Reviewer's report

Title: Sticky Knowledge-Lessons for transferring best practice in health systems

Version: 2 Date: 28 September 2007

Reviewer: Jacqueline Pugh

Reviewer's report:

I have carefully reread the new version of the manuscript as well as the other reviewer’s comments on the original manuscript—which were positive and suggested acceptance with minor revisions as opposed to my own which deferred to the editors about the appropriateness of the article for our journal based on it being a non-systematic, narrative review of primarily a single author’s work.

The manuscript has changed little although it does now acknowledge that there are other complementary and/or at times competing theories in the business as well as other social science literatures. Given that the inclination on the part of the other reviewer and the editor is to accept this manuscript, I feel that certain revisions are imperative prior to publication in order to make clear the nature of the article. Thus, I have actually made a number of such changes myself and identified the specific places where the authors would need to fill in information which I cannot. The formatting was lost when I converted the file from PDF to MD Word but I wanted to be able to track changes so everyone could see exactly what I had changed.

For my taste, the examples are a bit too good and evil. Everything is wonderful in the first, everything is bad in the second. See comments on the manuscript.

The intent of these edits is the following:

1. To make clear the nature of the article: a non-systematic, narrative review of a single author’s work
2. To push the authors to give a description of the process that was used to select this particular author’s work.
3. To clarify some of the points—especially to annotate the case to make it easier for the reader to understand the concepts as they are played out in the case.
The authors need to
1. Add a description of their “methods”—how the Szulanski was picked and why, how the case was developed (group consensus, Delphi method, whose input, etc.)
2. Add a brief description of Szulanski’s empirical work—what do the authors mean by empirical. In the response letter, they say he surveyed a number of companies—and it sounds cross-sectional. In the article, they imply that he identified cause and effect with certain of his 10 points and ability to spread knowledge. Again, the reader should not have to go read Szulanski given that this is the only author being reviewed here.
3. Figure 1 needs to be made clearer and graphically more pleasing. How do the two different sets of words relate to each other? Is there a way to show this or would it be better to drop one of them (the initiation-implementation-ramp-up-integration piece—since it is not discussed in depth like the other four are).

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.