APPLYING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
WITH IT
FOR SRI LANKAN LAW FIRMS

By

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Declaration

This thesis has no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or recognized qualification by an individual or an institute of higher learning to the best of my knowledge and belief. It contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis.

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The above particulars are true and correct to the best of my ability.

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ABSTRACT

In the *Journal of Information Law and Technology*, Professor Gottschalk argued that law firms represent an industry that seems very well suited for knowledge management research [16]. The term Knowledge management in law firms (KM in law firms) can be defined as: The way in which lawyers optimize the relation between knowledge and knowledge processes with the help of Information Technology.

Given the potential for improvement through the use of KM in law firms, I find it quite surprising that the popularity of knowledge management in legal circles stand at a very low level. I believe a contributing factor to this is the dearth of research and publications on Legal Knowledge Management by persons within and outside the legal industry.

Knowledge Management (KM) usually focuses on the level of an organization, while (academic) lawyers are known to be more people-oriented. This difference can be identified as another factor to the lack of interest towards KM in law firms.

The majority of law firms overseas use Information Technology (IT) for Knowledge Management. In some firms, highly sophisticated analytical tools are used to make expert judgments. Moreover, new advance technology, such as, mobile technology is used for KM within law firms. In comparison to these changes, the Legal industry in Sri Lanka is at a ground-level in terms of IT.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the law firm industry in Sri Lanka. The detailed investigation includes the current "IT status" in these firms, for instance, Infrastructure, Software Usage (e.g., End-user tools, Who Knows What systems, What They Know Systems, and How They Think systems), Communications, Backup Policies, Virus Protection as well as the lawyer's IT literacy level. In terms of Knowledge Management the researcher is interested in identifying the knowledge management practices in these firms, for instance, Knowledge sharing attitudes, Knowledge Capture, and Disseminations. In addition to this, the researcher will focus on the possible relationship between Knowledge Sharing Perceptions and Reward attitudes for lawyers as well as the relationship between Knowledge Sharing and Information Technology.

Finally, the researcher will identify the barriers to Knowledge Management and suggest recommendations to improve the use of Knowledge Management perspectives in Sri Lankan Law firms.

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ABBREVIATIONS

KM	Knowledge Management
IT	Information Technology
CEJ	Center for Environment Justice
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ROI	Return on Investment
COI	Cost of Information
NGO	Non Government Organization
ADB	Asian Development Bank
IPEP	Institute of Professional Environmental Practice
KFEM	Korean Federation for Environmental Movement
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CKO	Chief Knowledge Officer
LLP	Limited Liability Partnership
KMT	Knowledge Management Technology
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ELAW	Environment Law