

Self-assessment questions for session 5

The following are the self-assessment questions for the fifth session of the course. They are for private study and are not part of a formal assessment.

You should attempt to answer all of the questions. There are no right and wrong answers; the objective is to get you to think about the issues rather than to provide a definitive solution.

1 Emerging Organizational Forms and New Ways of Working

Look back at the section on organizational change in session 3 and answer the following questions.

- Why have inter-organizational links become the focus of such interest in recent years when such links have existed as long as organizations have traded with each other?
- Why is there so much interest in finding new ways of working when the classic bureaucratic model of administration has served western business so well for the past 200 years?

2 Innovation and Boundary Crossing

Look at the Siemens case study and answer questions 2, 3 and 5.

What are the differences between this attempt to share knowledge and that of Xerox in session 4?

3 Networked and Virtual organizations

Look at the Pay-Zone case study.

- To what extent could Pay-Zone's distinctive form of "unstructured organization" be adopted by other organizations, such as (for example) their clients?
- To what extent is Pay-Zone dependent on technology and to what extent is it dependent on the interests and personalities of its members?
- Looking at the section on strategic options, would you buy Pay-Zone as a complete package?

4 Compare and Contrast the Case Studies

Why is it so important for Siemens to find a way of quantifying the value produced by knowledge sharing whilst Pay-Zone can operate without any similar mechanism?

Look back at the material we covered in session 4.

- From a strategic viewpoint, how does the focus of the four cases differ and in what ways are they similar?
- In terms of technology and / or techniques, in what ways do the four cases differ and in what ways are they similar?

(Hint, you may find it easier to make a side-by-side list of specific examples and then construct a more general answer to the question)