

# Knowledge management

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..... Knowledge Management Knowledge management, which is relatively a young academic discipline with well established theoretical underpinning, has been in practice by various firms in Singapore and other countries for several years. This paper examines KM practices of Bumrungrad Hospital PLC and explains how various theories can be applied to the company practices.

Bumrungrad Hospital as an example for Organizational Learning

Boxall and Macky (2009, p. 10) described that knowledge management helps business firms achieve high performance working because it not only a functional management strategy but also bring organizational development programs. Since KM concentrates on improving people's skills, knowledge, experience, wisdom and overall personal as well as professional quality, they are prompted to work better and thus helps the organization achieve high performance.

As Noe (2002, p. 168) defined, Knowledge Management focuses on creating knowledge and sharing or exchanging it for further use in the organization for its overall purposes. It is thus a management process that can enhance business performance by designing, implementing and strategically aligning various tools, processes, systems and cultures with a view to improve people's knowledge. Its theoretical foundation is that knowledge is power, people are most powerful assets in the firm and therefore improving people's knowledge is the best strategy to enhance greater productivity in the firm. Bumrungrad, as the word itself denotes ' care for community' has grown to be an internationally renowned hospital with more than 30 years in service.

It has also become an illuminating example for better model for knowledge management practices. As its Annual Report (2011, p. 17) reported, a training program conducted by Spine Institute in cooperation with Anna Hospital in Germany for doctors from Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, India and other countries. This training not only helped doctors learn something new, but also shared their views, opinions and experiences in relation to full-endoscopic spine surgery among the doctors and other members of the training.

An effective way the Hospital has implemented for KM practice was IDP (Individual Development Program) that comprises of continuous education, regular training programs and other knowledge sharing functions. It holds Town Hall Meeting wherein employees get opportunities to raise their voices and views and thus to exchange knowledge among its people. As Bumrungrad's Annual report (2011, p. 90) revealed, the company believes that work efficiency is the result of loyalty its employees hold and this can be achieved through continuous programs and strategic activities to enhance people's knowledge by 'knowledge share' among its people.

Knowledge exchange practiced by Bumrungrad Hospital through meeting and training programs enhance tacit-to-tacit knowledge exchange. Nonaka and Takeuchi (2007) described that organizational learning is how an organization creates newer knowledge, disseminates and embodies it for organizational purposes. As they explained, the knowledge exchange program may take any of the four forms; they are 1) tacit to tacit exchange, known as socialization, 2) tacit to explicit, known as externalization, 3) explicit to tacit, known as internalization and 4) explicit to explicit, that is

combination (Magalhaes, 2004, p. 79). Tacit knowledge refers to the knowledge that exists in people's mind whereas explicit knowledge exists in papers, documents and databases. Socialization is perhaps the most effective knowledge share that can help a firm achieve its goals and targets from enhanced productivity and performance.

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