

12. Other tools for business innovation support

12.1. Literature searches

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12.1.0 Introduction

In our days a vitally important and significant factor ensuring successful and productive development of an enterprise is its competitiveness. What factors are those that may guarantee the required competitiveness – is it just good luck?, experience?, or coincidence of circumstances? These may, of course, be important, but the basic prerequisite is KNOWLEDGE. Throughout the history of mankind, knowledge has been the main driving force enabling people to achieve targeted progress; it is a core factor promoting development and growth in every sphere of life, in particular in the sphere of business and entrepreneurship.

The aim of the component

The main aim is to give a brief description of several widely known and frequently used ways on how to obtain information and to supplement our knowledge, showing WHERE and HOW you can search the required information or reference material.

Why is this important?

Any company should have access to knowledge and information about novelties, development trends in its line of business, about demand, preferences of its customers – everything else and possibly even more – since it is important to be always at least one step ahead of others. As a matter of fact, the dynamic nature of the modern times may be characterised by using the well-known phrase:

We can stay where we are only if we run, and we should run very fast!

The meaning of the phrase is the following: when we have already achieved something, when our enterprise is a success and things are running smoothly, we should not stop at this point. We have to follow our competitors and study the market; we have to identify all novelties and trends, not only on the local, but also on the global level, and therefore it is so important to be aware of the crucial role of knowledge and information in the operation of the company and to implement this role, thus contributing to successful development of the enterprise and expanding the staff's horizons and enriching their knowledge.

Practical application of the component

Increased KNOWLEDGE and AWARENESS will give the enterprise:

- Development
- Progress
- Competitiveness
- A stable market position
- Revenue.... etc.

The above factors could have a highly MOTIVATING effect in that they create striving for development and enlargement of knowledge, stimulate searches for information and data that would ensure successful operation of the company and its targeted development, and at this point the practical application of the component becomes evident – the basic ideas and a couple of practical examples are shown in the form of user-friendly tools that will help us to find the required information, data or reference material.

12.1.1. How to do literature and information searches?

Today information may be found in various ways, but it is important to find the most suitable tool of search on every concrete occasion, considering the specific nature of the information to be found. In cases when it is necessary to obtain some very specific technical information, most probably we will use a technical reference or will contact directly some expert in the field; nevertheless, the Internet could be used more often as the most comprehensive and operational means of finding information.

12.1.1.1. Internet

The rapid development of information and communications technologies (ICT) provides an opportunity to obtain large and varied amounts of information from all over the world in a couple of minutes or even seconds. The most frequently used and popular resource is the Internet, which nowadays combines several functions – it is a library with an unprecedented volume of literature, space for communication, which enables people to communicate and to exchange experiences with people from all countries of the world, and at the same time is the most powerful multi-purpose search tool itself.

The internet search tools are quite easy to use and operational: you start your search by entering in the window of the search tool the **key word** of the topic or phrase you are looking for.

For example, if you are interested in innovation management ► you have to type the words “innovation management” as a key word in the search window ► press the key “search” ► and in a couple of seconds you will be offered any information found according to your key word or phrase.



Example: Search tool <http://www.alltheweb.com/>

Usually a very large amount of information is found in this way, including perhaps some 300 or more links to the Internet information. However, it is quite easy to find your way through these offers, because you see the website, name and an excerpt from the text or comments, enabling the reader to make a judgement about the contents of the found homepage and to decide whether this is what you were looking for.

It is possible to limit or specify the range of the sought information as required. For example, if you are interested in references concerning exactly innovation management, you may write in the search window the phrase “innovation management”; if you are interested to find firms engaged in innovation management, you should write the phrase “innovation management firms”, etc.

It should be remembered that the phrase consisting of key words should not be too long or complicated but preferably should be as concrete as possible and directly formulated, otherwise the search engine may not be able to perceive the real key word.

Example - Links

The most widely used and well known search engines:

- <http://www.google.com>
- <http://www.alltheweb.com>
- <http://www.msn.com>
- <http://www.yahoo.com>

12.1.1.2. Databases

The use of databases is a way to obtain extensive and exhaustive data, as databases include various summaries of data, statistics, publications and other sources. Databases are available in various formats — in printed form (e.g., in library index cards and archived materials), in CDs (e.g., the annual statistical records), or in virtual form, i.e., on the Internet.

It should be noted that the Internet is the most comprehensive and complete storage place of databases, and an undoubted advantage is its range of search facilities, which should be characterised as global because it is possible to find information on any topic from any part of the world very quickly. Another advantage is that databases are user-friendly, because databases function exactly in the same way as the Internet search process (see the part **a) Internet**) – when you open a database, there is a window in which to write the key word of the information you are looking for, and a click on the search function will enable you to look at the information found according to your key word.

*You have to write the **Key word** > press **search button** > You will have the **result***

As numerous and very diverse databases are available, e.g., databases containing references, publications or other theoretical material, as well as databases aggregated by companies and statistical agencies, but in order to find the required information it is advisable as the first step to use the Internet search engine, then to select the most suitable databases and further to look into these databases for the necessary information by applying the principle described above.

Example - Links

International data base

<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbnew.html>

Computerized data bank containing statistical tables of demographic and socio-economic data for 227 countries and areas of the world.

Geohive – Global Statistics

<http://www.geohive.com/>

Geopolitical data, statistics on the human population of regions, countries, provinces and cities, some statistics on economic factors and more.

12.1.1.3. Libraries and direct contact

Libraries could be divided into three categories:

- Conventional – where all the information is available in printed form and can be found by using index cards or with the help of librarians.
- Partially virtual – an electronic catalogue of the library can be found on the Internet, which helps to check whether the sought literature, publications or other information is available at the library. It is possible to reserve or order the material, however, the particular material will be available only in printed form. In this case you also can ask the help of librarians.
- Virtual – an electronic library where all information is fully available via the Internet — both the catalogues and the materials. The search process is similar to that generally used for the purpose of Internet searches (see part **a) Internet**) or by viewing the library website where there are detailed instructions about doing an Internet search.

Example - Links

Questia Online Library <http://www.questia.com/>

Internet Public Library <http://www.ipl.org>

The WWW Virtual Library <http://vlib.org>

Direct contact is not the most efficient way of getting information if compared to Internet searches, which only take a click on the search button; establishment of direct contact will take much more time.

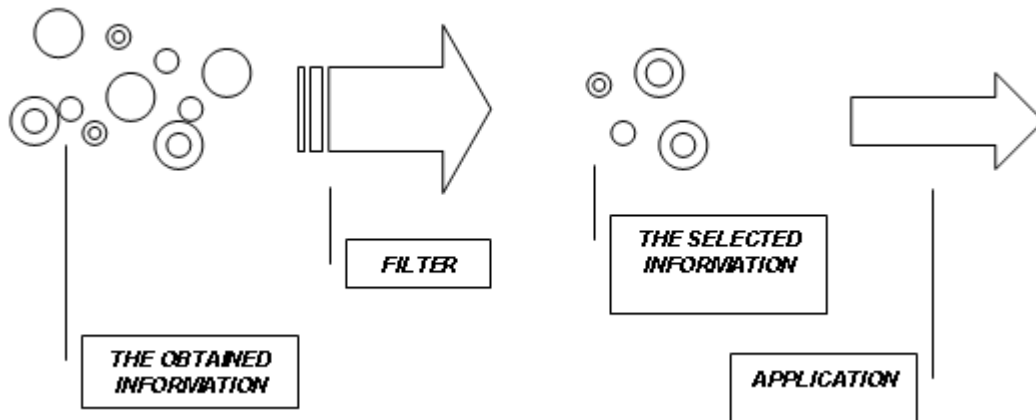
Nevertheless direct contact is a perfect way of establishing or maintaining contacts for communication purposes, by which we can additionally get **non-verbal information** and **feedback** . Due to direct contact, it is quite often possible to get some field-specific information and detailed comments provided by an expert in the field.

Depending on the type of the required information or specificity of data, it is possible to seek direct contacts in various countries, non-governmental organisations or private institutions, foundations, consultancies and other places.

12.1.2. Selection + summarizing of information and Conclusion

Selection and summarizing of information

To a large extent the selection and summarization of information will depend on the aim you are trying to achieve, the method by which information was obtained, its amount etc. On the basis of these factors, the most adequate information may be selected if you are guided by the following simple diagram:



The aim is to find information **X** ► by searching various resources, we find extensive amounts of information – **X, XX, Y, X, xY, yy, x, YY....etc.** ► selection is possible by using a *FILTER* consisting of a set of various criteria, depending directly on the initial aim (or aims) ► through the use of such a filter the *SELECTION* of the most adequate *INFORMATION* becomes possible – **X, XX, X, x** ► consequently, the obtained information is *APPLIED* according to the planned purpose and needs.

Conclusion

When starting a search:

First of all, set an **objective** ► state what you want to find, **what kind of information** or data, ► choose a suitable **resource for finding information** – the Internet, databases, direct contact or other means (evaluate the suitability of specific resources for your query) ► formulate the **key word** or phrase of the sought information (in case of a “search engine”) ► **select** from the offered/obtained information what suites best the set **objective**.

12.1.3. Resources

Bibliography

- Dimza, Vilnis. Inovācijas pasaulē, Eiropā, Latvijā – Rīga: LZA EI, 2003. – 206 lpp

Web links

The most widely used and well known search engines:

- <http://www.google.com>
- <http://www.alltheweb.com>
- <http://www.msn.com>
- <http://www.yahoo.com>

Databases

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- <http://www.geohive.com/>
Geohive – Global Statistics - Geopolitical data, statistics on the human population of regions, countries, provinces and cities, some statistics on economic factors and more.

Libraries

- <http://www.questia.com> Questia Online Library
- <http://www.ipl.org> Internet Public Library
- <http://vlib.org/> The WWW Virtual Library
- mpany Culture that fosters Innovation”)