

Knowledge Management – Knowledge Sharing
Student: Reginald Fraser Email: fraserr@nyack.edu
Program: Bachelors in Organizational Management

Nyack College

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In my experience in the workforce, I have seen both spectrums of knowledge sharing, an atmosphere of sharing information as well as one where information is hoarded. Thankfully it is more shared than hoarded. I find myself taking personal responsibility for divulging as much information as possible because I know the value in ensuring everyone is informed. I have also found that a lot of the people who tend to share knowledge are often those with more agreeable and conscientious personalities. Hislop point this out where he says that “personality variables of agreeableness and conscientiousness were positively linked to knowledge-sharing activities. (Hislop, 2018).

There are so many benefits in taking this approach. These include:

1. Efficiency of the team which has lots of benefits:
 - a. The more people are equipped with the necessary knowledge to get their jobs done. The more they feel empowered to do their job.
 - b. There is less reliance on others to leave their work to overlook or direct the process - more fairness in how the work is divided. This means workers could all take leave and not have to worry about their jobs not being covered or things falling apart because they are not there.
 - c. Work gets done faster because more people know the process.
2. Teamwork which is beneficial to organizations in many ways:

- a. Team-spiritedness often is associated with a positive working environment
- b. Competition among workers is reduced and the atmosphere takes on one that is more collaborative.
- c. Diversity of knowledge - where everyone is able to bring their knowledge to the table often leads to quicker and better solutions.

I have worked with some organizations where the atmosphere was more competitive among the workforce. People were not quick to share information and it seems almost like a “fight for self” mentality where everyone was competing for recognition and promotion. While it is important to be recognized for your valuable contribution to the workforce - team, being in such an atmosphere is difficult. I have seen people steal other people’s ideas to get ahead. I have seen backstabbing and so many negative things that are done in the name of moving up. This does not resonate with my convictions and is certainly unnecessary.

In my position as a leader, I always encourage knowledge sharing and support those who demonstrate that behavior. I believe a team is as strong as its weakest link so if someone is not equipped to be their best, the entire team suffers. I also feel it is counterproductive to have people consistently re-work the wheel when that information is already available.

I believe knowledge sharing and teamwork for starts with leadership and trickles down to department heads. If employees feel that they need to hoard information to move up, then they will do it. If there are no rewards and recognition for people who encourage knowledge sharing and teamwork, then the ‘dog eat dog’ behavior is reinforced. It therefore means that a lot of the knowledge sharing responsibility and teamwork falls on the shoulders of managers. This in turns positively impacts organizations where an atmosphere of trust, creativity and empowerment become evident. According to Ensign and Hebert, knowledge sharing is heavily influenced by proximity and organizational ties, which means knowledge workers become more creative when they work closely together. (Ensign and Hebert, 2010).

Therefore, a great way to encourage knowledge sharing is for management to help organize and support it. When employees are sent on training or acquire knowledge, there should be a weekly, biweekly or monthly knowledge transfer session. Ensign and Hebert further explained that research on the topic of knowledge sharing among colleagues supports the idea of rotation of knowledge workers across subgroups or intracompany (Ensign and Hebert, 2010). This is an excellent way to ensure knowledge is transferred.

References:

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