



Writing Success Story by Effective Knowledge Management

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I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management is all about the blend of technology with managing knowledge and treating it as significant asset for the success of any organisation. Knowledge workers use their heads more than their hands to produce value. They add value through their ideas, their analyses, their judgment and their designs.

“Capacity To Act” is the knowledge. It is both about issues being dealt with. Knowledge can be of two types as: tacit and explicit knowledge.

II. TACIT KNOWLEDGE

1. It is the personal knowledge embedded in individual experience
2. It can be shared and exchanged through direct, fact-to-face contact
3. It is deeply rooted in the individual's action, experience as well as in the ideals, values or emotions he or she embraces.
4. Subjective insights, intuitions, etc., are the examples of tacit knowledge.

III. EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

1. It is the formal knowledge that can be packaged as information.
2. It can be found in the documents of an organization – reports, articles and manuals, patents, pictures, video images, sound, software, etc.
3. It defines the identity, the competences and intellectual assets of an organization independently of its employees.
4. However, the explicit knowledge can grow and sustain only through the growth of tacit knowledge.

IV. EXPLAINING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge management (KM) comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organizational processes or practice. Knowledge management may be defined as a systematic, explicit and deliberate building, renewal and application of knowledge to maximize an enterprise knowledge-related effectiveness and returns from its knowledge assets. In simple words, knowledge management is a systematic and organized attempt to generate knowledge within an organization that can transform its ability to store and use knowledge for improving performance.

V. COMPETITIVE BENEFITS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM)

- Enhance employee retention
- Fostering information
- Streamline operation and reduce cost by eliminating unnecessary operation
- Increased revenues
- Generate new wealth
- Help in change management
- Extend global reach and scope
- Open new markets
- Improved customer service by streaming response time
- Lift productivity and efficiency
- Mitigate risk



- Unleash new ideas and creativity
- Develop and implement new business models
- Enhance team collaboration
- Better forecasting

VI. IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

From the 1990's the knowledge age has emerged age to supersede the information age (between 1960 and 1990). The organizations having rich 'knowledge source' only can able to maintain and enhance their core competence and corporate identity. In this competitive global market, the knowledge management is considered as intangible asset which can provide a substantial competitive advantage.

Since tangible assets such as land, machinery, etc., can be bought/owned by all organization to gain a competitive edge in the market by turning intellectual assets into value through innovation. Knowledge management can be used for creating customer value, operational excellence and product innovation, by which the profit and effectiveness of the organization will increase.

For example, the work of the following functions or departments is essentially knowledge-based:

- A. Customer service
- B. Information system
- C. Finance
- D. HR/Administration
- E. Management
- F. Manufacturing (such as CAM, JIT concepts)

Thus the knowledge management, especially in present scenario, is very important, because

1. It leverages internal and external expertise to build and apply industry- leading skills and
2. It develops and exploits in tangible based assets including brands, technology, and know-how.

VII. “HR MANAGERS TO FACE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN MANAGING THE KNOWLEDGE WORKERS”

Peter Ducker derived the term 'Knowledge Worker' in 1959 and defined a Knowledge Worker as: "Anyone who works for a living at the tasks of developing or using knowledge". A knowledge worker helps the company is gaining a competitive advantage over the others by developing business intelligence, getting knowledge of customer preferences, buying behavior and their expectations, increasing the value of intellectual capital and other variety of knowledge benefits that aid the business of the organization.

Examples of knowledge workers are: core professional like teachers, lawyers, architects, doctors, nurses, engineers, scientists and all such professionals who deal with information technology.

VIII. CHARACTERISTICS OF KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

The foremost characteristic of knowledge workers is that they have 'Good Thinking and Analytical Power'; they have good vision and can make strategies that how the product or the company can perform better. They have the ability to think independently. Along with analytical skills, they are endowed with 'innovative skills and creativity'.

The second characteristic that knowledge workers possess is 'Continuous Learning'. They can learn, unlearn and relearn in tune with the fast-changing environment. They are learning-oriented and focus on organizational learning to ensure operational excellence of organization along with their own growth. The third characteristic is the ability to work with 'Team Spirit'. Knowledge workers believe in collaboration, cooperation, and coordination while working and have a good team spirit. They search, create, share, and use knowledge regularly.

Knowledge workers are 'Calculated Risk Takers', as well as 'Emotional Intelligent' People. They do not fear risks; in fact they make decisions with calculated risk. They seek challenges in work and do not follow instructions blindly. Knowledge workers primarily have the characteristic of Emotional Intelligence. It is the capacity of understanding our own feelings as well as those of others.

Knowledge workers are 'Action-Oriented Professionals'. They are willing to embrace professional discipline, have patience and determination. They are highly qualified professionals with a high a level of education. Knowledge workers may either have expertise on specific skills or to multidimensional skills.

The main challenge that comes in the way is that it is an Expensive Affair. Expenditure includes money invested in HR (recruitment, training, compensation, benefits, etc) as well as in infrastructure. In order to utilize knowledge workers more efficiently, organizations need to have 'sound infrastructure and hi-tech information technology'.



The second important challenge is 'Sharing of Knowing' effectively between multiple knowledge workers and knowledge teams who are involved in various projects concurrently and independently.

APPROPRIATE SELECTION

Companies should focus on recruiting bright, knowledge seeking individuals. While selecting the individuals proper focus should be given to the candidate's qualifications, job-oriented competencies and previous work experience in the related work field. For Example: '3M' recruits creative people who have broad range of interest and are willing to learn. Similarly WIPRO

RETENTION STRATEGY

Companies should plan proper retention strategies. They should hire the best and fittest employees according to the need and culture; give them promotion, appreciation, incentives, rewards and appraisals whenever required. For example in the 1990s, in order to prevent attrition of employees due to "Poaching" many IT companies like TCS, Infosys and Wipro, etc., strengthened their retention strategies.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

HR managers should reinforce knowledge-sharing among employees through measures like group discussions, brainstorming, seminars, workshop, guest lectures, etc. Extensive knowledge of business proactive should be imparted along with the capability to translate technical information at the employee level. The benefits of knowledge sharing should also be elucidated to employees.

For Instances, "TOYOTA COMPANY " has intertwined people-based knowledge-sharing culture. The company believes in four key principles: Challenges, Kaizen, respect and teamwork. INFOSYS has well-developed software's and knowledge repositories of creating and sharing knowledge.

EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

The employees should be given the power to take decisions independently. They should be provided sufficient autonomy and flexibility in order to execute their work efficiently and achieve the desired level of performance.

OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES

Managers should provide opportunities for knowledge workers to brain storm ideas, exchange knowledge, and formulated new ways of doing business. Employees should view challenges in terms of opportunities, rather than merely focusing on problems. They should work on generating tomorrow's business instead of focusing on yesterday's problems.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

The organizations should give due significance to quality of work life, i.e., welfare provisions (ESI schemes, club membership, etc), fringe benefits (canteen, house rent, interest, free loans, etc), and harmonious environment. Provision for work-life balance, stress management, flextime, etc., should be adopted by organizations to improve the productivity of employees.

MOTIVATION AND RECOGNITION

Employees should be motivated not only by monetary rewards but also by appreciation and encouragement form time to time. This would help in maintaining work motivation in employees.

COUNSELING AND MENTORING

Managers of knowledge workers should act as facilitators in directing them towards their goals. Managers should play the role of a counselor and mentor, in order to motivate employees and remove obstacles in their path of achievement.

SOUND IT INFRASTRUCTURE

Managers should provide sound IT infrastructure to employees so that they can unitize their knowledge competence to the fullest. The organization should have sophisticated and user-friendly software systems that would help in documentation and streamlining of data and processes. For instance, companies, like Infosys and Tata Steel have knowledge repositories and hi-tech software's for knowledge sharing.

TRAINING

Knowledge workers should be trained regularly in order to sharpen their competencies and capabilities. Training provides a platform for learning and generates the scope of continuous improvement.

MAINTAINING TEAM SPIRIT

Managers should focus on maintaining coordination, collaboration and concurrent activities among knowledge workers. Generating team spirit in workers should be given the highest priority.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

A requisite for implementing knowledge-oriented concept in organization is that the top management should be involved to the fullest. The top management should lead the process and encompass it at all the levels in order to spread knowledge culture in the organization. Effective leaders are defined as people who come up with new ideas, and articulate a vision that inspires others to act. This work should be headed by a top managerial committee.



For instance, training program initiated by "Wipro" called "Winds of Change" aims at improving leadership skills and implementing knowledge management. Wipro created five different training programs like: Entry Level Program (ELP), New Leader's Program (NLP), Wipro leader's Program (WLP), Business Leader's Program (BLP) and Strategic Leader's Program (SLP).

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Along with implementing effective leaders, effective leadership style should also be used. As knowledge workers cannot merely perform on the basis of instructions, they must be treated with due respect and dignity. All employees should be dealt with tactfully because each one is different from another and may have altogether different needs. So, tailor-made and participatory style of leadership style should also be followed to create win-win situations. All these strategies, if implemented by the HR department, would definitely help the organization to enhance the productivity of knowledge workers, transforming the organization into a huge success.

IX. CONCLUSION

It is tough to manage Knowledge workers as these people are more aware of the latest happenings, have high expectations and are more prone to switch to other organization if not satisfied. So, managing knowledge workers is one of the greatest challenges countered by HR managers. If the HR department follows proper techniques and ways of managing knowledge workers, then the productivity of knowledge workers can be enhanced and the overall efficiency of the organization can be improved.

The top management must be aware of all niceties that one cannot just give instructions to knowledge workers but they must provide maximum opportunities to them so that they can explore their creativity and innovative skills to prove themselves. Organization should foster a congenial environment and focus on creating a learning culture within the organisation in order to get maximum advantage of the Knowledge workers.

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