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Don't Store it, Search for it: How Organizations can Encourage Middle Managers to Search for Distributed Knowledge

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middle managers to search for distributed knowledge**

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Abstract

This qualitative study examined how middle managers, at the micro-level, search for distributed knowledge to resolve non-routine problems, and how the organizational context, at the macro-level, influences the knowledge search effectiveness. We find that middle managers proactively search organization wide knowledge resources, thus highlighting the significance of middle managers in integrating distributed knowledge. Further, our findings show the importance of the organization to provide supporting structures. In particular, we offer evidence that effective knowledge search does not rely on repositories but that organizational design aspects and a strategy for managing knowledge that emphasizes interaction opportunities, informality, and openness can promote the search for distributed knowledge.

Keywords: distributed knowledge, knowledge repositories, organizational learning, middle managers, strategy-as-practice, micro-perspective

This is a working paper. For more information, please contact the first author.