

MOPAN 2008

**15th International Conference on Multi-Organisational
Partnerships, Alliances & Networks**

Boston, 25-27 june, 2008

**“Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote:...and the winner is
...”**

**A case study: Capgemini and its partners, an example of
interorganizational learning**

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Abstract:

Strategic management is no more a field reserved to the only top managers. With the huge growth of partnerships, alliances and cooperation's between firms, more and more managers and executives have to deal with strategic problems emerging through the process of knowledge transfer.

Our review of the strategic alliances literature begins with the Garette and Dussauge (1995) and Hamel (1991) writings about the process of knowledge transfer in strategic alliances. Since then, many researchers have been interested in this topic. Several authors confirmed the competitive nature of the transfer of knowledge (Nonaka 1994; Hamel 1991; Prahalad, Hamel & Doz 1999; Lyles 1988; Pucik, 1988; Kogut 1989, Inckpen 1998, 2000, 2002; Simonin 1993,1999, Grant, 1996, 2004;). But, it seems that none of them have treated all of the problems encountered by a firm when processing knowledge transfer (in the same research). In this paper, we have tried to describe and to explain these problems, and to highlight the factors of knowledge learning (P.Kale, H Singh, H.Perlmutter 2000; Lyer 2002; Hitt and al 2000; Oliver 2001; Osborn and all 1997; Liebeskind and all 1996; SK Muthusamy, MA White 2005; BN Anand, T Khanna 2000; KM Eisenhardt, JA Martin 2000...)

Knowledge represents an important resource (natural resource, A. Dewulf and all 2005) of the firms which helps developing competitive advantages. Nevertheless, the acquisition of knowledge requires complex and ambiguous processes.

Capgemini managed to deal with these difficulties by elaborating a strategy called: the "collaborative business experience". A fruitful strategy which enabled it to acquire competitive advantages but also to get the trust of its partners. Capgemini established an iterative learning process of knowledge with its partners. In this paper, we will describe a theoretical model entitled "the Capgemini interorganizational learning process: a **three-loop model**". It aims to explain the process of interorganizational learning considering the strategic alliances between Capgemini and its partners. More precisely, it is an update of the simple and double loop model (Argyris and Schön, 1978) which considers the individual and organizational routines (Nelson and Winter, 1982) as non exclusive. Indeed, it recommends to take into account a diversity of variables when considering strategic alliances: for instance, opportunism and the complexity of knowledge. This model was validated by a qualitative study that we carried out within this company. Indeed, we questioned 16 Alliance managers using semi-directive interviews. In addition to that, this study enabled us to determine the most representative determinants of interorganizational learning in terms of knowledge.

In this paper, we will expose the results of this qualitative study (realized with the 4th version of Nudist software) in order to answer the following questions: Which are the most representative determinants of knowledge learning considering the Capgemini Strategic alliances: the ambiguity and its antecedents, the absorptive capacity, the nature of knowledge, the organizational routines, in other words, the "administrative heritage", the theories of use and the professed theories, or the opportunism of the partners? How can we consider Strategic alliances: Is there a protagonist who would benefit the most from these strategic alliances? If so, who is it: Capgemini or its partners?

Key words: Knowledge, Interorganizational learning, Capgemini, Strategic alliances.