowledge statement identifies the company’s knowledge management strategy which includes the identification of objectives, initiatives and results in the composition, application and development of the company’s knowledge resources.”

The intellectual knowledge statement is a management tool used to generate value in a company and a communication tool to communicate to employees, customers, cooperative partners and investors how a company generates value for them.

The main knowledge resources to be managed are:

Ø Human capital (skills and personal competencies, experience, motivation, commitment)
Ø Structural capital (structures and processes which the employees need in order to be productive and innovative)
Ø Relational capital (relations with customers, partners, suppliers, public)

5.2 Elements of the Intellectual Capital Statement

To quote the Danish Ministry of Science (2003) “the intellectual capital statement consists of four elements which build up the company’s knowledge management. These elements link the users of the company’s goods and services with the company’s need for knowledge resources.”

[80] Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 7  
[81] Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 12
The four elements of an intellectual capital statement are:

1) Knowledge narrative
The first element expresses the company’s ambition to increase the value a user receives from a company’s goods or services.

2) Management challenges
These challenges highlight the knowledge resources that need to be strengthened through in-house development or through sourcing them externally.

3) Initiatives
The initiatives are concerned with how to compose, develop and procure knowledge resources and how to monitor their extent and effects.

4) Indicators
Indicators make it possible to follow up whether the initiatives have been launched or whether the management challenges are being met. Indicators make initiatives visible by making them measurable. Indicators can measure the effect, activities and the resource mix.

The Danish Ministry of Science (2003) describes that these elements are interrelated with each other and represent the analysis of the company’s knowledge management. The indicators show how initiatives are launched and put into effect. The initiatives formalise the problems identified as management challenges. The challenges single out what has to be done if knowledge resources are to be developed. The knowledge narrative also sums up, communicates and re-orientates what the company’s skills and capacity do or must do for consumers, and which knowledge resources are needed within the company.\(^\text{82}\)

Figure 4: Intellectual capital statement model
(Source: Danish Ministry of Science, 2003)

\(^{82}\) Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 13
5.3 Intellectual Capital Statement implementation for ANTO

Following the Danish Ministry of Science guideline of intellectual capital statements (2003), a tourism industry adapted format of an intellectual capital statement helps to assess the knowledge management situation and future outlook for the Austrian National Tourist office.

In the following section the theory of the intellectual capital statement is used and presented first and then combined with the information of knowledge management at the ANTO (in-depth interview with Alfred Cossmann and author’s knowledge as employee of ANTO).

1. Overview of existing activities and objectives that relate to knowledge and knowledge resources (initiatives)

Examples of initiatives:
Ø Establish educational activities in information technology
Ø Establish project groups
Ø Introduce open-plan offices
Ø Introduce financial or symbolic knowledge-sharing incentives for employees

Basically the following questions need to be addressed:
What are the existing and potential initiatives and objectives that relate to the company’s knowledge management?
How do these initiatives and objectives work?
What initiatives can be used to boost the company’s knowledge management?

A relevant initiative is a response to a current or potential problem. Initiatives should be checked for its relevance to a problem, how each initiative works, responsible person to each initiative and assignment of priority83.

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83 Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 14-16
ANTO Initiatives:

Ø To collect, structure, analyse market knowledge in order to support and dispose partners
Ø Affinity group marketing
Ø Sales and marketing strategy
Ø Customer relationship management tool
Ø Employee workshops, seminars
Ø Exchange with partners (networking)

2. Management challenges

Management challenges bring the initiatives together and show how they are interrelated. Furthermore, they show how initiatives should act together or be developed in relation to each other.

Examples of management challenges:

Ø Recruitment, development of employees and competencies
Ø Development of company’s processes
Ø Visibility in the market

Each management is based on a number of initiatives which are interrelated with each other. The initiatives ultimately work to create, develop and apply the company’s knowledge resources. According to the Danish Ministry of Science (2003), each company has three general types of interrelated management challenges where the company’s most important knowledge lies:

1) Information systems (e.g. intranet, databases):
Knowledge laid down in procedures, processes, work methods and tools in the heart of the company.

2) Co-operation between employees and partners:
Creativity arises through being together, also including customers.

3) Individual experts or groups of experts

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84 Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 16-18
Expert knowledge is to be used to create solutions to technically complex problems demanding a deep insight and analytical skills.

Assessment ANTO:
ANTO wants to convert the expert knowledge of its employees in its operating markets into products and services the Austrian tourist partners buy and want to use.

Co-operations, networking activities and continuous enhancement of the daily business to promote and enhance tourism in Austria on an international level are to be achieved in the long-run:

Ø Appointment of experts with knowledge of the tourism markets and the local needs (recruitment and retention of employees)
Ø Setting up and enhancing an IT-based system for efficient communication and knowledge sharing (development of processes)
Ø Establishing knowledge sharing by ensuring employees and customers to get to know each other and use each other as sparring partners (development of processes)
Ø Change of relationship between the guest (consumer) and the host (Austrian partner, hotelier). Importance to better understand the guest – increased customer knowledge will be needed
Ø Focus on the ageing population: consumers grow older and the demand for health and wellness increases

Global basis:
Ø Climate change: increase of holidays beyond the summer season, more products and services for the spring and autumn needed
Ø The consumer has more and more knowledge about the tourism products and services – the offered services and the knowledge have to be even better and more fine-tuned to keep up with this increasing demand (“smart consumers”)

3. Knowledge narrative

The knowledge narrative should give a coherent presentation of how the company uses its knowledge resources to generate use value.
According to the Danish Ministry of Science (2003), it is a narrative that generates an interrelated course of events, describes how and why the company’s ability (knowledge resources) relates to the user’s needs (use value).\(^{85}\)

Steps for a knowledge narrative:
1) Identify use value(s)
2) Define knowledge resources (people and tools)
3) Connect them together by using ‘because’ and ‘therefore’ in a knowledge narrative

Help questions for the knowledge narrative with assessment of ANTO:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help questions</th>
<th>Assessment ANTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What product/service does the company provide?</td>
<td>Marketing services to promote tourism abroad (full marketing activity range – print – online- events), networking and co-operations services for a market divergence and destination information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Who is the user?                                                              | • Austrian regional tourist organisations and other tourism related organisations (consultancies, local tourist offices, hotels, hotel chains)  
|                                                                                | • Market partners (tour operators, journalists, travel agents)  
|                                                                                | • End consumer (holiday maker in Austria)  
| How is the product/service used?                                              | Seasonal, geographic and target group differentiation in usage (different markets/countries are attractive for various partners)                                               |
| How does the product/service benefit the user?                                | Visibility and marketing activities in foreign countries to penetrate a market as well as building of business contacts and networks abroad. Positioning of the partners tourism product in a market |
| What current or potential knowledge resources does the company need to create use value? | Databases, document management system, customer relationship management system, intranet and internet, workshops, expert knowledge, blogs, chat, forum, etc.  
| How does or can knowledge resources contribute to the company’s products or services? | Marketing services, activities, destination information can be quickly passed on – there is ease communication between employees and end users through the knowledge resources |
| How are use value and knowledge resources interrelated?                        | Information about marketing activities is made visible and available for professional users and partners. For the end consumer the knowledge resources help to compare destination offers and also to exchange their opinions and experiences with others |

Table 5: Knowledge narrative help questions  
(Source: Model by Danish Ministry of Science 2003,  
data from in-depth interview and author’s representation)  

\(^{85}\) Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 16-20
Assessment ANTO:

Based on the three users being identified through this help table, three different narratives are being derived:

a) **Narrative for market partners (Belgium tour operators, journalists, travel agents):**
The company supplies networking and co-operations services with Austrian partners to Belgium market partners. The tour operators, travel agents and journalists experience that they have a satisfying partner with ANTO because the networking and co-operations services contribute to make Austria as a holiday destination more famous in the Belgium press and travel industry. They personate the link between Austrian tourism partners and the market partners. To be able to do this, the company must have access to various communication channels (internet, intranet, workshops, databases, customer relationship management system) as a point around which the company’s management resolves, because they make it possible to accumulate knowledge and distribute this knowledge to its partners.

b) **Narrative for end consumers (holiday makers in Austria):**
The company supplies destination information about Austria to its end consumers. The holiday makers experience that s/he is well-informed about current holiday offers, destination and touristic information because this destination information contributes to compare Austria with other holiday destination and to get a proper picture about different possibilities how to spend a holiday in Austria (hotels, activities, transport). To be able to do this, the company must have access to intranet, brochures, blogs, databases, brochure download, etc. as a point around which the company’s management resolves, because they make it possible to accumulate knowledge needed to make the choice of Austria as holiday destination.

c) **Narrative for Austrian regional tourism organisations and other tourism related organisations (consultancies, local tourist offices, hotels, hotel chains):**
The company supplies tourism marketing services to Austrian regional tourism organisations.
The Austrian tourism partners experience that they are better off with these marketing services and products because these services contribute and enhance the visibility and positioning of their tourism products in foreign markets and to have a market partner at this markets with professional local know-how. To be able to do this, the company must have access to internet, intranet, communication channels, databases, and customer relationship management tool as a point around which the company’s management resolves, because they make it possible to accumulate and distribute knowledge.

4. Indicators

According to the Danish Ministry of Science (2003), indicators contain the intellectual capital statement figures and therefore become a tool that can create insight and are used in follow-ups and evaluations. Indicators allow management challenges and initiatives to be defined and formalised. 86

Indicators are made up of three types of figures:

- Effects (e.g. quality, satisfaction, productivity)
- Activities for developing knowledge resources (e.g. performance reviews, supplementary training, meetings with customers)
- Resource mix (e.g. composition of education, major accounts, technology platform)

Assessment ANTO:

- Number of co-operations agreements
- Number of visits to the company’s homepage
- Overall business strategy including the vision that the ANTO should be and act as a think tank
- Sales figures (yearly budget)
- Number of internal expert requests to hold meetings (e.g. for scenario planning)

86 Danish Ministry of Science, 2003, 20-25
5.4 Knowledge Management best practices

In-depth interviews following the main practices of the guideline of intellectual capital statement help to assess the way knowledge management is practiced in other European tourism organisation and further make it comparable to the practices at the Austrian National Tourist Office.

Austria, Switzerland, France and The Netherlands are competitors on the European tourism market (with bases Belgium) – aiming for the same tourists. These countries offer the same kind of products and the destinations attract similar customers. In winter the destinations offer skiing and winter sport possibilities (except The Netherlands). In the summer season the main tourist activities are hiking, biking, mountain biking. An all year round city and culture tourism to famous cities as well as “wellness” holidays are the highlights of these countries tourism offers. The organisations compared are all dealing with the same services but differ in the key product, namely the tourism destination. They aim to promote and market tourism products and services for their country. Users of the products and services are potential guests, regional tourism organisations, hotels and Belgian market partners (e.g. tour operators, journalists, travel agents). On one side the main value each organisation creates for its customers is the tourism information to make guests choose for their destination regarding to wishes and needs. On the other side the key value for Belgian market partners is the networking function and for Austrian/Dutch/Swiss/French partners to have a representative in the foreign market Belgium. The national tourism organisations are able to provide local market know how and to suggest marketing activities according to the partners requirements and specifications.

The way of doing “tourism business” is quite similar and the differences are marginal. A comparison “behind the scene” on the basis of how tourism knowledge is being identified, created, stored, disseminated and controlled will give a new insight of these tourism organisations. Best practices from the assessed organisations will help ANTO to fine tune its knowledge management practices. Learning from the others is the main goal.
5.4.1 Findings Knowledge Management at the Austrian National Tourist Office

The in-depth interview with Mr. Alfred Cossmann (Benelux Regional Manager of the Austrian National Tourist Office) on the 28\textsuperscript{th} of March 2007 helped to enhance the findings of the previous chapter how knowledge management is performed at this organisation.

Knowledge management activities (market intelligence) comprise to collect, structure, analyse market knowledge in order to support and dispose the Austrian partners in an efficient and structured manner. A knowledge management strategy exists in the company and the whole topic of KM is very important and very much in use at the ANTO although there is no single KM department. Knowledge management is coordinated on a decentralised organisational level in various departments.

Knowledge management has the following main purposes and is implemented as:

- Networking of experts
- Document management
- Create new products and services
- Enhancement of customer and employee satisfaction
- Enhancement of innovation and competitiveness
- Enhancement of processes
- Development of competences
- Development of a knowledge friendly company culture
- Enhancement of communication channels within the organisation

Important factors for a successful KM implementation are that knowledge needs to have a high priority in the organisation and employees need to accept the KM system. Barriers for a good implementation are that the value of every single employee is difficult to measure, there is not enough financial backup and the used technical systems are not user-friendly.

Regarding the development and the future outlook of knowledge management within the organisation, Mr. Cossmann crystallised three topics:
Ø Intercultural management: especially at new markets (e.g. Arabic) customers should be informed how to treat guests from different cultures with different habits and customs

Ø Market specific knowledge: still to be enhanced, knowledge about the destination should be enhanced through “blog-style” information (more credible)

Ø Image data collection: are not yet conducted (e.g. hiking campaign – test at the beginning of a campaign how Austria is seen in Belgians eyes and afterwards – what is the effect?)

Present knowledge resources in use:

<table>
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<td>Lessons-learned reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge exchange with external partners</td>
<td>Microsoft Dynamics</td>
<td>Kick-off-meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job rotation</td>
<td>Company newsletter</td>
<td>Story-telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops, trainings</td>
<td>Document management system</td>
<td>Teamwork projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Keyword search engine</td>
<td>„Bulletin“ company magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian Web Academy (E-Learning)</td>
<td>Database management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTO United (employee get-together)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequently-asked-questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Austrian National Tourist Office knowledge resources
(Source: in-depth interview Alfred Cossmann, 2007)

Indicators and measurement tools are the overall business strategy including the vision that ANTO should be and act as a think tank but also sales figures, corporate website statistics, number of internal expert requests to hold meetings (e.g. for scenario planning).

Knowledge about users splits into three categories:

Ø Knowledge about Austrian partners

Ø Knowledge about Belgian market partners (journalists, tour operators, travel agents)

Ø Knowledge about the guest (end consumers going on holiday to Austria)
For the management of this knowledge ANTO uses a customer relationship management system. Furthermore there exists a program where information about the customer ordering brochures on the phone is saved and used for other activities.

The most interesting knowledge to find out for Cossmann is the true holiday activities of guests and what the real, true reasons for a holiday decision are. “To look into the customers brain to find out why they book a holiday and what they really do during their holiday is of most interest for the tourism marketer”, states Alfred Cossmann.

The biggest management challenges regarding knowledge management are:

Ø Change of relationship between the guest (consumer) and the host (Austrian partner, hotelier). Importance to better understand the guest – increased customer knowledge will be needed

Ø Focus on the ageing population: consumers grow older and the demand for health and wellness increases

On a global basis:

Ø Climate change: increase of holidays beyond the summer season, more products and services for the spring and autumn needed

Ø The consumer has more and more knowledge about the tourism products and services – the services and the knowledge has to be even better and more fine tuned to keep up with this increasing demand (“smart consumers”)

5.4.2 Findings Knowledge Management at the Switzerland National Tourist Office

The in-depth interview with Mr. Ivan Breiter (Benelux Regional Manager of Switzerland Tourism) on the 21st of March 2007 revealed a very developed knowledge management system at the Switzerland National Tourist Office.

Although there is no explicit knowledge management strategy and no single knowledge responsible department with its own budget, the topic of knowledge management is properly implemented.
Knowledge management has the following main purposes (mainly used in different departments on a horizontal organisational basis) and is implemented as:

Ø Recruitment/new employees (knowledge is passed on from the old employee to the new one)
Ø Networking of experts
Ø Document management
Ø Create new products and services
Ø Enhancement of customer satisfaction
Ø Enhancement of innovation and competitiveness
Ø Enhancement of processes
Ø Development of a knowledge friendly company culture

Regarding to Mr. Breiter, employee acceptance of knowledge management is most important for a successful implementation. Time and efforts to implement knowledge management as well as employee fluctuation are main barriers for the implementation. Future perspectives and the development of KM at the Switzerland Tourism Board focuses on partner activities (regular guests system = CRM software), the integration and networking activities with tourism universities and external partners (knowledge of what the job of tourism board is about). Important and constant information updates on the corporate website including yearly customer questionnaires are current knowledge management initiatives.

For Mr. Breiter, there is no point in a single and universal knowledge management database – the used technologies and the human knowledge management system has already reached a high level at the organisation.
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</tr>
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</table>

Table 7: Switzerland National Tourist Office knowledge resources  
(Source: in-depth interview Ivan Breiter, 2007)

The biggest management challenge is to find and to use the right marketing tools to communicate to the future guests and “picking” the right customers who will finally book a holiday to Switzerland. The right communication tools for the needs and wishes of the future guests is the number one challenge.

Controlling of knowledge management is difficult to undertake. Employees yearly appraisals, the main company business and strategy plan with clear indicators facilitate the measurement of knowledge management: Important indicators are costs of implementing quality management (ongoing quality management program for the ISO standard), number of new customers and the number of new users on the corporate website.

5.4.3 Findings Knowledge Management at the France National Tourist Office

The in-depth interview with Ms. Margot Konings (Fairs and Special Events, Webmaster Maison de la France BELUX) on the 22nd of March 2007 revealed interesting insights into knowledge management at the French National Tourist Office.
Knowledge management is deeply implemented in the overall business strategy of the national tourism board – also expressed through a knowledge strategy which is controlled by the headquarters in Paris (centralised organisational structure of knowledge management). Although there are employees responsible for knowledge management there is no single employee in an office or department entitled to be a knowledge worker.

Knowledge management has the following main purposes (mainly used in different departments on a horizontal organisational basis) and is implemented as:

- Networking of experts
- Document management
- Create new products and services
- Enhancement of customer satisfaction
- Enhancement of innovation and competitiveness
- Enhancement of processes

According to Ms. Konings, knowledge management has and will have an even bigger importance at the tourism board. Environmental changes and the constant development leads to a virtual knowledge system – given the guests the possibility to inform themselves online (not only holiday booking).

“Maison de la France” was one of the first tourist boards which installed a brochure-download on their corporate website. During the last years a steady decrease of demand on paper brochures was noticed. On the other side an increase in online business – also in the tourism industry followed and changed the way doing business. The call-centre at the Brussels office has also been abolished. Guests are motivated to inform themselves online.

Another way the French gain knowledge of their customers is through their marketing activities (e.g. fairs, events). According to the topic of the event (e.g. winter event) they try to collect valuable E-mail addresses from potential guests. Further on, these addresses are used to inform the target group for winter holidays through electronic mailing for example.
Strong emphasis is put on the online marketing activities – the corporate website with well-informing statistics helps the marketing experts to adjust their actions. For employees the most important tool for knowledge exchange is the intranet which is frequently used and contains the information needed for each department and each employee to perform their work efficiently.

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<td>Intranet</td>
<td>Pizza Brainstorming (ordering pizza for a relaxed atmosphere for idea finding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring/mentoring</td>
<td>Corporate chat</td>
<td>Expert knowledge exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External experts exchange</td>
<td>Company newsletter</td>
<td>Kick-off-meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job rotation</td>
<td>Database management system</td>
<td>Office Exchange meetings (Spanish office for meeting in Brussels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops, trainings, seminars</td>
<td>Document management system</td>
<td>Teamwork projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly appraisals</td>
<td>Keyword search engine</td>
<td>Bulletin board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lessons-learned reports (trip records)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organisation magazine (4/year)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: France National Tourist Office knowledge resources  
(Source: in-depth interview Margot Konings, 2007)

A customer database helps to structure the knowledge about the guests (addresses, interested topics, visited fairs and events etc.). With the help of this customer database various marketing activities can be performed. In this context the management challenge to find out what kind of topics, interests and wishes the potential guests have is most difficult to find out. “Maison de la France” tries to find this knowledge through a combination of off-line and online activities (events – addresses – customer database and website statistics).

Controlling of knowledge management is undertaken through various kinds of evaluations throughout a business year. E.g. evaluations of the time efforts, budget, customer addresses for big marketing actions generated are controlled through forms coordinated through the headquarters. Also the business strategy including clear knowledge management goals has to be followed and is controlled through website statistics, number of new customers generated at events.
5.4.4 Findings Knowledge Management at The Netherlands National Tourist Office

The in-depth interview with Mr. Bram Straatman (Benelux Regional Manager of The Netherlands Tourism Board) on the 4th of April 2007 revealed a good knowledge management system at the Netherlands National Tourist Office.

Knowledge management is controlled by the headquarters in The Hague and different departments use various elements of knowledge management – there is no strategy and no KM department although the KM concept is used very strongly in the organisation.

Knowledge management has the following main purposes (mainly used in different departments on a horizontal organisational basis) and is implemented as:

- Networking of experts
- Document management
- Create new products and services
- Enhancement of employee and customer satisfaction
- Enhancement of innovation and competitiveness
- Development and competences

Important factors for a successful KM implementation are that knowledge needs to have a high significance within the organisation as well as the constant give-and-take of knowledge by every single employee. Barriers on the other side are that there is little time for KM activities, the technical equipment is not what the company needs are and that goals are not clearly defined.

For Mr. Straatman the future of knowledge management for the Netherlands National Tourist Office is the transformation of knowledge into marketing products and services.

A difference to the other tourism organisations is the existence of a general motivation system (monetary bonus) which is based on defined goals and the completion of these goals in a specific time frame. The success of knowledge management as well as other marketing goals is measured through indicators (website statistics, budget, new customers).
Present knowledge resources in use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee tools</th>
<th>IT tools</th>
<th>Informal techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment manual</td>
<td>Intranet</td>
<td>Brainstorming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring/mentoring</td>
<td>Corporate chat</td>
<td>Mind-mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External experts exchange</td>
<td>Company newsletter</td>
<td>After work employee meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities of practice</td>
<td>Database management system</td>
<td>Bulletin board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops, trainings, seminars</td>
<td>Content management system</td>
<td>Teamwork projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Questions</td>
<td>Keyword search engine</td>
<td>Best practice pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Dutch National Tourist Office knowledge resources  
(Source: in-depth interview Bram Straatman, 2007)

Knowledge about customers is collected through market research, customer satisfaction questionnaires, registered campaign reactions and registration of customer behaviour at the point of sales. A CRM system and database help to organise and use the collected data for marketing activities (e.g. direct mailings).

According to Mr. Straatman, the Belgians are a very informative nation – knowledge about how they decide, book and make their holidays can be easily assessed. As one of the big management challenges he mentioned the Web 2.0 concept to be introduced in the tourism organisation. The use of an online dairy is now tested on the American market and should then be extended on the European market. Idea: 4 Four Americans tourists are sent to The Netherlands and write their impressions and recommendations for sights, food, etc. including pictures on the website.

Blogs and online brochure downloads also round the e-marketing activities. The challenge is to help and stimulate the interaction between the customers and organisation (holiday information center - which should result into a holiday booking). Out of a continuous learning process new products and services should be developed being up-to-date to the customers’ needs and wants.
5.5 Summary and recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>The Netherlands</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerator</td>
<td>Employee acceptance</td>
<td>Online activities</td>
<td>Knowledge as high priority in the organisation, give-and-take between employees</td>
<td>Knowledge as high priority in the organisation, employees need to accept the KM system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>Little time, high employee fluctuation</td>
<td>Little Time, high employee fluctuation</td>
<td>Little time, technical equipment is not what the company needs are, goals not clearly defined</td>
<td>Value of every single employee is difficult to measure, not enough financial backup and used technical systems are not user-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future perspective</td>
<td>Regular guest system (CRM), networking with external partners</td>
<td>Strong website with brochure download, topic search and statistics – link off-line and on-line activities</td>
<td>Transformation of knowledge into marketing products and services</td>
<td>Intercultural management, market specific knowledge, image data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management challenges</td>
<td>Right marketing tools for the needs and wishes of the future guests “finding the right customer”</td>
<td>Customer knowledge about wishes, needs, topics and destinations</td>
<td>Web 2.0 in tourism organisation, stimulation of the interaction between the customers and organisation</td>
<td>Focus on the ageing population, climate change, change of guest-host relationship, “smart consumers”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Summary of knowledge practices at European tourism organisations (Source: in-depth interviews, March-April 2007, author’s graphic representation)
Summarising the in-depths interviews of the four tourism organisations, knowledge has a high priority although the way of organising knowledge is not clear and often not even defined at all. The definition “knowledge management” is mostly not used but when asking about the knowledge resources (IT, human, culture) various parts of a knowledge management system were identified. The main management challenge is to predict customers’ wishes and needs in order to offer the right products and services. Evident for the human focussed tourism and leisure industry and what was crystallised through the interviews is the connection between employees, processes and IT tools. All four interviewees stated that the combination of existing employee knowledge and the new IT tools and how processes are performed (e.g. CRM, Web 2.0. components, database management system) will make a difference in business performance, customer satisfaction and will make the company live up to future challenges.

6 Conclusion

At first sight, the combination of knowledge management and the tourism and leisure industry is not a clear one. At the beginning of the thesis basics of knowledge management, tools, techniques, the way the tourism and leisure industry works, but also a section about influences of intercultural management help to get an understanding of how the parts work and what they have in common. The actual knowledge work started with an overview of market intelligence activities at the ETC. A research close-up with the help of an intellectual capital statement was then set onto ANTO (bases Belgium). Best practices gained through in-depth interviews round off the research section. The preliminary research undertaken for this thesis does not allow to state statistical relevant results and would need further investigation. But a basic overview and a prognosis can be given:

Consumers will be smarter then ever. They will know more detailed where to get the information they need, what kind of holiday they want to spend or what kind of marketing activity is well-suited for their tourism product. New forms of experience exchange through the internet “scream” for smarter knowledge provided to customers.
Tourism organisations and its employees need to react to this desire of smart knowledge. To find out about customers wishes, needs and wants is the most interesting question in marketing. Thanks to a number of technical helpers it is nowadays easier to answer this question to some extent (e.g. cookies, website statistics, direct mailings, questionnaires). The customer-company interaction can be supported through the internet and especially the new Web 2.0 technologies which provide a chance and change in organisational thinking and structure. Internal knowledge can be discussed through new technologies (e.g. blogs, forum, organisational wiki, intranet for innovative ideas). The sudden opening and allowing of customers to share ideas and experiences makes these “externals” unnoticed work for the company. Interests, critics, ideas are being discussed and can be used as a big asset for the company. Market research about customers is transferred to the web. A “take-part-web” for employees and customers support the connection of internal and external knowledge. On one side technical tools are a service provider and support (e.g. key word search, brochure download) and on the other side they try to capture knowledge about the customers (e.g. CRM) and need to become a stronger part of tourism marketing.

Besides the technical helpers, some questions for tourism organisations are still not solved. Why does Mr. Miller spend his holidays in Vienna? What does he like best there?

Only the interaction between the guest (customer) and the host (hotel, restaurant, tourism organisation) and the provided service can help to better answer these questions. The different players, customer, employee and company crystallise a simple key of common understanding and a way how to make knowledge among them flow, namely “communication”. Through communication consumers make themselves wise about existent products and services, they communicate with each other and with employees to acquire information, reserve a hotel room, receive information about marketing services etc. Employees communicate with customers and with each other to exchange information, knowledge and to develop new products and services. The enabler of the knowledge flow is the company management. It is a management aim and responsibility to foster knowledge management through motivation systems, to create a knowledge supporting company culture and to provide the required tools and techniques in order to strengthen the human and technical points of interaction between customers and employees.
Knowledge management flow within a tourism organisation can contribute to create innovative new products and services adapted to the customers needs. Employees will become satisfied and loyal when seeing their ideas, input and knowledge be realised. The company will have a stronger position in the market, be financially healthy and be ready to live up to future challenges. On the customer side of the knowledge management flow customised products and services according to their needs and wants are offered and make customers be satisfied and loyal. Organisational partners, shareholders and network partners also will be content with the company performance. This optimistic view of knowledge management for the tourism and leisure industry needs high investment (human, time, involvement, technical, processes, financial). The company with its employees should gain a competitive advantage within the tourism and leisure market and the customers and partners will have a reliable, loyal and satisfying partner in return.
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- Jacob, N. (2003): Intercultural Management, Great Britain and USA

In-depths interviews

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Cossmann, A. (Benelux Regional Manager of the Austrian National Tourist Office), 28th of March 2007
Konings, M. (Fairs and Special Events, Webmaster Maison de la France BELUX), 22nd of March 2007
Straatman, B. (Benelux Regional Manager of The Netherlands Tourism Board), 4th of April 2007

Websites

- http://www.etc-corporate.org/, 22nd of August 2006
- http://www.kmtool.net/, 5th of December 2006
- http://www.kmtool.net/, 7th of December 2006

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- www.austriatourism.com/xxl/_site/us/_area/477232/_subArea/479962/allgemeines.html, 9th of May 2007
Appendix

A) Ind-depth interview questionnaire

Knowledge Management – a topic of great interest – this is also true for the tourism and leisure industry. A challenge for everyone. This questionnaire’s topic is knowledge management. The emphasis is to assess the “status quo” of knowledge management at your tourism organisation. The questions are about the actions for implementing knowledge management, the used IT infrastructure and the relevant challenge for the tourism and leisure industry. The questionnaire consists of four parts (KM basics, IT, further education, and customers). The results will be incorporated in the master thesis “Knowledge management in the tourism and leisure industry with the case study of the Austrian National Tourist Office within the European market”.

Thanks for your collaboration!
Marianne Assl

STRATEGY & ORGANISATION & COMPANY CULTURE

1 What does knowledge management mean at your organisation?

2 Do you have a knowledge strategy?
☐ Yes, ______________________
☐ No
☐ I do not know

3 In your opinion, how strong are the knowledge management efforts at your organisation?

Very little average strong very strong
Little   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

4 How is knowledge management coordinated in your organisation?
☐ Through a centralised solution
☐ Through a decentralised solution
☐ Through a decentralised solution in connection with different departments

5 Do you have a knowledge management department?
☐ Yes
☐ No

6 For which activities is knowledge management used for and what are the emphases?
Knowledge Management…
☐ is used for networking of experts
☐ is used for the collection and documentation of knowledge
☐ is used for the development of products and services
☐ should contribute to the enhancement of employee and customer satisfaction
square should contribute to the enhancement of innovation and competitiveness
square is used for the enhancement of processes
square is used for competence development
square is used for the development of a knowledge friendly company culture
square should contribute to the enhancement of communication flow within the organisation
square Other

7 What factors are accelerators for successful knowledge management?
square Knowledge needs to have a high priority in the organisation
square Employees need to accept knowledge management
square Employees need to be motivated through motivation systems
square The users need to give feedback to the quality of knowledge
square There need to be a responsible person for knowledge management

8 What are barriers that avoid a successful implementation of knowledge management in your organisation?

Barriers:
square Benefit of the single employee is difficult to measure
square Time for knowledge management activities is limited
square Not enough financial support for the activities
square Goals are not clearly defined
square No sufficient technical equipment
square There is a “knowledge is power” opinion in the organisation
square Employees do not want to make their work transparent
square Technical systems are low in user-friendliness
square Knowledge management is considered to be too technical

9 What are the perspectives and the future development of knowledge management for your organisation and the tourism and leisure industry?

PROCESSES & IT

10 Which of the following tools are used/exist in your organisation?
square Intranet
square Forum
square Best practice pool
square Yellow pages
square Knowledge portal
square Corporate chat
square Corporate-newsletter (intern)
square Knowledge management community
square Document management system
square Workflow management system
square Data mining system
square Databases
square Other
11 Which of the following tools are used for the idea and innovation generation but also for a decision help and are anchored in the company culture?
- Brainstorming
- Mind-mapping
- Lessons learned reports
- Kickoff meetings
- Project manager experience exchange
- Role-playing
- Story-telling

12 What problems occur during the human and technical interaction and might be a barrier to share knowledge?

13 What informal structures support knowledge management?
- Bulletin board
- Informal employee meetings
- Workshops
- Projects
- Coffee corner
- Other

TEAM & COMMUNICATION

14 What possibilities are offered from your organisation to exchange and enhance employee knowledge?
- Tutoring
- On-the-job-training
- Knowledge database
- „Communities of practice“
- FAQ’s, manuals
- Seminars
- External consultants
- Job rotation

15 How are the above mentioned learning forms being implemented (question 14)?
- Employee educational training
- Internal seminars from experienced employees
- Knowledge and learning exchange with external partners
- Electronic learning possibilities
- Other

16 Do you have a motivation system for knowledge sharing?
- Yes,
- No

17 How is knowledge management success being measured?
- Appraisal through top management level
- Indicators
- Employee surveys
- Monetary success appraisal
CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE

18 How is customer knowledge being collected at your organisation?
- No collection of customer data
- Manual survey and appraisal of customer data
- Automatic appraisal of customer data (e.g. cookies)
- External market research
- Customer satisfaction survey
- Registration of customer behaviour at the point-of-sale (POS) or through campaigns
- Customers are being contacted when permitted (permission marketing)

19 Do you use information technologies for customer care?
- No
- Yes, the following:
  - Sales-information-system
  - Call center
  - Customer relationship management systems
  - Database marketing/data mining
  - Other: ___________________________

20 What customer knowledge is most difficult to find out and why?

21 Which management challenges are relevant for the future of your organisation and need to be dealt with?

22 Information about the interviewee

Name of the organisation:

Gender
- male
- female

Age
- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 60plus

How many employees does your organisation employ?
- Until 50
- 51 to 100
- 101 to 250
- 251 to 500
- Above 500

Thank you for your collaboration!