

## Executive summary

This EMA is broken down into three parts, task 1 provides a detailed overview of the initiative outlining key theories and periods. Task 2 (A) provides a critical review of the theories and practices that shaped my thinking and a discussion of theories rejected. In task 2 (B), I assess how my management practice has changed over the MBA learning journey.

Following the residential school period, the objective of the initiative was narrowed from focusing on the wider issue of innovation incubation to how knowledge is transferred between the different layers of management within a client account. This process, if used correctly can aid the development of sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997) which will allow COMPANY X to enhance its position as a value-added supplier. The security industry has an oligopoly structure (Brander, 1986), whereby a small number of oligopolists (Brander, 1986) are increasing the pressure on the commercial model of COMPANY X, thus reducing margins. COMPANY X has an underutilised innovation capability which via knowledge sharing mechanisms may allow COMPANY X to be seen as thought leaders thus retaining and gaining blue chip clients.

The theories of knowledge transfer are central to the findings in this paper and focus is applied to the teachings of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) using the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) as a foundation for the transfer of knowledge. The SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) as detailed, is only the front end of this complex subject and to fully understand the situation, I needed to observe the impact of trust and the facilitation of knowledge between the client and the operations team. During the initial cycles of inquiry, it became clear that there was an element of shared context between the members of the operations team which Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) define as Ba. Only when a care-driven environment is promoted, will the social capital increase and trust will be exhibited that allowed senior management to enter this environment to act as the knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) to facilitate the sharing of knowledge via communities of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and after action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999). The initiative was well received by the stakeholders within the account team and this lays the foundation for potentially continuing the initiative across the division, although the wider divisional environment is not conducive presently to knowledge sharing due to the cultural and leadership styles evident and a major shift in perspective would need to be undertaken.

In task 2 (A) I discuss the theories that shaped the initiative and also discussed how theories outlined in previous TMA's were not used. The MBA has been an enlightening experience, which has changed my perception of management and how I approach an organisational situation, this is discussed further in task 2 (B).

## Introduction

The evidence-based initiative evolved into a learning journey. The original scope was to improve innovation incubation within my organisation, although this was narrowed to focus on knowledge transfer between management layers. I have evidence to suggest that this lack of knowledge transfer is weakening sustainable innovation development (Christensen, 1997) and the findings enclosed in this paper will discuss this further.

## Task 1

### Organisational overview & my role

COMPANY X is a multinational, FTSE 250 security organisation with 623,000 employees operating across numerous sectors, see appendix 1. I am a strategy manager within the secure solutions division covering the UK and Ireland, managing a team of eight strategic account managers (SAM). I report into the divisional executive board and the management structure can be found in appendix 1. The Secure solutions division has an annual turnover of 700 million GBP and provides the physical security guarding and technology services. Each SAM leads an account management team, with a span of control of six operational managers. Although this is only in relation to this account as the operations function is controlled by operations directors. Therefore, the SAM has no direct reports, but each operations manager indirectly reports to the SAM. Please refer to appendix 2 for the account structure organisational chart.

### Initiative Objectives

The development of innovation within each account is crucial to cultivate a value-added approach to retaining contracts, therefore the transfer of knowledge is vital to COMPANY X being seen as an innovative supplier. In TMA1, my focus was on the wider issue of innovation incubation, although following dialogue at the residential school (See appendix 3), this was narrowed.

Objective statement.

**“Understand how knowledge is currently transferred between the different layers of management within an account team, how this can be improved, which in turn helps develop new opportunities for innovation”.**

The initiative focused on a single client account team (appendix 5) where this could be piloted before any implementation across the division. This is a complex subject and these findings are

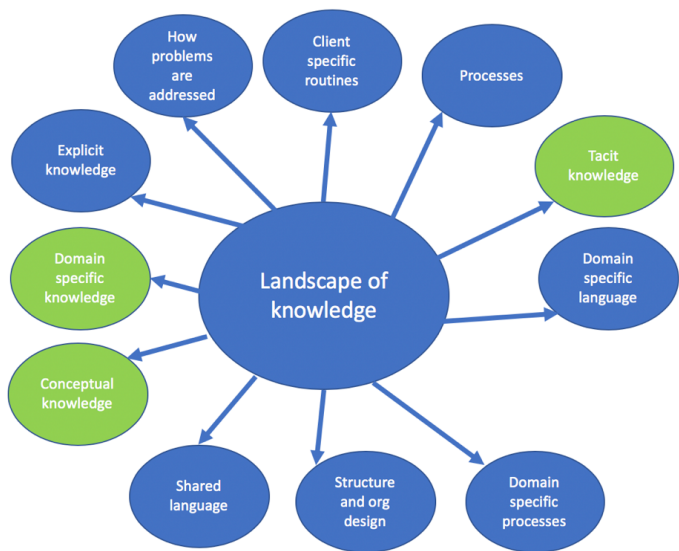
part of a wider project that COMPANY X is undertaking to promote the sharing of best practice. The wider project is currently in its initial stages and this paper will identify means of improvement as well as recommendations of how knowledge sharing can become part of each account team and contribute to the wider organisational best practice project.

Initiative Rationale

Area of focus

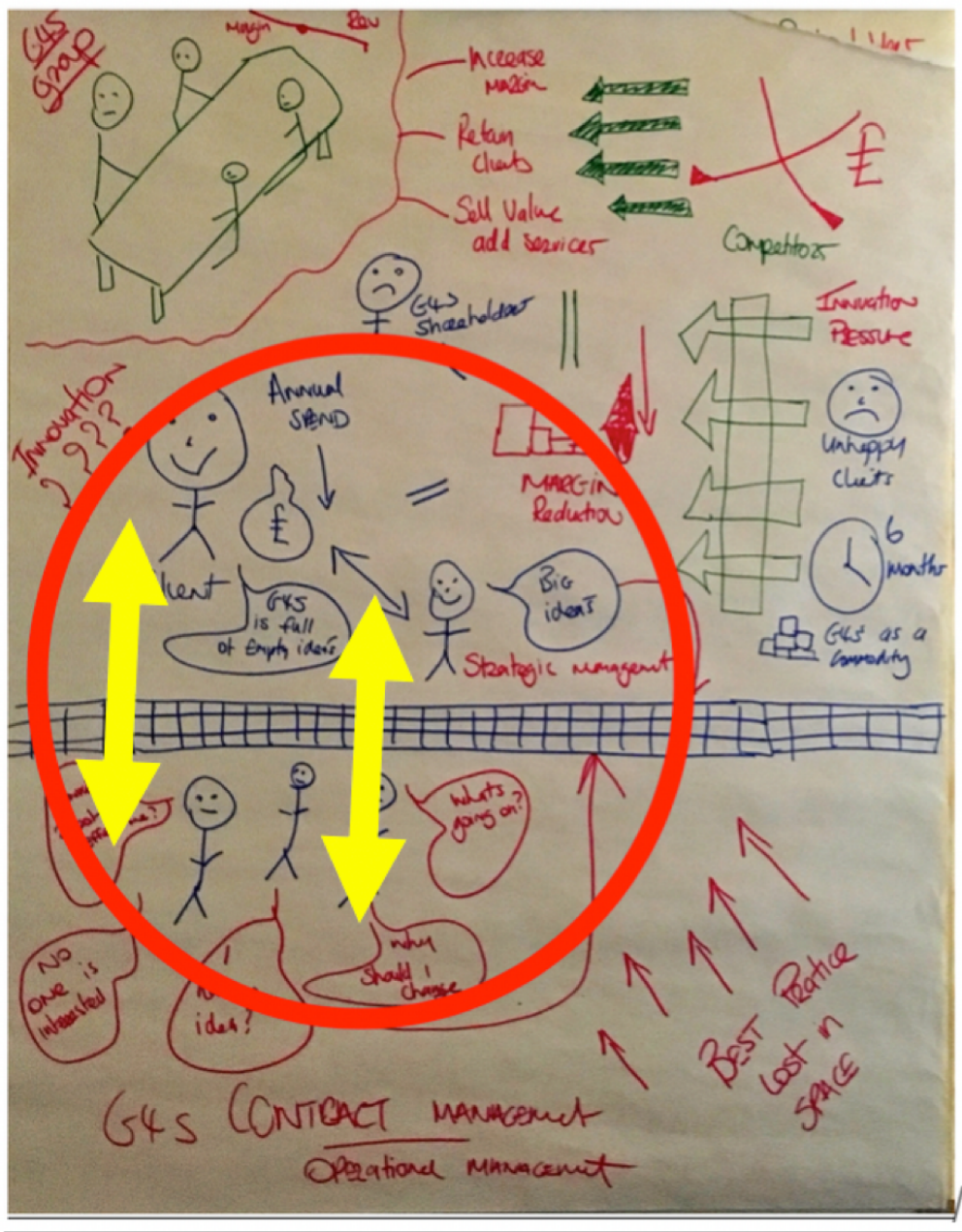
Innovation is a method of increasing value for the organisation. The security industry is low margin and the industry structure mirrors an oligopoly (Brander, 1986), whereby due to competition from a small amount of oligopolists (Brander, 1986) there is increasing pressure on our commercial model. The interpretation of innovation within COMPANY X is misguided and very little thought has been given to the process of knowledge transfer and the connection to sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997). The definition of sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997) is incremental improvements designed to appeal to and retain an existing customer base (Ries, 2011). COMPANY X has a vast knowledge-based competency, when viewed from an innovation perspective, this is underutilised, and it is vital that the organisation can extract knowledge from the landscape of knowledge (Phillips et al., 2018) and become known as an innovative supplier and be less reliant on commodity-based pricing. The initiative will focus on the knowledge elements in green outlined below.

Figure 1 – Landscape of knowledge (Phillips et al., 2018)



The transfer of knowledge between the operational managers and the SAM is disconnected and this is mirrored across the division. We need to focus on building a transfer mechanism between what is developed within the account team and how this is transferred into the clients. Unless we operate in an integrated approach, innovation development is likely to be weaker, leading to a transactional relationship which based on client feedback, is not conducive to long term relationships (Appendix 10). Innovation within COMPANY X is also reactive. There appears to be a push to innovate either when we receive a client complaint or if we are nearing the end of contract.

Figure 2– Rich Picture (Checkland, P. and Poulter, J.,2006) of situation with supporting narrative in appendix 4.



## Business Perspective

The rationale is to understand the knowledge transfer process, how this can be improved to develop innovation and to discuss the factors of how this can be incorporated across the division. This may allow the division to focus on innovation as a continuous cycle of inquiry instead of a one-off exercise. Without taking a holistic approach to theory and practice, we are not able to take an evidence-based view of how the teams interrelate and share knowledge. The division could become a learning organisation which is defined as a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capabilities (Senge, P.M., 2006). I will explore this further, as sharing in a common context is the foundation of Ba (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This approach may allow COMPANY X to retain value driven contracts that focus on quality, rather than price, with potentially a more motivated workforce focusing the benefits of belonging to a group (Handy, 1976, p. 147).

## Academic Perspective

This study is based on the paradigm of Interpretivism (Guba, 1990), whereby meaning occurs via social constructions and viewing the world through different lens. Interpretivism (Guba, 1990) rejects objectivism, therefore elements in the world are only participants in the mean-making process (Open University, p. 8, 2017). The research design follows such Interpretivism (Guba, 1990) methods such as ethnography, whereby I participated in back to the floor exercises and interviewing of the account management team. I have to consider the impression I had on evidence collection, as the behaviours of the individuals may have been influenced by my engagement. Action research methods were employed, as I assumed the role of the knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) within the initiative by collecting qualitative data via after action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999).

This approach allowed me to apply theory to practice, therefore shaping an argument via cycles of inquiry. The initiative covered multiple aspects of management practice and each theory provided a deeper understanding of the initiative environment.

## Stakeholder Perspective

COMPANY X is a highly political, power driven organisation, therefore, a focussed approach was taken. Firstly, it's important to outline the context in relation to the divisional structure. The initiative is sponsored by my line manager who sits on the executive board along with the chief operating officer (COO). The quality of the relationship between them is strained due to

differences in approach leading to conflict which impacts the messages being transmitted. These differences in perception promotes agency theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976) as each protects their own interests. This is important as the operational managers within the account teams report into the operations directors, who report into COO leading to divergent objectives (Stacey, 2000) being exhibited. Divergent objectives are driven by individuals having different agendas leading to conflict, which in turn results in political activity (Stacey, 2000) such as withholding information or cancelling meetings, these forms of passive resistance were displayed during the cycles of inquiry.

## How the perspectives changed and my actions

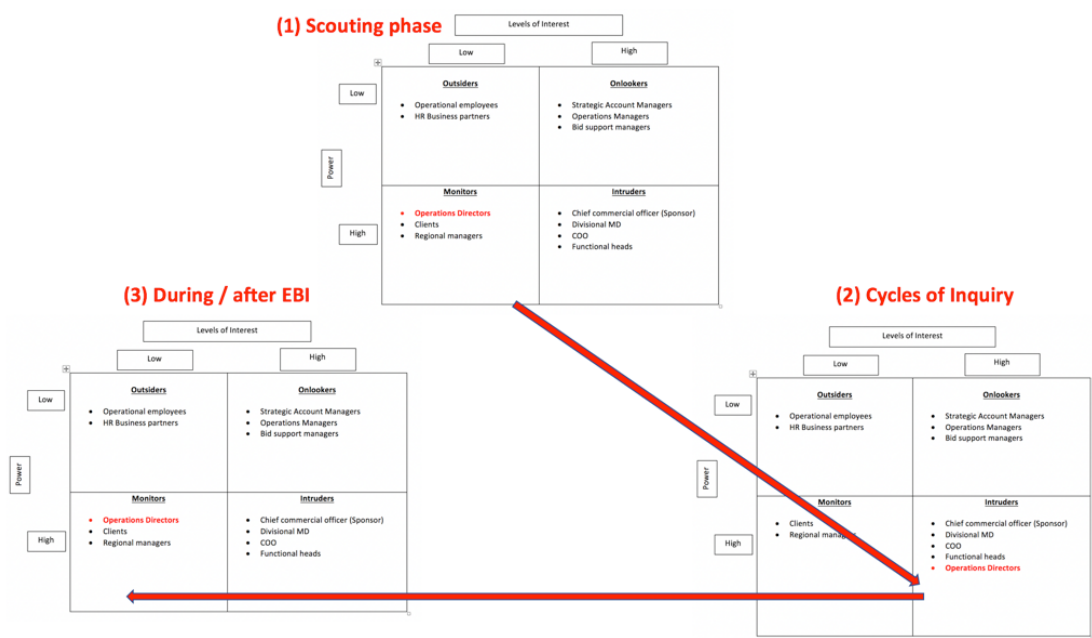
It became clear that different stakeholders exhibited different types and levels of power. This stems from the different cultures between the commercial and operational functions. The operational function is viewed as operating a coercive power source (French and Raven, 1960) where rational-legal authority (Weber, 1952) rules and pressure is applied to ensure compliance. This authority structure resembles a Machine (Morgan, 1986, p. 14) whereby efficiency and control are prevalent. This is emphasised by the performance metrics of the operational function, which drives the performance engine of the operation (Govindarajan, 2010) and is discussed in task 2 (A). The commercial functions power base is built around reward (French and Raven, 1960) providing the team with autonomy to meet their targets. although, power can be transient and contextual with different types of power being exhibited depending on the situation. As an example, if a SAM is not performing, coercive power (French and Raven, 1960) will be exhibited in the form of performance reviews.

In the scouting elements of the initiative, both operational directors were passive monitors with low levels of interest, although during the evidence collection process this situation changed. Questions were being asked of the reasons for the initiative, which delayed the compiling of information and political game playing started. This political gaming was amplified within the operational function as the direct reports of the operations directors became less responsive to my requests and failed to share information. This also impacted the availability of operational managers to attend the community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) based around the account team. These behaviours of passive resistance are unobservable acts that undermined the initiative. This form of resistance is categorised as refusal (Fleming and Spicer, 2007), which only built up conflict and unless this was resolved the initiative would fail.

The obvious plan was to engage the sponsor to assert a top down push strategy (Lee and Lawrence, 1991) on the operations directors. As Kipnis et al. (1980) states this often relies on coercive power (French and Raven, 1960) by developing assertive behaviour, although this strategy can have longer term negative effects on relationships. Therefore, I pursued a persuasion strategy (Lee and Lawrence, 1991) as it was important to ensure that I maintained a workable relationship after the initiative. By meeting with both operations directors, I was able to outline the benefits, counter the resistance which was based on misinterpretations and by involving them in the process, was able to start changing their perceptions to support instead of

hinder. How their interest changed throughout the initiative is outlined below using the power and interest matrix (Price, 2009).

Figure 3: Operations director movement: Power and Interest Matrix (Price, 2009)



Use of theory

Knowledge management

Organisational knowledge is a key ingredient in the core capabilities of an organisation (Grant, 1996), although there is a limited understanding of the process of knowledge creation and management. Within COMPANY X, the importance of knowledge is discussed openly and there are programs afoot to enhance the process of knowledge flow. This is where the problems with interpreting the definition of knowledge are evident. Knowledge flow within the context of COMPANY X is focused on internal marketing practices of sharing the organisations products to enhance commercial growth, therefore exposing the product mix to clients. Little attention has been applied to the flow and creation of knowledge within teams that can help develop sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997). The knowledge within the team is underutilised from

an innovation perspective and the theories discussed were vital to understand and improve knowledge flow.

## Types of knowledge

The definition of knowledge is “Justified true belief” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This definition fails to outline the dynamic and humanistic dimensions of knowledge creation, as this is social process that is linked to a particular space and time (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This contextual element is often forgot about but as boundaries of knowledge are built around a specific context, they allow for shared meaning to be achieved, this shared meaning is called Ba (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and is vital for knowledge flow, this is covered in task2 (A).

The boundaries within the initiative were the account team and developed into a community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), whereby this context could be exploited.

Within the initiative, the theory of knowledge follows a western epistemology of knowledge based around rationalism, which is defined as knowledge obtained deductively by reasoning and appealing to mental constructs such as concepts and models (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This is in contrast to the Empiricism (Carnap, 1991) approach, which is built around sensory experiences and during the studies in Japan, Nonaka and Takeuchi based there understanding using this epistemology.

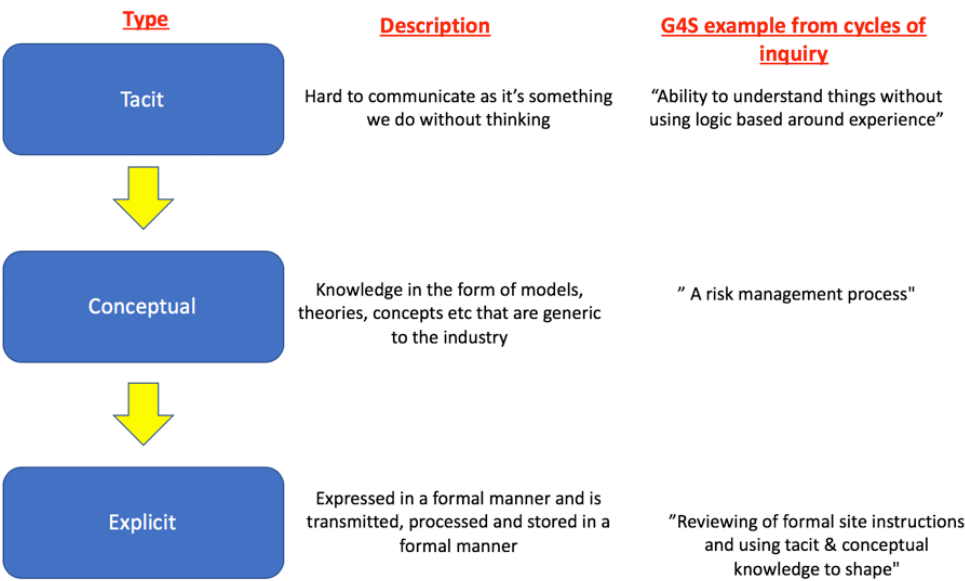
The process of knowledge transfer according to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) contains two types of knowledge. Firstly, explicit knowledge, which is expressed in a formal manner and is transmitted and stored in tangible form. Within COMPANY X, explicit forms such as operational processes are codified prespecify to the account and outline the duties that are to be performed. Other elements are codified, such as a planning documents to direct the strategic direction of the account. This element during the initiative appeared to be structured due to the auditing processes undertaken, although this is was based on a limited number of samples and further investigation would need to be conducted to provide conclusive proof.

The second form of knowledge is Tacit, which is more personal and harder to formalise. Tacit knowledge is built around action, routines, ideas and emotions (Toyama, R. et al, 2000). Tacit knowledge is hard to communicate as it's something we do without thinking. This type of knowledge is fundamental to developing sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997) within the account team and the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) was at the centre of this process. Although it is important to recognise that we need both tacit and explicit knowledge to give meaning to the knowledge creation process, as knowledge is created through interactions between tacit and explicit knowledge, rather than from tacit or explicit knowledge alone (Toyama, R. et al, 2000).



An aspect that became prevalent during the initiative was the theory appeared missing Conceptual Knowledge (Carpenter, 1986) The definition of Conceptual Knowledge is “to the knowledge of, or understanding of concepts, principles, theories, models, classifications” (Barsalou et al, 2003). This is an important consideration as during the community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) this type of knowledge was prevalent. As an example, all operations managers are qualified security managers and hold considerable conceptual knowledge of security practices. Therefore, these forms of knowledge, shaped my understanding and allowed knowledge to categorized by targeting knowledge in conceptual form first while developing further inquiries into abstracting tacit knowledge.

Figure 4: Types of knowledge within COMPANY X



SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)

The conduit for abstracting knowledge was the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), and is based on the foundation of Ba (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). It's important that this model is used in an iterative fashion, whereby we spiral through the different stages codifying the forms of knowledge. During the initiative certain elements became more pronounced, for example, during the socialization stage a number of the operational managers pulled in intra-firm information by crossing the account boundaries, by creating discourse or “water cooler moments” with their

colleagues. This allowed intra-firm best practice to be highlighted and implemented into the knowledge spiral for application. It is important to consider the associated elements of this process as the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) is just that, a model. Without taking a holistic view, the application of this will not be successful. It was clear that we must understand elements such as the culture of the organisation, the social structure of the team and how their jobs are designed.

It was clear during the early stages of the cycles of inquiry that a consideration of the organisational culture was imperative. The SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) wouldn't be successful if the current culture is not conducive to sharing ideas. The theory of organisational culture was important and was based on two metrics. Using the model of organisational culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1982), COMPANY X at a corporate level operates a quick feedback, high risk environment. This tough guy, macho culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) creates a highly political environment with associated conflict. This tends to apply short term measures which have suppressed risk taking. This risk of failure and reprimand created a low trust environment leading to individuals viewing the organisation breaking the psychological

contract (Herriot, 1992) between the organisation and the individual. This fear of reprimand was unsubstantiated and will be as discussed in the next section. As Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) state, knowledge cannot be created without the dimension of care, in the respect of mutual trust, empathy, access to help and a lenience in judgement.

The process of knowledge transfer cannot be viewed in isolation and consideration of the associated factors form an important part of the initiative and will be discussed next.

### Productive Periods

There were multiple periods that were productive in the initiative and analysing all of these in this paper would not be realistic. Therefore, I have chosen periods that created light bulb moments, altered my perception and allowed learning to take place within the organisational and academic perspective.

#### Creating a trust, care-driven environment

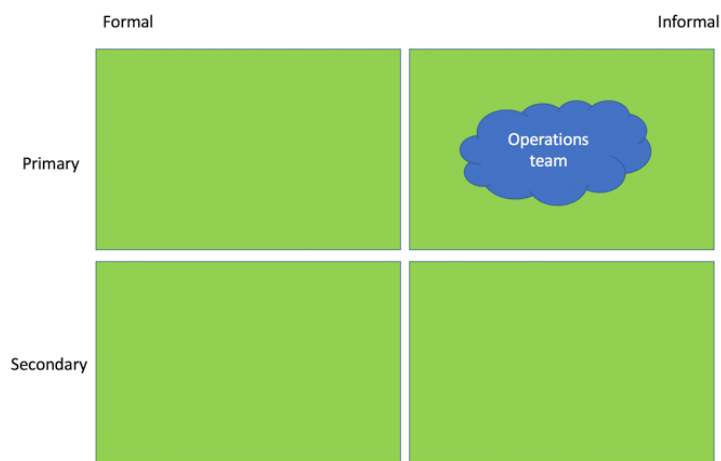
To enable knowledge sharing there has to be a culture of trust within the community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), this is a crucial enabler and failure to consider this aspect, restricts the flow of knowledge within the team by erecting barriers that may provide unsurmountable.

The tough guy, macho culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) is prevalent within COMPANY X, although through the cycles of inquiry there was a surprising discovery. Although there was a lack of trust of senior management, which included the SAM, there appeared to be a strong embedded relationship between the operational managers and the other members of the team, therefore elements of a Ba (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) were already evident. Through the cycle

of inquiry, of interviewing the operations managers, this focus on building a team environment stems from the nature of the operation, the composition of the team, and the longevity of the operations managers interviewed. The element of ethics was considered during the initiative, as a breakdown in participant privacy would further weaken the element of trust and may have a detrimental effect on the individual, therefore all notes taken during the interviews were dealt with in a confidential manner.

The security industry is based around tight deadlines and teamwork. The group shared similar values and beliefs which was driven by their longevity working together and the ex-military composition of the individuals, which promoted mutual support and a team ethos, with the potential to enthuse and motivate each other in an informal manner, as indicated in figure 5. They appeared to be out of tune with the organisational goals and actions as they didn't see themselves working for COMPANY X, but for their own security company and as part of their own team.

Figure 5: Operations team categorisation (Kakabadse et al, 1988)



Using Tuckman's (1965) stages of high performing teams, the operational team appeared to be performing, although lacked leadership built around the account and this reduced the effectiveness of how knowledge was shared and communicated. This lack of leadership meant objectives were out of alignment with client needs and due to the closed, introverted nature of the team, most of the knowledge was held in tacit form leading to a failure to record in usable forms to aid and promote creativity. This closed, introverted nature of the team promoted, to a certain degree the aspect of groupthink (Janis, 1972) which led to convergent thinking when discussing

aspects of how the operation performed and become prevalent during the after action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) as discussed in the next section.

The lack of trust of senior management promoted this closed, introverted stance, which impacted the effectiveness of encouraging knowledge sharing and the generation of solutions. This lack of trust appeared to be derived from low profile cultural symbols (Trice and Beyer, 1984). A number of the team members discussed organisational stories of their colleagues being reprimanded for making mistakes when attempting something new or speaking out against a manager when there was a difference in opinion. When iterating through the cycles of inquiry to substantiate this, the individuals lacked evidence to validate these views and appeared to be mythical in nature. This created a “us and them” environment, whereby the operational team failed to engage the SAM and wasn’t seen as part of the team. This had to be addressed to ensure that we operated in a community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) which promoted a care-driven environment to generate trust and the sharing of knowledge. As knowledge needs to be shared to be created and exploited, it is important for leaders to create an atmosphere in which team members feel safe promoting knowledge and raising their head above the parapet, therefore when faced with this situation, I needed to consider moving care from a low context to a higher context (Nonaka, 1995) environment, by bestowing knowledge to help the sharing of insights, which promotes trust (Von Krogh et al., 2000).

Trust is mutual and for members of the operations team, they had to believe my intentions to be brought into the process. The subject of active empathy (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) was important in starting the trust building process within the team and is built around looking beyond our assumptions by changing our perspective of the individuals. Only when you can see situations from the viewpoints of the individuals, can you truly understand their situation, lowering barriers and gaining trust. It was decided following this cycle of inquiry, that we needed to demonstrate action and along with the SAM, spent half a working day per week for eight weeks participating in a adapted Genchi Genbutsu (Liker, 2005) session. These back to the floor periods, allowed us to experience what the team does, this helped with breaking down the barriers of engagement. This process was enlightening and outlined the level of difficulty faced by the team due to poorly made organisational decisions and allowed myself and the SAM to empathize on a more personal level.

During the initiative, the operations managers relaxed and become more active in their views and how we can improve aspects of the client’s service, whereby promoting sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997). This element of the initiative was fundamental for the socialization stage of the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) as without this foundation of trust, barriers would stay erected leading to a failure of knowledge flow. This was simply a means of communications, as before the initiative we operated in a high context (Hall, 1989) form, whereby context was taken for granted and the meaning was lost. Switching to a low context (Hall, 1989) form of communications and engagement via active empathy (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) allowed us to start to enter the social network of the account team by gaining social capital and the lowering of the trust barriers.

During these cycles of inquiry, the topic of colleagues being reprimanded needed to be addressed, as if there is a fear of reprisal, this will inhibit the creative process. It is important not to punish genuine mistakes when trying to enable a culture of knowledge sharing and innovation, as they generate learning opportunities and forms an action – reflection cycle (Open University, p. 2, 2017). There is an important distinction between an environment of ongoing operations and an innovation approach to mistakes. Planning for ongoing operations is based on a organisations performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000) and is focused around repeatability and predictability, this focuses on results and expectations of the individuals. When viewing a mistake from this perspective, this creates uncertainty which impacts the wider operations metrics. This contrasts with the innovation led approach, whereby we must adjust expectations and focus on learning to improve knowledge sharing.

This process of ideation and mistakes not being reprimanded had to be communicated by myself when starting the socialisation stage of the knowledge process. Any ideas generated and agreed during the SECI (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) process would be sponsored by myself and explanation of error would be my responsibility. This stance set the tone for the knowledge sharing sessions and allowed for the lowering of barriers to sharing ideas. Should this be implemented across the organisation, a major shift in culture and leadership styles of senior management would need

to be changed, which at present, I do not believe there is an appetite to deliver, otherwise barriers to knowledge sharing will become normal practice and internal capability will decline.

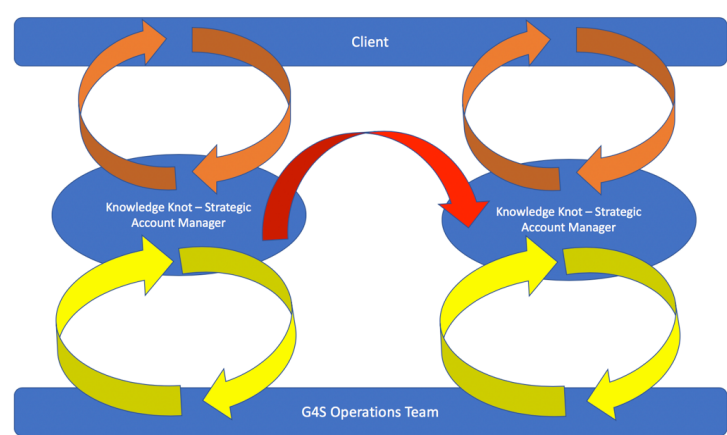
### Externalisation & Combination of knowledge

The second productive period follows the building of trust and focuses on the development of the SAM as the conduit for knowledge transfer. The operations managers hold a considerable amount of tacit and conceptual knowledge, that requires conversion into explicit processes to aid development of sustainable and efficiency innovation (Christensen, 1997). Firstly, I will define both sustainable and efficiency innovation (Christensen, 1997). Sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997) comes from listening to clients in an existing market, creating and adapting products to satisfy their future needs (Christensen, 1997). An example taken from the cycles of inquiry would be the removal of a proportion of security guards and provide an integrated solution using both security guards and technology (appendix 6). Efficiency innovation (Christensen, 1997) is a form of process improvement that enables businesses to simplify and streamline their processes (Christensen, 1997). This is linked to the organisational performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000) that aims to reduce the levels of unpredictability, by reducing variation. COMPANY X implements the methodology of Six Sigma (Smith & Harry, 1995) and although this is important in the knowledge sharing process, this element is not covered in detail in this paper.

Knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)

The building of social capital between the SAM and the operations managers vastly improved during the cycles of inquiry. The bridging of the knowledge gap between the client's future needs and the operations team required facilitation during externalization period of the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) as successive rounds of direct and meaningful dialogue within the community of practice triggered externalization (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995, p. 126). The role of the SAM was pivotal for the flow of knowledge, as they assumed the position of the knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) between the client and the operations team. This theory of middle – up – down management (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) put the SAM at the centre of knowledge management process and positioned them at the intersection of the flow of knowledge.

Figure 6: SAM as the Knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)



The SAM served as a strategic knot acting as the conduit between the client and the operations managers. The SAM operated in the form of a knowledge engineer (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and acted as the catalyst to amplify the creation and knowledge sharing processes. Therefore,

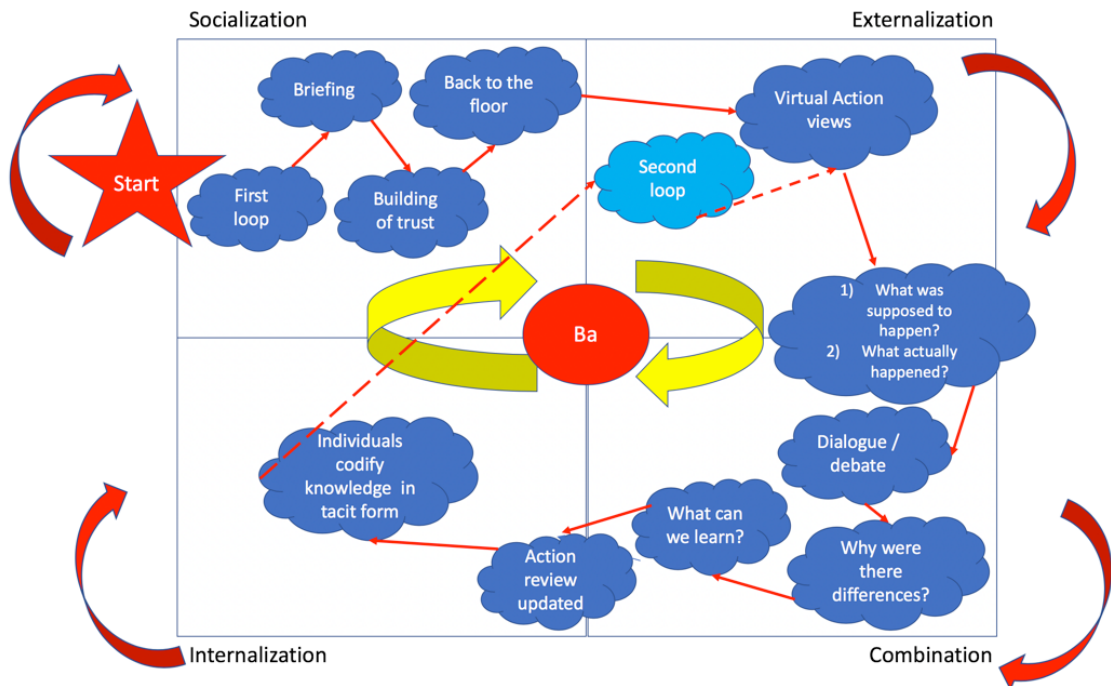
facilitation skills were imperative and during the cycles of inquiry, this role was occupied by me with the support of the SAM as they will be assuming this role over post initiative.

### Community of practice and After-Action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999)

In 2015, COMPANY X implemented a virtual account structure whereby security employees are client based and the operations managers work remotely. This lack of physical structure has impacted socialisation and the fostering of trust (Daft, 2006), as there was a lack of informal contact with management and only now has this started to improve. This aspect provided a logistical challenge when conducting the community of practices (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). I implemented a monthly face to face community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) at the client's site, whereby this shared context provoked discourse and our findings were codified. During the cycles of inquiry, it became clear that there was a requirement for more regular deliberations, as a monthly community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) was inadequate due to the gap between the sessions and the amount of activity that occurred over this period. This was seen in the first community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), as when discussing the previous activities, the operations managers memory was lessened compared to the time of activity and elements were missed that could have aided in the process. The second element identified was the gap between the activity and the review, as learning was delayed which prevented this being codified and applied to the knowledge process immediately. Therefore, on deliberation with the rest of the team, we implemented a weekly virtual community of practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), utilising the collaborative platform of the Google. Using this platform, allowed each session to become an after-action review (L Baird et al, 1999), whereby all knowledge was recorded and used to further enhance our learning.

The After-action review (L Baird et al, 1999) was designed to quickly identify key lessons and actions. Although it decided to adapt this process to fit the account requirement and the time limitations of the team, as a daily meeting would have been seen as bureaucratic and would have interfered with the daily operations to a detrimental effect. Using the virtual platform, the utilisation of the after-action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) was well received by the participants, although there were elements of heated debate. In this respect, the rules of an after-action review (L Baird et al, 1999) were similar to brainstorming as they rely on an open climate and any type of blame culture will inhibit knowledge sharing. Therefore, the expectations of the session were confirmed, and any blame was contained. This took a number of weeks to embed into the team but provided a foundation for creating discourse, learning and codifying knowledge which can be stored and used in a format to develop innovation. It is important to convey that each after action review (L Baird et al, 1999) was one spiral of the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) which allowed a continuous and iterative process of knowledge conversation to take place.

Figure 7: After- action review (L Baird et al, 1999) incorporating the SECI model (Adapted from Sarayreh, B et al., 2012)



The externalization and combination of the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and the after-action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) were not exclusively dependent on the facilitation of the SAM, rather the integrated approach discussed. Collaborative discourse and access to organisational intelligence, increased employee commitment and trust. Combining knowledge and information lead to a broader perspective, but also a more effective conceptualisation of

knowledge when storing in explicit form, therefore increasing the value of existing knowledge that could be used iteratively in the SECI process (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

### Initiative Evaluation

The initiatives principle objective was:

**“Understand how knowledge is currently transferred between the different layers of management within an account team, how this can be improved, which in turn helps develop new opportunities for innovation”.**

This was a complex subject experimented within the boundaries of the account, which due to the dedicated team differs in structure and scope with other accounts. When evaluating the initiative, the learning and development model (Kirkpatrick, 2006) has been applied to analyse the impact of the initiative. Feedback is in qualitative form due to the suitability of this type of data, as this takes into consideration the needs, behaviours and time scales of the initiative and if reviewed on



a continuous basis, quantitative means would be assessable due to the data compiled over a suitable time horizon when engaging with clients to provide tangible financial results (i.e. growth or savings).

The Learning and development model (Kirkpatrick, 2006) analyses the effectiveness of an initiative. Although the model contains four categories, I will be using only the reaction and behavioural classifications due to the relevance to the initiative.

## Reaction

This section refers to how stakeholders involved, responded to the initiative and how this has contributed to its development. As this paper has shown, there was a lack of trust in senior management, with the SAM seen as an outsider. This was an area of focus during the socialisation stage, as failure to address this would limit knowledge sharing and receive limited engagement within the team. With constant engagement, barriers lowered, social capital increased and the process of being accepted into the social circle was underway.

Post initiative interviews were conducted with three members of the team, the results of the interviews were encouraging. Using semi structured questions and observing body language to promote my understanding, the participants found the process worthwhile, they felt less isolated, more connected to the direction of the account and understood how their knowledge could be used in a more productive manner. This had the potential to increase job enrichment (Herzberg, 1968), by exercising the employee's aptitudes to a greater degree and increasing the level of recognition both internally and externally. There was general consensus that this was the direction we should pursue, although there were reservations as other managers within the organisation operate different leadership styles, which are not conducive to learning. As the initiative was based around a small team that was known well known to me, there could be an opinion that these participants were cherry picked to favour the initiative, therefore introducing bias into

the findings. I implemented a small survey but decided against completing this due to the risk of ethical considerations being compromised, as the survey sample was small and identifying the participants from the results would be simple based on the feedback. I am aware, that if this was to be implemented across the organisation, a much wider canvas of stakeholders would need to be considered to build a credible business case.

Senior management was canvassed to provide feedback, and this was surprising (appendix 6). My line manager heard positive undertones when engaging with their peers, with questions being asked in a positive light and he is keen to expand this within the organisation although the lack of tangible financial outcomes from the initiative may limit its effectiveness and over time results may develop into positive sustainable innovations (Christensen, 1997) that can be quantified over the longer term.

An encouraging aspect was the perceived commitment from the sceptical operations directors. During the early stages of the initiative, resistance increased, but following the employment of a persuasion strategy (Lee and Lawrence, 1991), this reduced. In email returns (appendix 6) and following conversations, they appeared to be more positive towards the initiative, although this is caveated by the limited scope. If this was to be implemented across multiple contracts, focus and direction may be taken away from the organisational performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000) which adversely would affect their performance metrics. Failure to achieve these metrics, would alter the perception of the initiative, creating barriers to engage moving forward and a further political strategy would need to be employed to mitigate this.

## Behaviour

Changing behaviours to encourage knowledge sharing was an important element in developing the initiative. From the initial cycles of inquiry, it was clear that the operations managers addressed problems in a methodical manner and there was a shared context amongst the team. Changing behaviours permanently takes time and the initiative was a start to this process. Applying the after-action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) to capture learning focused the team via conversations which bridged what was supposed to happen and what actually happened, therefore learning took place and knowledge was codified for future use. This promoted a more reflective stance and allowed critical reasoning to be entered into the organisational discourse.

A rewarding aspect of the initiative was individual team members taking their own learning and applying this to their situation in a structured approach. This was a form of combination within the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), as concepts were adapted, documented in the after - action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) and further internalised following deployment of the solution. The behaviour change was the key to the knowledge sharing process, as knowledge is an iterative process that spirals around the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

A word of caution when implementing this outside the initiative environment, the organisational structure and cultural environment may not be conducive to knowledge sharing in its present format. This may obstruct behavioural change and inhibit the scope of creative thinking and after-action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999). To develop an innovation led

approach to knowledge sharing, we must view innovation outside the normal organisational procedures by not restricting the flow of knowledge by framing innovation under the current organisational performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000). Unless we view knowledge sharing as an important aspect of the account function, innovation will become an afterthought and lose momentum. Therefore, should this be implemented organisation wide, processes need to be developed to encourage and reward knowledge sharing.

## Initiative next steps

Knowledge sharing is engaged in a casual manner in organisational life, although this is not always between the layers of management to benefit innovation development. Knowledge

sharing must be built into the DNA of the organisation and COMPANY X has a considerable journey to undertake before this becomes a reality.

Utilising the expertise of operations managers knowledge, promotes the application of deep smarts (Leonard, 2005) whereby the team members leverage their use of knowledge forms. This promotes the team to develop pattern recognition i.e. Intuition. (Leonard, 2005) when reflecting on account level innovation. The focus of the team within the shared context of the account promoted the development of intrateam communications which was facilitated by myself acting as the knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), this promoted improved diagnostic and cue seeking (Leonard, 2005) which was exhibited during the after-action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999).

The focus of the initiative was based on a narrow framework of a single account, with a small team acting as test subjects. It is vital, that the initiative iterates as a continuous program to ensure that we are constantly reflecting on our actions to improve the process. The natural progression of the team is to develop into a knowledge crew (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) whereby the initiative environment evolves to create a more robust framework for knowledge. During the initiative I acted as the knowledge knot (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), which moving forward will be difficult due to my overarching responsibilities. Therefore, training and development of this process has to be applied to the SAM to ensure that they assume this role, converting knowledge between forms, thereby facilitating the four modes of knowledge conversion (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). My role will assume the responsibility of a knowledge officer (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), whereby the overarching framework discussed is refined and harmonised, constantly reflecting on the vision of the team and building up a credible business case to scale this across other areas of the organisation.

Internalisation of knowledge is the last stage of the iteration of the SECI model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and is an important element to embed the new knowledge within the individuals involved. The documentation of learning via the after- action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) helped individuals internalize what they have experienced, thus enriching their tacit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Although the codifying of knowledge within the initiative is progressing, there is a requirement for this to be entered into an accessible form otherwise the knowledge flow and importantly learning will be blocked. Therefore, I propose the information is entered into an internal COMPANY X Wiki to create a repository of knowledge that that provides employees with an understanding and ability to identify critical knowledge (Leonard,

2005). This repository can be called upon by not only members of the account team but also, this is accessible to other members outside this team to increase the utilization of knowledge. As COMPANY X utilises the Google suite of collaboration tools, this will be simple to implement, although maintaining momentum and compliance of standards will need to be monitored to ensure this is utilized to aid the flow of knowledge.

Although this initiative was successful within the confines of the account team, If I was to start this process again, I would look at expanding the sample of stakeholders used and would engage the

end client in a more critical manner to gain extra credence to the project and to allow greater insight to be developed. As discussed, there is a lack of trust within the senior management team across the organisation, with a perception of reprimand and a tough guy, macho culture (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) reducing these barriers will a major challenge and unless this is sponsored at executive level, I fear the process will not be employed. COMPANY X will suffer from the lack of knowledge sharing and innovation development which will undermine our organisation in the competitive landscape and reduce our profitability long term. As this initiative is part of a wider COMPANY X project, these findings will be added to the overall project, which will hopefully mitigate the highlighted issues.

## Task 2 (A)

The theories and concepts that shaped my practice

The initiative evolved over the module with focus altered from the broad theme of understanding the innovation incubation process within my organisation to understanding how knowledge is transferred between members of an account team, which aids the development

of new opportunities for sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997). The SECI model (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) of knowledge creation was the conduit for transferring knowledge between the team, although as the initiative progressed it became clear that this model was only the interface of the theory and consideration needed to be applied to the broader theories of knowledge management and creation.

Knowledge requires a context to be formed, therefore application of the SECI model (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) without consideration to this would be counterproductive to knowledge creation. As Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) state "There is no creation without place". The theory of Ba (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) addresses this and is defined as a shared context in which knowledge is shared, created and utilised (Von Krogh et al., 2000). Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) originally proposed that this process was to be completed in a physical space, although as discussed in task 1, within the initiative this was adapted to a virtual form using the Google platform.

The important concept to understanding Ba (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) is interaction and shared beliefs which can be ever changing in scope. Ba (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) can span both organisational and divisional boundaries although within my initiative, this was based at the level of an account. This was vital, as a boundary allowed for meaningful discourse within a shared context for knowledge to evolve, as the boundary was at account team level, this allowed individuals within the team to access applied knowledge and eliminate knowledge redundancy (Leonard, 2005), as other participants sensed what was trying to be articulated and this sped up the knowledge sharing process (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This boundary allowed the initiative to be regarded as a success, although when expanding this across the organisation, maintaining a boundary around multiple contracts is going to be more problematic, this is due to two reasons.

Firstly, the building of Ba (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) takes considerable time and is not something that can be switched on and off. When Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) developed this theory, the focus of the study was on organisations in Japan where individuals would be employed for a substantial period, sometimes for a whole career and would develop these shared beliefs during organisational life. This would be facilitated by the passing of knowledge between different generations using a form of apprenticeship program. Within COMPANY X, the longevity of managers on accounts changes frequently unless they are part of a dedicated team, as in the case of the initiative, thus making this more problematic.

Secondly, the elements of the organisation's performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000) and the impact it has on the sharing of knowledge is important to consider and this reshaped my

thinking towards the innovation process within my organisation. As discussed in task 1, a organisations performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000) is built around ongoing operations and is based on repeatability and predictability, as an example, budgeting tends to be based on the previous year with a small incremental movement.

This repeatability and predictability of the organisational performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000) focuses the team to develop their own operations into smaller versions of this performance engine, thereby limiting the sharing of knowledge that may lead to sustainable innovation (Christensen, 1997) being developed by constraining ideas within a narrow frame. This became evident within the initiative as the operations team was a conducive unit and met its performance metrics, although ideas were held within the team and only when me and the SAM became involved, did knowledge start to flow.

The design of these small performance engines (Govindarajan, 2000) are not the fault of the entities involved; they are directed by the incompatibilities between ongoing operations and innovation development (Govindarajan, 2000). Ongoing operations are repeatable, while innovation is none routine. Secondly, ongoing operations are predictable, while innovation is uncertain (Govindarajan, 2000), these two points lead to anxieties being developed by regular team members when sharing knowledge that may result in anything that may affect their own individual performance targets set around operational delivery.

The last point is important, as the vast majority of the operational teams within COMPANY X are a shared resource between different clients and their performance is evaluated based on the metrics of the performance engine (Govindarajan, 2000). As an example, a member of the operations team is targeted on being within budget and on target for operational delivery, therefore, distractions to develop and implement new innovations via knowledge sharing may impact their performance targets, potentially leading to personal failures. As discussed in task 1, the wider organisational environment within COMPANY X is not conducive presently to knowledge sharing and a major organisational change would need to be facilitated to enable this. The process of the initiative altered my thinking from why knowledge isn't being directed to innovation and focused more on analysing the enabling factors that the organisation hadn't considered such as performance targets.

The types of innovation proposed and how COMPANY X expects these to be developed within the existing teams also shaped my thinking. Using the three models of innovation (Govindarajan, 2000) as a base, the organisation focuses on Model S (Govindarajan, 2000) initiatives whenever innovation is considered. These are small initiatives undertaken by front line employees who work across multiple clients, the initiatives are small, and the focus is on modest improvements. The

team are using slack time to jam in innovation into their business as usual practices; therefore, it is realistic not to expect major innovations and knowledge practices to be

developed (Govindarajan, 2000). When the workload increases, innovation and knowledge sharing decreases. This point was enlightening from the initiative as my perception of innovation development and knowledge sharing within COMPANY X was a responsibility of everyone and we should all be in a position to develop these capabilities.

### Theories that were rejected

In the scouting stage of the initiative, I anticipated analysing motivation within the account team from a dual factor theory (Herzberg, 1968) perspective, whereby I presumed I would be able to distinguish the initial motivational and hygiene factors within the team. Herzberg (1968) suggested that traditional models of a single dissatisfaction – satisfaction continuum was incorrect in that improvement in some areas might remove dissatisfaction (Open University, p. 69, 2012). There was an assumption that the motivation of the SAM's were comparable to the operations managers and this assumption was incorrect.

When evaluating this theory with the team in interviews during the scoping stage of the initiative, it became clear that the SAM's were less concerned in the tangible awards of account retention but were more interested in the achievement and recognition of retention, which was aligned to motivational factors as discussed by Herzberg (1968) and the advancement and personal growth within COMPANY X. This was in a contrast to the operations managers who discussed the same topics as the SAM's but were more focused on the hygiene factors of pay, company policies and the disconnect between the levels of management. Through questioning it was determined that pay was seen as a motivator for the operations managers and this could be viewed as a weakness in the theory. Herzberg (1968) completed his studies by interviewing professional engineers and managerial staff, whereby money was a limiting factor within motivation (Open University, p. 69, 2012), whereas the operational team within COMPANY X are considered blue collar workers and appeared to be motivated by different factors.

This theory assumes that the employee is either satisfied or not, this fails to focus on the distinct elements of the individual's role and only takes an all-inclusive view. For example, an operations manager may find activities such as people management as a satisfier but find compiling reports as a dissatisfaction factor. Herzberg (1968) states that responsibility is a motivating factor, but when discussing with the operations managers, it was evident that certain individuals sought responsibility and others saw this as a demotivator and achievement of intrinsic rewards wasn't important to them. The dual factor theory of motivation (Herzberg, 1968) was limited in use as it failed to address the topics discussed in the interviews in a rounded manner and although this paper doesn't take a deep drive into motivation, any further theories of motivation may become more useful in the initiative follow up actions.

The second theory rejected was a surprise, as during the early stages of the initiative it was felt this was going to be an important element to unlock creativity during knowledge sharing sessions. The theory of Functional fixedness (McCaffery and Pearson, 2015) reframes how we view an aspect of practice or a tangible product. For example, when the titanic stuck an iceberg, why didn't the passengers try to mount the iceberg? As this was a large floating device and could have potentially been used to aid the rescue process (McCaffery and Pearson, 2015). Functional fixedness is based around a psychological bias, that limits a person to seeing an object in only the way in which it has been traditionally used (McCaffery and Pearson, 2015). This was the basis of why I perceived the theory to be advantageous in my initiative.

The operations managers primary service is physical security, as outlined in task 1 this is composed of security guards and mobile patrol units. There cognitive bias is to envisage solutions from this perspective and ignore other innovation opportunities that may be more appropriate for the client. This cognitive trap appeared to be prevalent during the after-action reviews (L Baird et al, 1999) when discussing different solutions to the actions completed. For example, how I explained a client objective, determined how the individuals thought of a solution, this was due to the wording used. When describing the need of the client for COMPANY X to "Guard" the main entrance of their building, the individuals automatically reverted to their cognitive bias of physical security due to the word "guard". In reality, just changing the sentence to the need of a client for COMPANY X to "protect" the main entrance opened up more ideas from the team such as integrated solutions (Please see appendix 6). This is an example of generic parts technique (McCaffery and Pearson, 2015), a systematic way to change the way an object is described to avoid unintentionally narrowing people's conception of it (McCaffery and Pearson, 2015).

Although this aspect was a success, it was rejected due to various reasons. Firstly, was a failing of myself as the facilitator and my lack of experience using this theory. It was clear that the team felt this was outlandish and the ideas but forward were viewed as impractical and due to my limited experience using this, I was unable to change their mindset by building a credible argument. Secondly, I felt after attempting this theory, that this was more suited to an advanced community of practice (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) due to the biased mindsets towards physical security guarding. Foundational creative techniques would need to be implemented first to allow this be accepted and potentially used in the initiative.

### Developing a critical and evidence-based approach to management

The evidence-based approach to inquiry counters the practice within management circles of disregarding evidence and relying on personal experience and judgement to provide a more critical thinking-based methodology. I feel I used evidence in my management practice prior to the MBA, although I rarely interrogated the quality of the evidence and its sources. The



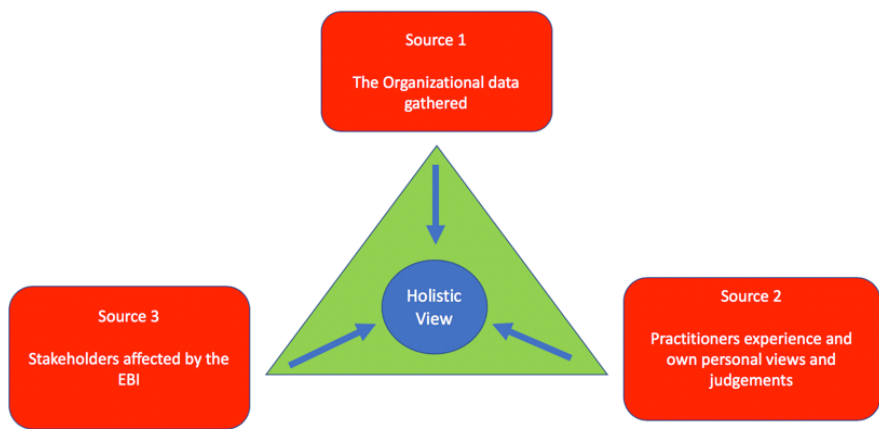
aspiration of evidence-based inquiry is to progress the method of how decisions are identified and evaluated to provide a more robust means of action.

The lack of evidence-based inquiry within COMPANY X is prevalent, as practitioners make decisions based on their experience and judgement, which is highly susceptible to systematic errors incorporating cognitive limits that are prone to biases that impair the quality of decisions made (Open University, p. 8, 2018).

This appeared be due to a lack of understanding of evidence-based inquiry or a lack of time due to other commitments. Although I would agree that time pressures can become a barrier to this practice, the need to make a decision immediately within COMPANY X is rare, with time horizons allowing plenty of opportunity to collect and evaluate information that would aid better management practices.

Acquiring and aggregating evidence from multiple sources has allowed me to take a rounded view to aid my practice. Triangulation of information (Wilson, 2014) sources was imperative in B839 due to the different perceptions that each source revealed. This triangulation of different sources ensured I became more sceptical in approach, which enabled me to build a credible approach to justify my conclusions.

Figure 8: Triangulation of evidence sources (Wilson, 2014)



Critically appraising evidence sources is positioned around asking good questions which mirrors the action – reflection cycle (Open University, p. 2, 2017). This is a form of experimentation through learning by doing in a systematic fashion (Open University, p. 9,

2018). For example, when reviewing organisational information, it's important to ask how was this compiled, is it complete or has certain elements of the evidence been removed to improve the perception of the argument, thus introducing bias into the inquiry. The main principle is that decisions are likely to improve, the more trustworthy the evidence is. Evidence based inquiry has allowed me to develop a critical mindset, digging into what is presented to me by questioning and challenging assumptions that allows me to become a more reflective manager.

## Task 2 (B)

The MBA journey has been an enlightening experience that has allowed me to personally grow, from a career and personal perspective. The use of models and theories have enabled me to interpret scenarios through a new pair of eyes, leading to holistic thinking, both broad in perspective and deep in understanding. During this journey I have pursued a challenging career, which along with the MBA has jointly shaped my thinking and my approach to organisational life.

### My perception of management

Prior to the MBA, my perception of organisations was viewed through a black and white lens, for example, employee poor performance. This was perceived as a failure of the individual and pressure would be applied to ensure they were refocused using traditional performance management tools. During the MBA and as seen in the initiative, it became clear that an organisation is a complicated system of interconnected parts which influence the situation faced by employees. Only when you apply systems thinking (Checkland, 1999), can you make an informed decision that leads to a course of action. This characteristic of perception is outlined in figure 8.

Figure 9: What is the pig (Morgan, 1997)



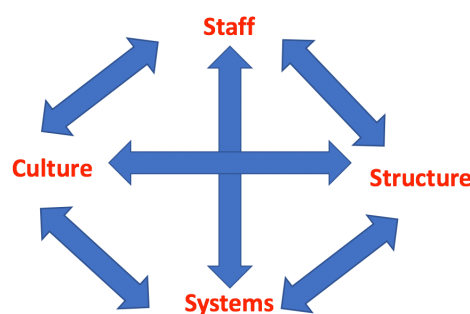


WHAT IS THE PIG?

Using the metaphor of the pig as an organisational situation, this outlines that stakeholders view each situation from their own perspective, deeming that their beliefs are the truth and that the truth is obvious (Morgan, 1997). This is connected to the observable actions of the individuals and fails to understand the presumed assumptions, prejudices and thinking processes that are behind most decisions and sit below the water line of the cultural iceberg (Schein, 2010).

When reviewing an organisational situation, you must take a broader perspective, focusing on the organisational DNA such as organisational culture, structure etc, only then can an educated decision be made. A metaphor of an outer body experience encapsulates my MBA journey. As an MBA trained manager, this has taught me to take a helicopter view, developing my understanding and evolving into a conscious competent manager, connecting thought, practice and experience (Connor and McDermott, 2004) into everyday practice.

Figure 10: Organisational DNA (Govindarajan and Trimble, 2005)



## Impact of bias on my practice

The second reflection which has altered my perception of management, is the impact of bias in organisations when presented with information. The definition of Bias is “Something to have an effect on the results of research or an experiment so they do not show the real situation”

(Nickerson, 1998). The use of questioning and evidence to identify bias is linked to critical thinking and is another significant skill developed throughout the MBA. Bias is exhibited in my organisation on a frequent basis. Bias comes in countless forms and is used to influence stakeholders towards a course of action. A number of different types of biases have been exhibited during my organisational studies, and the knowledge sharing initiative. Prior to the MBA, I would be inclined to surface read information and not question how bias affected what was presented to me. This was clearly poor practice and when reviewing information, I now look for clues of confirmation bias where a hypothesis is formed to confirm a belief or support a course of action but dismisses evidence that doesn't support the presented hypothesis (Nickerson, 1998). This was exhibited during the scoping stage of the initiative, as the operations directors ignored the real issues and only presented cases of clients who were favourable to the current service delivered, only using probing questions and taking a more holistic approach, did I manage to understand that this was a biased view and further investigation was required.

## Reflective management and peer feedback

Certain practices have been repeated and strengthened during the initiative. Taking a step back from a situation was a key skill developed. This process of reflection has enabled me to become a more inquisitive manager, asking good questions and this has become a management foundation for increased understanding. This is reflected in appendix 9 where peers from my MBA studies and my organisation have detailed how my management practice and critical thinking has developed.

Reflective learning is a deliberate process of undertaking an action – reflection cycle (Open University, p. 2, 2017). This is an extension of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 2001) and encapsulates deliberate action, which is reflected upon, actions adjusted and completed again in the similar manner as a scientist would create an experiment. This has allowed me to become a more measured manager and apply theoretical understanding to daily practice, thereby adding to my professional development.

The MBA is a skill set that resembles a bag of golf clubs, this metaphor outlines that to play a certain hole, you require a certain club otherwise you will apply the wrong club to the wrong type of shot. This is an essential theoretical underpinning of the MBA; it has allowed me to reach into the golf bag and apply models and concepts to situations. The MBA is more than just my tool set, it's a mindset that has allowed me to take a strategic view of a business situation and apply analytical methods to analysing, justifying and proposing solutions within my organisation. From a personal perspective, this has been a life changing process which

has cemented my understanding of management, the future direction of my career and a commitment to academia thought-out my life.

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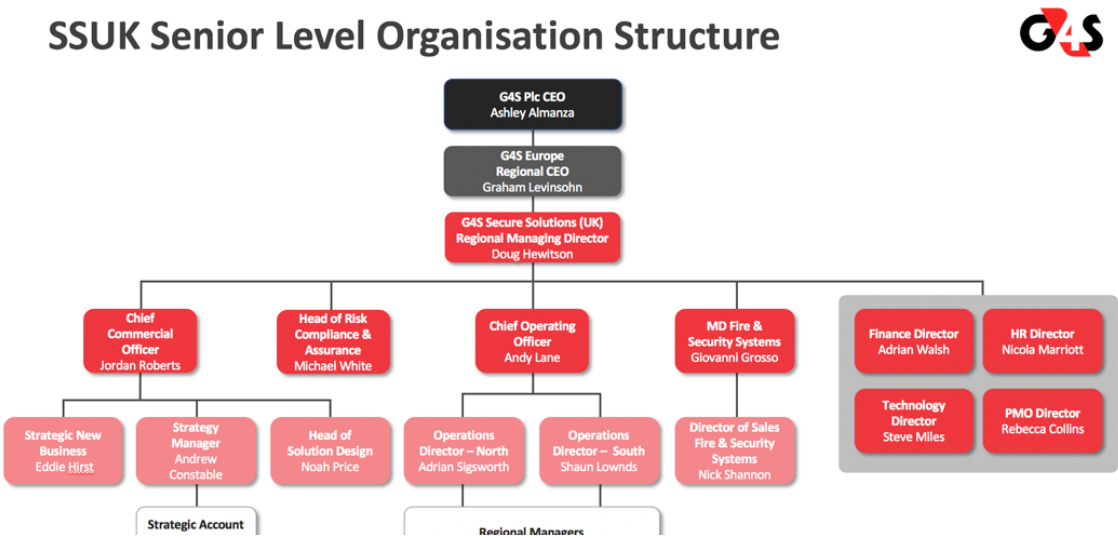
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Appendix

Appendix 1

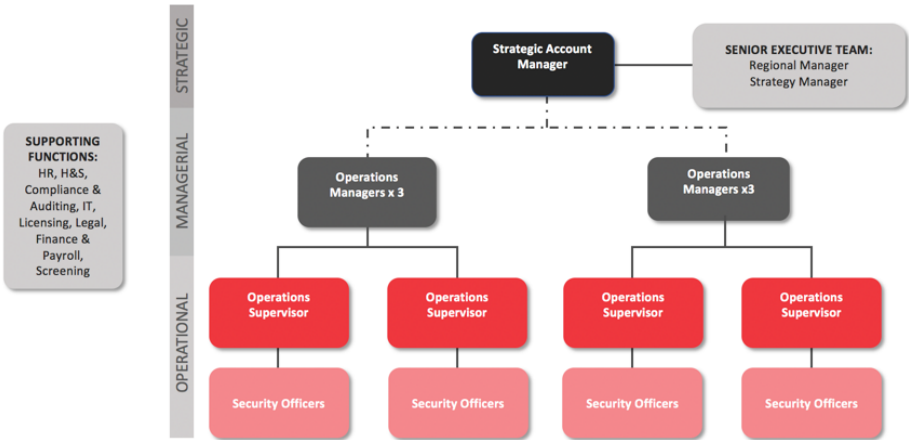
About COMPANY X

COMPANY X Secure solutions organisational chart



Appendix 2 – Strategic account organisational chart

Account Management Structure



Appendix 3– Residential school reflection

The process of Cluster analysis is to surface and capture perceptions of the EBI from the viewpoint of my peers. The process entailed a short 15-minute presentation of the overview of the EBI. For this I used my rich picture to discuss each element in turn and to relate any questions to each other. My peers of Ben, Andrew and Heather all wrote down their thoughts on postage notes following the questions. The notes contained questions, theories, models and subjects that may help with scoping the salient points. Once the exercise was completed all the themes were grouped together to outline any common ground that may generate insight. The main themes outlined were as below.

- Motivational theories
  - Culture
  - Team dynamics
  - Strategic vision
  - Control measures
- Change management and control
- Evidence collection and type
  - Stakeholder analysis
  -

Interestingly, the main points were grouped around the strategic vision theme which was aligned to my broad scope and a lack of focusing on the pertinent issues. This would be expanded in the next session.

Reflection from the exercise was how difficult it was to articulate the problem to my peers. Firstly, this was due to the problem being vast and unfocused and secondly due to my peers not being part of the organization and therefore not understanding the dynamics of the environment within COMPANY X. Apart from my initial cycles of inquiry, this was the first time I had discussed this out loud and provided good practice at narrowing the scope further.

### **Functional Perspectives**

Day 2 started with a group session based around the concept of functional perspectives. One person presents their EBI to the group and in groups of two each group role plays a function within COMPANY X to allow different perspectives to be brought to the EBI process and to gain a new perspective on this. I presented my EBI to the group in the same manner as in day 1, running through the rich picture and explaining the contextual elements of the EBI. There was a number of questions throughout this presentation to gain an understanding which helped shape my articulation and presentation of the problem.

The tutor broke the groups down into the below functions and each team compiled a set of questions to ask.

- Operations
- Commercial / Marketing
  - Finance
  - HR

### **Questions and answers from the Functional Perspective session (Recorded for evidence)**

## Finance.

### **1. What is the business case driving this?**

a. The main business case is we are being seen by our clients as a commodity supplier due to the lack of thought leadership and innovation being applied to the contracts. This is stopping us from becoming sticky with the client and leading to the organization losing both clients and retaining clients on lower margins as price is the main factor.

### **2. How will this change effect the bottom line?**

The main changes will be built around a reduced overhead due to the operational efficiencies of an operation performing better. Secondly, becoming a more innovative organization will allow more clients to be retained on a higher margin due to the clients seeing COMPANY X as a partner instead of a commodity provider. This will achieve long term gains that any partnership brings by moving the client up the loyalty ladder.

### **3. Why should we fund this?**

As outlined above, the benefits to COMPANY X are in developing deeper capabilities through innovation and knowledge sharing between the functions. This will not only benefit our clients but COMPANY X will benefit from longer term contracts, deeper relationships and the organizations capabilities will improve due to tacit knowledge being pulled out of the heads of the teams and becoming explicit in nature.

### **4. Is there a risk of higher margins attracting new competitors?**

- a. The overall cost for the client will not necessary increase as the efficiencies will be produced within COMPANY X. With a reduction of overhead, the physical margin will increase but as COMPANY X has been competing on price recently we need to differentiate ourselves to be positioned as a thought leader and a true security expert that adds value to the client's organization. The security industry has thousands of competitors, therefore it's the solution that attracts corporate clients and not the overarching margin.

## **HR**

### **1. How are you working with HR to ensure alignment? (Training, bonus, job specs etc)**

- a. Firstly, I completed an initial pilot of this EBI within my own clients to complete my first cycle of inquiry. This was important as it allowed me to judge the level of interest and the driving factors behind this. From a training perspective, this will be minimum during the EBI process as I plan to extend the pilot to one of my managers portfolios. There, will be briefing on the elements outlined but this has been considered. Within the pilot I completed, I changed the bonus scheme from all bonus going to myself to a pot system whereby each element of the solution has access to this. This is important due to the operational team currently not receiving any bonus for any new solution; therefore, they see this as extra work for no reward. Secondly, I consulted my team of strategic managers of my plans regarding the scheme changed. Interestingly, 6 out of 8 managers were in favor of this as they felt this would overall improve client retention, which would lead to increased work and bonus due to volume. The 6 managers were also not driven by bonus but by other contextual factors, so the signs are promising.

### **2. How are you going to address the cultural and motivation differences between the functions?**

Very good question. There are two very different cultures within the operational and strategic function. Operations is a mix of power and task orientated, with red tape restricting progress. The strategic function which is aligned to the commercial element is entrepreneurial and role based with a much more open environment. Theories of analyzing the cultures will be used, such as Scheins "Iceberg" and Handy's cultural elements. Motivation is a large factor in this EBI with issues of expectancy and equity theory being exhibited. This will form a large part of the EBI function.

Power and politics theories again need to be considered in depth while completing the EBI.

### 3. **Plans to extend the pilot.**

As indicated above, I will be rolling out the EBI within one of my managers portfolios as a second stage pilot which will be the basis of the EBI.

### 4. **Has a redundancy program been costed?**

No, this is out of scope for the EBI as this will be more about the knowledge creation process between the different layers of the organization and how this can drive innovation and change for the benefit of both clients and COMPANY X.

## **Commercial**

### 1. **What's the commercial rationale for your EBI?**

Presently, we are operating using a model that hasn't changed in a considerable time and due to the lack of thought leadership and providing clients with real value-added services we are turning into a commodity product. Becoming a commodity product is failing to differentiate our services therefore we are dropping into the below areas of margin erosion

- i. ***Win new business on lower margins***
- ii. ***Retain new business on lower margins***
- iii. ***Lose new business bids and current contracts***

COMPANY X has a valuable recourse and capability in the tacit knowledge contained within the operational teams. As this is tacit it is not VRIO and can be transferred to other organizations when the manager leaves. Therefore, we must implement a program of moving this knowledge to explicit forms for the capability to become VRIO.

Promoting a mechanism of knowledge transfer between the teams will increase the levels of team work, creating an environment of continuous improvement which will empower managers to be heard, be part of the solution development and promotes a culture of learning.

Providing a culture of innovation by joining the operational and strategic managers together in a team based approach, will allow for new solutions to be delivered that answer clients questions and focus on moving clients up the loyalty ladder whereby we become "Sticky" and are seen as a partner organization for there business.

### 1. **Does people being replaced by CCTV work commercially?**

- a. This misses the point as the plan is not to replace staff with technology for the sake of change. Designing an all-round integrated solution is the end result. The EBI will be narrow in scope and is more about connecting the strategic and operational teams together to promote a culture of innovation and knowledge transfer that will allow for a true team based approach to be developed that will answer the needs of clients and move us up the loyalty ladder as indicated above.

### **Can you achieve retention + value add with the existing operational structure?**

- a. The business will operate, and we will retain and grow. Although as indicated above, when dealing with large multi-location clients they are looking for thought leadership and innovation which answers their pains of service.
- b. COMPANY X will retain clients that are focused on cost as their primary driver, this can only be attained in two ways for our business.
  - i. Reduce the client's provision on the site to reduce the overall spend. This is not always acceptable to the client due to the risks involved, plus COMPANY X will lose

- revenue.
- ii. COMPANY X will need to cut margin, due to our higher overhead compared to smaller security providers. As margins are circa 5 – 11% GM presently, we are finding ourselves becoming busy fairs operating business which is not financially viable.

## Operations

### **1. What checks are in place presently?**

We operate KPI's and SLA's with each client, although these are of varying standard and are not uniform in approach. The operation is not targeted on KPI performance by COMPANY X, this is driven purely by the client. Due to the lack of management of KPI's internally, focus shifts away from these to other activities such as growth, debt collection and resource coverage leading to a culture of reactive service for clients. The larger clients normally have a criteria for innovation which in my experience is centered from COMPANY X perspective on selling technology and is rarely answered correctly from a true innovation approach of developing a new method, idea, product that answers their latent needs.

### **2. Do you have the ability to assess potential for effectiveness?**

Presently there is no other gauge in the business to monitor effectiveness apart from the metrics outlined above. Following the EBI pilot within my team, we can judge from a qualitative perspective the improvement and in time assess the quantitative effectiveness of the project.

### **3. Do you have a R&D dept in the business?**

We do not have a pure R&D function, although we have a small innovation team. This is based around the methodology of Effects based security design (EBSD) and is in its infancy in the organisation. The team consists of two individuals who are resource short and therefore are not as effective as they could be. The director of this function is behind this EBI as it will allow EBSD principles to be shared amongst the functions in a more concise manner and release the work load of his team to focus on large opportunities over 10m+.

Appendix 4– Rich Picture commentary adapted from TMA1

## **Top**

Starting in the first third of the rich picture, the group board sets the direction of the organisation and is constantly putting pressure on the divisional units to increase profits, retain clients and cross sell services. Although this appears to change on a monthly basis with the focus either on profit growth or revenue growth.

Competitors are applying pressure which is impacting margins and reducing costs for clients. Although the clients are receiving a reduced annual spend, this is meaning that the physical security product is becoming very commoditized and little appears to set COMPANY X apart from the smaller security providers. The COMPANY X shareholders are unhappy that the division is reducing its margin leading to a reduction in profit.

## **Middle**

**\*\*Focus area of EMA\*\***

The middle of the rich picture outlines the clients of COMPANY X, they appear happy that their cost is reducing although they discuss innovation with the strategic team, agree a plan of action and then nothing happens leading to a lack of confidence in the COMPANY X senior management from the client's perspective. The ideas discussed by the strategic managers hit the large brick wall sitting between strategic and operational management creating a force field.

To the middle right of the rich picture, we can see the pressure that triggers innovation presently in the organisation, this is normally reactive due to client complaints or retenders.

**The focus of the EMA is within the red circle and the interaction between the levels of management within the account.**

**Bottom**

Below the brick wall, sits the operational management team who manage the provision for the clients at a functional level. There is a number of issues here, firstly, the team feel like they are not listened too when they have good ideas. No one is interested and this leads to problems of a resistance to change and a lack of understanding of the drivers of innovation from the client's perspective. Any idea they do have leaves the team and hits the brick wall and goes nowhere or stays within the team.

Best practice and new innovation ideas from outside the division or industry are in the macro environment and although the teams at both a strategic and operational level under these, nothing happens with these leading to being seen by clients as reactive.

Overall the brick wall and the lack knowledge sharing are leading to innovation ideas being wasted which is having a negative effect on both the clients and the COMPANY X employees and turning COMPANY X into a commodity-based provider.

Appendix 5 – Pilot account

<u>Account Name</u>	<u>A Logistics Organisation</u>
Sector	E-commerce and fulfilment
Organisational type	Ltd organisation
Annual Spend with COMPANY X	2.5 million
Total employees on contract	75 security officers
Direct Management	6 x operational managers

Services delivered	Man guarding, control room functions, patrol officers, monitoring
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Appendix 6 – Post initiative emails – Line manager and operations directors North and South

**\*\*Private and confidential\*\***

Line Manager – Chief Commercial Officer - SSUK

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Jordan Roberts**<[Jordan.Roberts@uk.g4s.com](mailto:Jordan.Roberts@uk.g4s.com)>  
Date: Tue, Aug 20, 2019 at 2:10 PM  
Subject: Re: OU Knowledge project  
To: Andrew Constable <[andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com](mailto:andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com)>,

Andrew,

The project to gel together knowledge sharing in the strategic account function has allowed me to understand where we have gaps in the process. From our discussions it is clear that the problem is more to do with getting knowledge to our SAM's and using this to win business and retain contracts. From my SST meetings, comments have been made in a positive light from Andy and the other operations directors. I am keen to look at how we can scale this and look forward to discussing it in due course.

Jordan

---

**Jordan Roberts**  
Chief Commercial Officer

**G4S Secure Solutions (UK & Ireland) Ltd** | Sutton Park House | 15 Carshalton Road | Sutton | Surrey | SM1 4LD  
**Tel:** +44 (0) 7595 523000 |

**Website:** [G4S Securing Your World](http://G4S.Securing.Your.World)

Operations Director North

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Adrian Sigsworth** <[adrian.sigsworth@uk.g4s.com](mailto:adrian.sigsworth@uk.g4s.com)>  
Date: Thu, Jul 25, 2019 at 10:05 AM  
Subject: OU Knowledge Project  
To: Andrew Constable <[andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com](mailto:andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com)>  
Cc: Nick Cooper <[nick.cooper@uk.g4s.com](mailto:nick.cooper@uk.g4s.com)>

Andrew



Andrew

The feedback from my team has been positive in the main and following our discussions, I see a greater impact moving forward when our other projects have come to fruition. As this was based on one account with dedicated management its a interesting take on how we need to proceed, although as you are aware most of our contracts are not as resource heavy.

I am keen to see how this progresses and let me know when you want to discuss the next actions with me and Shaun.

On another note, can you give me a call reference Unipart

Kind Regards

Adrian Sigsworth  
Operations Director – North  
G4S Secure Solutions (UK) LTD  
07836 506006

Operations Director South

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Shaun Lownds** <[shaun.lownds@uk.g4s.com](mailto:shaun.lownds@uk.g4s.com)>  
Date: Tue, Jul 23, 2019 at 9:51 PM  
Subject: Re: OU knowledge Project  
To: Andrew Constable <[andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com](mailto:andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com)>  
Cc: Bryan Hall <[bryan.hall@uk.g4s.com](mailto:bryan.hall@uk.g4s.com)>

Hi Andrew

I have been impressed with the project and your feedback during the sessions has been well received by Warren / Simon. I like the overall view of the project, although I to take this forward you will need to back this up with a suitable financial plan otherwise it will may not get approved. Thanks for briefing myself and Adrian as the aims and objectives became clear following this.

Well done and lets catch up soon.

Regards

Shaun Lownds

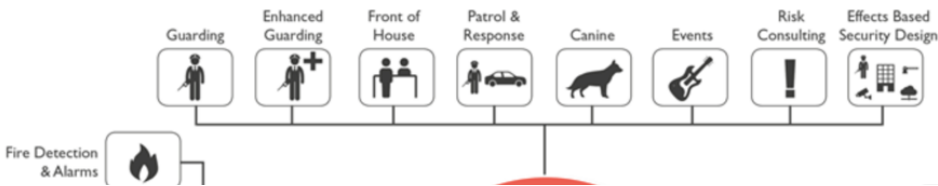
Operations Director - South

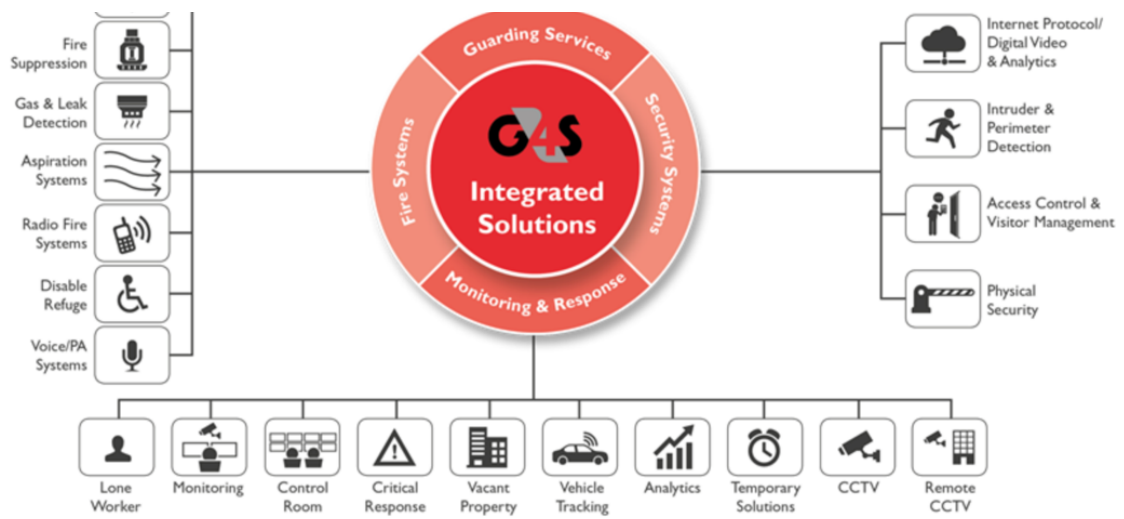
G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Ltd

[Shaun.lownds@uk.g4s.com](mailto:Shaun.lownds@uk.g4s.com)

07778 855110

Appendix 7 – Integrated security solutions





## Appendix 8 – After action review examples

### Situation: Gate house review & proposal – Northampton Campus (First face to face AAR)

<u>What was supposed to happen?</u>	<u>What happened?</u>
* New gate house proposed	* Proposal was late.
	* Focused on MG fire too much


<p>for Northampton team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Solution must be innovative</li> <li>* Deadline 1/9/19</li> </ul>	<p>* Where was the integrated solution?</p>
<p><u>Why was there success?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Diff between what was requested and proposed. Failure to engage with other departments.</li> <li>* The SAM was involved? why not?</li> <li>* Due to sickness - Project was late.</li> </ul>	<p><u>What have we learned?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* SAM Needs to lead process</li> <li>* Kick off meeting - * A must</li> <li>* Bring tech into the conversation early.</li> <li>* Work as a joined up unit!</li> </ul>

### Situation: Control room improvements – Corby control room (Virtual session)

<p><u>What was supposed happen?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client asked for a development opportunity at the Corby control room</li> <li>• We must work with the client to determine the scope</li> <li>• Timelines to implement: In place 24.08.2019</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><u>What happened?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In depth proposal built which outlines the key benefits of the re-engineering project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good engagement with monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal was on time</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cost was around 23% too expensive</li> <li>•</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><u>Why was there a difference?</u></p> <p>The client had requested a cost-effective solution. We have used high end product when we need to be referring to Hick Vision instead of Symmetry</p> <p>Margin was too high, re-costing required</p>	<p><u>What can we learn from this?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Although we understood the requirement, we needed to be more aware of the type of equipment needed to fit within the budget.</b></li> <li>• <b>Margin adjustment needs to be ran past the SAM for sign off, along with</b></li> </ul>

Appendix 9 – Fellow student and COMPANY X feedback

**Feedback from Sarah Cain – Fellow OU MBA student (Peer)**



Sarah Cain

to me ▾


Sat, Sep 14, 10:31 AM (2 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Andy,

Andy has elevated his practice since the start of the MBA. At the start of the course he communicated his thoughts to everyone in a manner that is understood clearly. Andy has improved the way in which he gains information or thoughts from others through his use of questioning. This shows that Andy has actively listened and applies his critical thinking to form questions that explore the conversations in depth.

**Feedback from Kevin Campbell – Fellow OU MBA student (Peer)**

EMA feedback ▶ Inbox x



Kevin C

to me ▾

Sat, Sep 21, 11:41 AM (2 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Andrew

In my experience Andrew has improved both his theoretical knowledge and practice as a manager over the past 3years of the MBA. We met at B716 day school 1, at the time Andrew came across as very logical and methodical however on reflection his awareness and use of management theory was mainly descriptive.

In my experience Andrew has significantly developed his management practice to include the use of theory, critical thinking and reflection. Presently in our regular conversations about management practice and MBA journey, Andrew demonstrates a clear understanding of how a range of different theories may be applied. This includes critical understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and how they may be adapted to improve the problem-solving and decision-making processes. Importantly Andrew also demonstrates an awareness of the impact different contexts can have on the application of management theory. For example, is a piece of theory relevant if the context changes, what questions does it raise?

Andrew also shows a deep level of reflection in his communications (written and oral). Andrew's communicating style was high context at the start of this process he has developed a low context style of communicating that is very accessible to stakeholders from different background.

Andrew's methodical/logical approach and low context communication style also means he is very good at formulating strategy and communication well with stakeholders to drive change.

I look forward to seeing Andrew's continued professional development post MBA.

## **Feedback from the Head of Solution development (Peer)**

From: **Noah Price** <[noah.price@uk.g4s.com](mailto:noah.price@uk.g4s.com)>  
Date: Wed, 28 Aug 2019, 12:48  
Subject: Re: Feedback

Andrew,

I have worked with Andrew since 2016 and over this time have seen Andrew's practice change. He has developed into a more measured manager who takes a constructive and critical view of the situations facing the organisation. It is clear that the MBA has helped him widen his thinking to reinforce his practice. As G4S also has its own methodology "The G4S way", Andrew has taken to this better than most managers and implemented this in combination with his outside business studies.

Best

Noah

Noah Price

Head of Solutions Development

Mobile: + 44 (0)7912 512 655 or +44(0)7875 277 743

[noah.price@uk.g4s.com](mailto:noah.price@uk.g4s.com)

## **Feedback from the Northern regional manager (Subordinate)**

From: **Steve Hopper** <[steve.hopper@uk.g4s.com](mailto:steve.hopper@uk.g4s.com)>  
Date: Fri, 20 Sep 2019, 12:18  
Subject: Re: feedback  
To: [andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com](mailto:andrew.constable@uk.g4s.com)

Hi Andy

I am happy to provide some feedback on how you have developed. Since you joined G4S it is clear that you have invested time and effort into understanding the business and what effect decisions have on the team in general. Although I haven't had any formal management training (Apart from 42 years in the business!), I can see how you have benefited from this and developed into a well rounded manager. The aspect that stands out for me is the use of questions, as you always tend to be the most clear and measured.

All in all, it's a pleasure to work with you.

Many thanks

**Steve Hopper**

**Regional Manager - North**

**Patrol & Response Services**

**G4S Secure Solutions (UK&I) Ltd**

**Mobile +44(0)7836 781976**

**Email [Steve.Hopper@uk.g4s.com](mailto:Steve.Hopper@uk.g4s.com)**































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