

Travel Report – How can CEVT enhance their *Disseminative Capabilities*?

Purpose

The purpose of our study was twofold, one from an academic perspective and one from a corporate perspective. The academic purpose was to contribute the research gap identified within the field of the sender's disseminative capabilities. Most previous research has focused on the receiver's capabilities. The corporate purpose was to investigate the knowledge transfer of CEVT's previous joint projects with Geely, and subsequently come up with recommendations how to enhance that process for the future.

Previously mentioned led us to our main research question: *How can CEVT improve their disseminative capabilities to enhance the knowledge transfer process in inter-organizational NPD projects?*

Following, we had one sub-question that would broaden the understanding related to the main focus of research: *What are the current challenges in the knowledge transfer process towards Geely at CEVT?*

Method

The method of collecting data was primarily semi-structured interviews around previous NPD-projects and the challenges they had showed. Prior to our departure to China we performed all the interviews needed from the Swedish side at CEVT, as well as reading and studying processes and knowledge sharing routines to gain a deep understanding around the subject and to come prepared.

With help from our supervisors from CEVT, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted in total at Geely Research Institute (GRI) in Cixi, Zhejiang, China. The reason for these interviews in China was to hear how the knowledge sharing routines were perceived from a Chinese perspective and what in their opinion could be developed further.

Main Findings

The findings from this study showed that it is possible to group the challenges in this particular inter-organizations knowledge transfer process from a framework created through our systematic literature review.

In the **realization of knowledge** phase, the main challenge identified revolved around making potential valuable information available for both parts. The research identified that much knowledge today is leaked in informal settings at CEVT and therefore not disclosed in the shared systems. In the **assessment of the recipient** phase, the main challenge identified was not around technical knowledge, but rather around the application of the shared processes and shared systems. Both parts have committed to shared routines, but the rationale and

background behind why this certain process are deployed are rather unclear. Especially from Geely's perspective, but also in some cases from CEVT's side. In the **encoding of knowledge** phase, the main challenge identified regarded the de-contextualization of path-dependent knowledge, i.e. how certain decisions were taken and knowledge, in general, were converted to ease the receiver's ability of interpretation.

In the **knowledge transfer mechanism** phase, a variation of different formal and informal media was deployed regarding the handover, i.e. a formal handover meeting where responsibilities were shifted. The main challenge identified was the process of communication-related to if the shift of responsibility was sufficient from a project maturity perspective, and if it was sufficient, how Geely would proceed with the project. In the **support of knowledge** phase the findings are generally very positive. Geely interviewees express great gratitude towards CEVT's positivity towards supporting activities. However, now these activities are reactive from CEVT side, while a more proactive approach was requested from a Geely perspective.

Another evident challenge regarded the **organizational differences** between the two companies in terms of dissimilar structures, which impact the knowledge transfer. Furthermore, the shared process system deployed was identified as another obstacle at present, due to the path-dependency from a previous waterfall PM style adapted from Volvo, thus an inability to match the Geely project management structure, characterized by agility.

Moreover, a challenge identified was related to **communication**, both technical and linguistic in nature. Shared systems were in place, but due to connection problems, many employees could not access these systems, which in turn impact the knowledge transfer and subsequent project success. Also, the accessibility problem of shared systems affects the ability to communicate between the organization, leading to a significant of knowledge being transferred to written media tools instead of rich media communication tools. Thus, a challenge in transferring tacit knowledge was impacted.

An additional challenge identified was related to the **cultural distance** between the two organizations, both national and company, mostly regarding awareness and acknowledgment by the employees. Finally, a key challenge identified was related to the **measurement** of knowledge transfer or project success. At present, no clear structure has been crafted to measure success on a project-level, thus impacting the ability to create "lessons learned" applied in future projects.

Travel Report

In China, we had Shanghai as a base. We rented an apartment through contacts, as both of us have studied in Shanghai. When setting up our interviews we made sure that we could do as many as possible each day, as we had a two-hour travel to reach Geely in Cixi. When we arrived in Cixi we felt very welcomed by our contact at Geely, Liz, who had helped us to set

up all the interviews. Apart from the interviews we were invited to a guided tour of Geely's premises in Cixi. The days we did not spent in Cixi were devoted to transcribing the interviews and to work on the empirical findings section in our thesis.



Outside Geely Research Institute