Knowledge Transfer Mechanisms Among Intermediaries in Service Business Development

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Background

- **Objective**: to identify and analyse knowledge transfer mechanisms for service business development regionally and nationally
  - Nature of knowledge and knowledge transfer in services
  - How service firms can utilise external knowledge and what intermediaries and public policies have to offer in this respect
- **Approach and data**: focus on “intermediaries” (applied research, training, development agencies, associations, KIBS) which operate between new knowledge creation and firms
  - Literature review, interviews of intermediary representatives (n=34), survey for KIBS and business development experts (n=248), four expert workshops
Earlier research by authors


Published research reports


Mechanisms of knowledge transfer

**Media**
- Online sites and platforms, databases, case descriptions, scientific publications etc.
  - Examples and “good cases”, awareness-raising, identification of service business developers and partners

**Training**
- Short-term or long-term training courses for professionals in services sector
  - Methodological and conceptual tutoring on service science and service business, but also hand-on learning and contextualization

**Communities**
- Occasional or periodic networking of larger communities of firms and intermediaries, e.g. benchmarking events, roundtables etc.
  - Trust building, creation of common development agendas, regional services development

**Partnerships**
- Facilitation of long-term cooperation between intermediaries and firms or sub-networks of firms; strategic matchmaking, joint marketing initiatives, staff exchange opportunities
  - Trust building, holistic development approach, co-creation of joint service products and offerings

**Project cooperation**
- Fixed-term and target-oriented services development or consulting projects
  - E.g. with service design, include customers/users in the project

**Infrastructures and resources**
- Cooperative platforms and activities for strengthening resources and facilitating co-creation, e.g. living labs, joint facilities, joint recruiting opportunities etc.
  - Physical and/or technical platforms and test beds should enhance interaction and facilitate service design processes and co-creation between organisations
Knowledge transfer in service innovation processes

Need for contextualization and end-user involvement increases

Users
- Market knowledge on user needs
- User preferences and feedback
- Communication to users, market feedback, value creation with users

Service firm
- Service idea conceptualization
- Service concept creation
- Service system development
- Service process creation
- Service organization
- Service implementation

Intermediaries and public policies
- Support for awareness-raising, education, capacity building, online services
- Support for ad-hoc and/or stable innovation networks and communities, co-creation platforms, service development methods
- Support for customer- and target oriented development projects, partnership networks, user communities

Need for resources and price/unit of knowledge transfer increases
Some practical tips for enhancing KT in services

“Regions or sector with low-level of servitization – focus on awareness-raising, conceptual tutoring, facilitation of idea generation and matching with service business experts.”

“To make service firms to seek ideas and solutions which are not in their comfort zone use scientific findings, models and case examples.”

“Introduce mechanisms that allow both open participation, as well as closed or limited participation. The Latter ones are more suitable for securing confidential development or establishment new partnerships for service delivery.”

“Find ways to ensure that knowledge which is transferred is internalized (i.e. understood and operationalized) in receiving organizations. Find ways to commit top management and whole organization in development activities.”

“Use service design methods and create tangible and visible prototypes or physical artefacts of potential new service concepts and processes. This helps to grasp the idea of the new service within the staff, partners, stakeholders and customers.”

“Use quick prototyping – ‘fail often to succeed sooner’. The sooner the ideas are concrete and visible the sooner they can be disregarded or accepted for further development.”

“Target support activities to include also infrastructural and organizational development instead of only conceptual, business model or processes development.”

“Provide support which allows service firms to productize their service activities. It will on the other hand help firms to communicate their staff and customers about the qualities of the service but it also facilitates exchange of ideas and learning between firms.”
Thank you!

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