



Knowledge Work and Knowledge-Intensive Firms

Mats Alvesson

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This book addresses the concept of knowledge, and its use in the contexts of work and organizations. It provides a critical understanding of current approaches to knowledge management, organization and the 'knowledge economy'. The author describes a number of cases of 'knowledge intensive firms', including IT firms, management consultancy firms, advertising agencies and life science companies. He emphasizes the ambiguity of knowledge in the input, process, and output of professional work, and suggests that we should be careful in assuming too much about the nature, role, and effects of 'knowledge' in business life. Instead, we should understand the constructed nature of knowledge and scrutinize knowledge claims carefully. Alvesson looks at several aspects of management and working life, including human resource management issues, client control and the regulation of identity. Rhetoric, symbolism, image, the politics of knowledge claims, and identity are all shown to be crucial for understanding the management of 'knowledge intensive firms'. By challenging key assumptions in current thinking about knowledge and organization, a novel theoretical approach is suggested. The book will be of interest to business and management academics concerned with issues of knowledge and organization and will serve as supplementary reading for graduate and final year undergraduate business and management students.

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