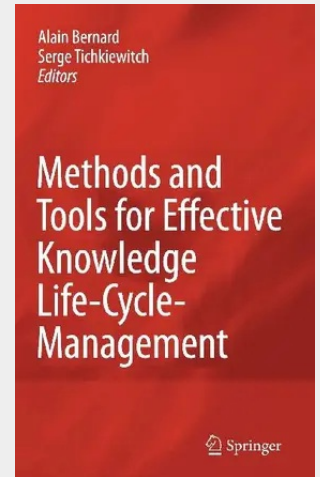


Methods and Tools for Effective Knowledge Life-Cycle-Management

Knowledge Management is a wide, critical and strategic issue for all the companies, from the SMEs to the most complex organizations. The key of competitiveness is knowledge, because of the necessity of reactivity, flexibility, agility and innovation capacities. Knowledge is difficult to measure itself but what is visible, this is the way of improving products, technologies and enterprise organizations. During the last four years, based on the experience of most of the best experts around the World, CIRP (The International Academy for Production Engineering) has decided to prepare and structure a Network of Excellence (NoE) proposal. The European Community accepted to found the VRL-KCiP (Virtual Research Laboratory – Knowledge Community in Production). As its name indicates it, the aim of this NoE was really to build a 'Knowledge Community in Production'. This was possible and realistic because the partners were representative of the most important universities in Europe and also because of strong partnerships with laboratories far from Europe (Japan, Australia, South Africa, USA, etc...). Based on such powerful partnership, the main issue was to help European manufacturing industry to define and structure the strategic knowledge in order to face the strategic worldwide challenges. Manufacturing in Europe currently has two essential aspects: 1. It has to be knowledge intensive given the European demands for high-tech products and services (e.g. electronics, medicines).

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