

# Knowledge dilemma and strategies for knowledge management



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## **Introduction**

Information being exchanged amongst the workers of an organisation is a system that has been an essential constituent of the procedure of knowledge management. With the introduction of the contemporary information and communications technology within corporations, it has become very convenient and has also become a valuable support function to make such exchanges possible by reducing the obstructions of time and distance. On the other hand, those corporations that have invested in technologies of this kind are frequently faced with the complications of inducing the workers to utilise the purpose of those technologies in order to communicate their knowledge and perceptions. The knowledge share/hoard predicament is a socio-psychological behaviour aspect that describes that employees feel the need to not share information or organisational knowledge that they possess because it may eventually harm their own status within the organisation or by sharing knowledge may therefore provide a competitive advantage to their colleagues, over them. This has been elucidated further in Sabrautzki 2010 that since organisational knowledge is a collective resource employees may make use of it without actually contributing towards developing or increasing it. However, sharing or hoarding knowledge does have their own results which may be in a positive or a negative manner. Individuals usually hoard knowledge when they feel that sharing that knowledge would eventually result in a decrease of their power or status within the corporation because of the very fact that they have shared their distinctive wisdom with the rest of the workforce.

While assessing the various forms of beneficial public problems, there have been certain suggestions of particular interventions that may be implemented by corporations in order to facilitate the organization to promote the required social dynamics which would eventually boost the all-encompassing concept of sharing knowledge and information within the corporation and its employees. Such interventions may assume various forms such as interventions that lead to restructuring or even increasing the recompenses for making a contribution towards increasing organisational knowledge or interventions that aim for augmenting effectiveness within the employees by means of sharing knowledge. Various substantial corporations have started to or have taken into consideration the aspect of implementing an organisation-specific and effective knowledge management system which would help the organisation and its employees share knowledge with efficacy.

Most of such corporations aim at engaging in particular knowledge management initiatives because of the objective of attaining a competitive advantage over rival firms, enhancing marketing efficiency, intensifying focus on the consumer as well as increasing modernization within their product lines, as described further in Paton & McCalman, 2008 that for a corporation, to develop a 'learning' mindset amongst its employees, it is necessary to develop an attitude that works on the information 'pull' element rather than a culture that encourages the information 'push' attitude. A very significant element of the information pull culture has been the fact that it concentrates mainly on the softer aspects of management, therefore many corporations are often not very successful with the

information 'pull' attitude and as a result are not able to accomplish the complete benefits of a bottom-up knowledge delivery structure.

Knowledge management consists of such executive practices carried out by a corporation for the purpose of generating, collecting, distributing and making use of organizational knowledge. There has been an increasing certainty amongst corporate leaders, experts and researchers that sharing knowledge within the organisation would be an important strategic resource. This is because organisational knowledge is regarded as a nonmaterial asset that is distinctive, reliant on direction, causally indefinite and is also difficult to replicate or replace in any way, therefore such attributes cause knowledge to be a possible reason for competitive advantage for an employee, hence the reason why hoarding it becomes a possible course of action for most employees, as subsequently the person in possession of it becomes a plausible target for attention from company management.

#### Impact upon Knowledge Exchange and Trust within the Workplace

The knowledge hoarding dilemma has made organisations move towards more effective alternatives which would assist the corporation in managing its knowledge in a better way. The current advancements in information and telecommunications technology have greatly assisted organisations in successfully sharing organisational knowledge among the employees. With the development and extensive implementation of global networking and telecommunication procedure, the usage of the intranet knowledge portals within organisations have made it achievable as well as cost-effectively practicable to share knowledge in order to integrate workforce, specifically

within substantial and extensively disseminated corporations and also permitting such organisations to easily exchange records and reports and practically any form of multimedia records from one location to another. In Schwartz 2006 it has been explained further that within an organisation, the socio-technical attitude regards sharing of knowledge to be a completely organised procedure that requires support from top-down involvement from the management as well as bottom-up employee and expert interventions.

This sharing and exchange of information amongst the workforce encompasses an important constituent that is essential for the formation and management of combined knowledge and subsequently causes the availability of such implements that sustain such exchanges, while this in turn also immensely makes possible the execution of effective knowledge management systems within a corporation. On the other hand, various corporations frequently experience several issues within their operations and functionalities that ultimately put at risk the probable benefits of investing in modern automated systems for organisational knowledge management. Such as the element that workers may hoard the information that they possess from their fellow workers simply because of their inadequate awareness of the advantages sharing knowledge with other workers. Goodman 2007 describes this aspect further that when various groups within an organisation operate collectively, as a result they naturally develop a culture that encourages the sharing of knowledge, whereas global and interconnected groups function jointly in order to accomplish shared targets, thereby driving group effort amongst the assorted departments of sizeable corporations.

Employees might also face other difficulties because of problems with being able to incorporate such activities in the course of their daily work owing to lack of time or the lack of abilities or the expertise to use information systems that support knowledge management. Whereas certain workers may perhaps not be able to understand the personal gain that they would obtain from exchanging organisational knowledge partially because of the fact that they receive inadequate encouragement from the management of the corporation for utilising new initiatives to the company's existing operational set up.

Knowledge symbolises a source of supremacy and dominance for most employees in a corporation. It is this knowledge that is exchanged or shared amongst consumers and suppliers with reciprocation, good reputation and selflessness that in turn also operate as mechanisms of compensation. Trust, on the other hand, is a necessary requirement for trouble-free execution of such activities within the market. This conviction therefore exists on an individual stage and is possible by means of strong corporate working associations that may exist among co-workers, within work groups and even within various organizational levels. However various employees believe that by sharing significant organisational knowledge with the other co-workers, he or she becomes exposed to the hazard of decreasing one's worthiness within the corporation thereby raising the probability that he or she is not indispensable requisite for the organisation any longer.

In Torrey & Datta 2002 it has been described that trust among employees comes when knowledge is understood and accepted through inner and outer cultural filters as well as by managing situational problems through via <https://assignbuster.com/knowledge-dilemma-and-strategies-for-knowledge-management/>

socially acceptable behaviour. When a corporation focuses on understanding the management of knowledge across various cultures, then this practice would in turn assist knowledge sharing as well as originality and creativity, thereby evening out the course that leads to further learning and knowledge exchanges taking places across cultural limitations. As a result differences in social culture are what an organisation must focus on when dealing with and achieving effective knowledge sharing and exchange.

Furthermore employees also feel that it is most essential for them to be known as a specialist or an expert within their organisation, hence their reluctance to share knowledge with other co-workers. They believe that if a worker does not have the repute for proficiency then that knowledge or expertise would not be able to symbolise their power or dominance over their colleagues. When employees hesitate in sharing their knowledge it might also be because of the uncertainty that other co-workers may accept acknowledgment for the source of that information, and consequently assert acclaim for it. Such attitudes that cause hoarding of knowledge will eventually be detrimental for an organisation because not releasing important organisational knowledge might hinder the operational procedures of a corporation. Hislop 2009 states that the element of trust is the actual reason why employees hesitate to share information with their peers. Even when an individual does actually trust another and shares knowledge, the aspect of uncertainty still remains as to where and how would that information be used by that person.

When organisational knowledge becomes the only means of attaining a competitive advantage over other employees, then hoarding knowledge

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becomes prevalent within that corporation, ultimately also increasing the level of mistrust and feelings of jealousy and envy amongst employees. Organisational culture and ethics might also be compromised and would also cause a negative environment to develop within the workplace. However, it is essential for organisations and their employees to understand that sharing information with a colleague will most likely result in receiving beneficial knowledge in return, while it might even result in increasing one's own knowledge as well. Thus by the establishment of an educational framework within an organisation that promotes as well as remunerates the practice of knowledge sharing and prevents and reprimands the practice of hoarding important organisational knowledge for individual gain or gratification, would consequently ensure that the organisation has been successful in carrying out its knowledge management practices. Stegmeier 2008, pg. 59, has explained this in the following words that various corporations enhance and develop advanced knowledge management systems that assist in classifying data according to competitive pricing analyses, market researches as well as according to technical information. The main purpose of conducting such tasks is to accumulate and store for easy accessibility, quick retrieval and to manage the intelligence of the corporation for its subsequent benefit.

It is essential for an organisation to create a corporate philosophy that attaches importance to innovation and vision, incessant improvement as well as interaction and communication of thoughts and wisdom, as it is the presence of such organisational culture which would ensure that the knowledge management initiatives being employed do become successful in the end. When a corporation wants to manage its knowledge assets in an



effectual manner it must also possess a workforce that is enthused enough to delve into new market prospects, is able to adapt to and implement new operational processes and new products as well as are keen on employing new methods to their work systems and operational structures. de Man & de Man 2008 has described this further by saying that with the presence of trust amongst staff members diminishes the propensity of protecting and hoarding knowledge because this then provides the assurance that the other employee will not try to exploit the ingenuousness. Therefore, corporations must adopt procedures that consist of reciprocal faith; companionship and respect which would therefore decrease protection of knowledge.

## Conclusion

Organisations must also establish such work structures that are variable enough to allow ground-breaking and inventive modifications within corporate procedures, occupational descriptions that permit workers a rational degree of working independence, while they must also establish corporate procedures that make it possible for knowledge and information to be shared among employees in a timely and effective manner. Not only will such procedures ensure effective knowledge management, it will also eliminate any form of distrust amongst employees, in fact employees will also learn to rely on their co-workers and managers for receiving and sharing knowledge without the fear of not receiving credit for the knowledge being shared. Thus sharing and exchange of ideas within a corporation is one of the most essential procedures through which an organisation is able to achieve the practice of collecting knowledge without which an organisation

would not be able to attain core knowledge that in turn formulates its core competencies.