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## **TRANSFER ZNALOSTÍ A JEHO OVPLYVNĚOVANIE MOTIVÁCIOU A OSOBNOSTNÝMI ZVLÁŠTNOSTAMI ZAMESTNANCOV**

### **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND ITS INFLUENCE BY MOTIVATION AND PERSONALITY SPECIFICS OF EMPLOYEES**

#### *Abstract*

**Knowledge is an essential factor in ensuring the success and competitiveness of companies, who need to constantly create and share. Transfer of knowledge in the enterprise is a complex system composed of not only the participants themselves - the staff, and the technical means to create synergy with its business system knowledge. Activities in the transfer of knowledge is influenced not only assisting factors - activators, as well as factors that hinder the implementation of the process in the construction of knowledge management in the company. Personality specifics as a cultural differences are a form of barriers to knowledge transfer, as their essence lies in each individual participating in the organizational learning process itself, which is an essential element of the aforementioned transfer of knowledge.**

#### **1 Introduction**

Knowledge flow is a main critical factor in an organization's success. Knowledge involves a person using his or her perception, skills and experience to process information – thus converting it into knowledge in the mind of the individual. Information thus has little worth in itself until it becomes knowledge as a result of processing by the human mind. The process begins with data being organized to prepare general information. The next step involves this general information being sorted and structured to produce contextual information that meets the requirements of a specific group of users, such as a project teams. Individuals then absorb the contextual information and transform it into knowledge on the basis of the individual's experiences, attitudes and the context in which they work. (Ajmal, Koskinen, 2008), (Plchová, 2011)

Knowledge represents a key organizational asset. For many activities, such as product development and diffusing best practices across the organization, expertise must be transferred and shared among units. Companies that are more effective at knowledge transfer have been shown to have a greater likelihood of organizational survival and higher levels of productivity. Even though a growing understanding of the importance of knowledge transfer, the sharing of information within organizations remains a challenge. (Burgess, 2005)

Organizational Knowledge Transfer is defined as a process in which is one organizational unit influenced and affected by another organizational unit. In this condition, knowledge transfer can be also defined as „how knowledge acquired in one situation applies of fails to apply to another. Knowledge transfer represents transfer not only in individual level, but the problem of knowledge transfer transcends the individual level to include transfer at higher levels, such as the group, department or division. Knowledge transfer represents itself through. Thus knowledge transfer can be measured by measuring changes in knowledge or changes in performance. (Argote, Ingram, 2000)

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Knowledge transfer can facilitate the learning of new tasks by re-using information and knowledge from similar previously learned tasks. In the individual transfer learning scenarios commonly explored in the transfer learning literature, the previously learned tasks are known as the source tasks, and the new task is known as the target task. (Eaton, Lane, 2011)

The term “motivation” is generally understood to refer to individual motives that are designed to benefit the self. Social and personality psychologists have tended to adopt a broader definition that encompasses other sources of motivation, such as the motivation to benefit one’s group or the members of the one’s social network. The idea of using knowledge as a means of enhancing one’s organizational influence and reputation is consistent with a strategic contingency view of power that argues that organizational members who maintain control over valued resources and are able to reduce uncertainty will enjoy more power. (Burgess, 2005)

Knowledge transfer in the organizational context has been widely investigated in about half a century. This research field was commonly labeled by the terms like “technology diffusion” and “diffusion of innovations”. With the increasing interests on knowledge management, the focus of diffusion researches in the business and management circles has been gradually moved to “knowledge” and “knowledge diffusion” or “knowledge transfer” has become an active sub-field of knowledge management since “knowledge transfer capabilities play a significant role in an organization’s knowledge acquisition process”. (Xuan, 2011)

Companies are being restructured by introducing market elements such as profit centers, divisional units or holdings. The idea is to exploit the advantages of the price mechanism by making the exchanges between the actors or departments more explicit and by rewarding employees according to their contribution to the company’s profit. This strategy corresponds to a view of firms as the governance structure “of last resort, to be employed when all else fails”. A further important distinction has been drawn between tacit and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be coded in writing or symbols, but only a small part of our knowledge is explicit, “we can know more than we can tell”. Knowledge barriers can be described as a “lack of knowledge” about a new technology and how it should be used in organizations. Knowledge barriers are regarded as a lack of knowledge, which leaves a person beyond all hope of grasping the content of the subject that is being discussed. The lack of a frame of reference from memories and experiences makes the topic impossible to understand or to connect to previous knowledge. (Osterloh, Frey, 2000)

Theoretics recognizes the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, no significant body of empirical research has evaluated the effect of the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors on employee knowledge transfer behaviors. Following the knowledge based view of the firm extrinsic and intrinsic motivation represents determinants of the employee’s knowledge transfer. Most individuals desire more from their jobs than simple extrinsic compensation. (Cruz, Pérez, Cantero, 2009)

## **2 Employee motivation and its influence on knowledge transfer**

Organizations learn indirectly from the experience of other units as well as directly from their own experience. Learning indirectly from the experience of others is also referred to knowledge transfer. A current theme in research on knowledge transfer is identifying

factors, which facilitate or inhibit knowledge transfer and explain the variation observed in the extent of transfer. These factors include characteristics of the knowledge such as its ambiguity, absorptive capacity, expertise, similarity or location and characteristic of the relationships among the units – for example the quality of their relationship. Knowledge transfer also emphasizes cognitive and social factors, more recent works with emotional and motivational factors as predictors of knowledge transfer. Organizations including for-profit firms, need to balance transferring knowledge internally with keeping the knowledge in a form that is hard for other organizations to imitate. (Argote, Miron-Spektor, 2011)

Knowledge transfer within an organization enables employees to work together efficiently, and is essential to efficient management. Thus, managers are motivated to maximize knowledge transfer among their employee not only to generate extrinsic motivation results, such as high quality of personal and professional life, but also to develop intrinsically held ideals, such as a strong commitment to the organization that allows them to visualize their professional development with greater autonomy inside a pleasant work environment and in line with their ethical and moral values. Managers should encourage their employees to transfer knowledge as a means to enhance their organizations' efficiency. One person's primary motivation for sharing information might be to accrue recognition and rewards, whereas another person might be primarily motivated by a desire to help his or her colleagues. Importantly, motivating individual behavior change has been shown to be more successful to the extent that the intervention targets the underlying functions that these behaviors serve. Persuasive appeals to motivate people to volunteer were found to be most effective when they were designed to target the primary function that volunteering served for the particular individual. (Burgess, 2005)

Intrinsic motivation is not necessarily controllable by the organization. Feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless they are accompanied by a sense of autonomy, thus people must not only experience perceived competence, knowledge transfer workers must also experience their behavior to be self-determined if intrinsic motivation is to be maintained or enhanced. These strong connections to factors beyond extrinsic rewards show the considerable influence that intrinsic motivation exerts over knowledge transfer, thus improving individuals propensity to share their knowledge with other organizational members and facilitating learning processes, which are vital issues at a time when the ability to learn more and learn faster than one's competitors is often an organization's only sustainable competitive advantage. Intrinsic motivation is, therefore, a powerful tool to overcome barriers that hinder knowledge transfer among employees. (Cruz, Pérez, Cantero, 2009)

This distinction between the two types of knowledge is important because of the transferability and appropriability of explicit knowledge, as opposed to tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is acquired by and stored within individuals and cannot be transferred or traded as a separate entity. Explicit knowledge has the character of a public good with the exception of patents or copyrights. Tacit knowledge is a crucial source of sustainable competitive advantage because it is difficult for competitors to imitate it. The contribution of a particular employee's tacit knowledge to a team output cannot be measured and paid accordingly. (Osterloh, Frey, 2000)

The transfer of technology, innovations and know-how has traditionally been seen as a very important predictor of foreign direct investment in international business theory. Knowledge as the skills, routines and information are considered as that relate to specific applications of industrial production. Organizations attempt to close the gap between what is

known and what is put to use thru the transfer of knowledge. Using the concept of knowledge flow it is difficult to decouple the engagement and effort involved in knowledge transfer processes from the outcome. Transfer effectiveness refers to the extent to which knowledge is actually adopted and used in the recipient unit. Knowledge must not only be subject to transfer efforts, but also must be incorporated into the operations of the recipient unit for the transfer to be considered successful. Efficiency and effectiveness to be distinct performance dimensions related to the overall transfer process and not to any specific phase of it, each of the two elements is influenced separately by underlying factors. (Ciabuschi, Martín, Ståhl, 2010)

The growing complexity of project work means that an increasing number of technical and social relationships/interfaces must be taken into account by project managers in adapting knowledge and experiences from the daily work of a company and from earlier projects. Project team members frequently need to learn things that are already known in other contexts; in effect, they need to acquire and assimilate knowledge that resides in organizational memory. Their effectiveness in doing this determines their personal effectiveness, the project's effectiveness and ultimately the company's effectiveness. (Ajmal, Koskinen, 2008)

Company may significantly improve its knowledge and innovative capabilities by leveraging the skills of others through the transfer of knowledge both within and across firms. Knowledge transfer is a complex phenomenon and in practice, successful transfer is often not easy to achieve. Knowledge transfer involves moving elements of knowledge from one party to another. The boundary that separates the parties often plays an important role as it can be a barrier or a facilitator to the transfer. Knowledge transfer across national boundaries, whether intra- or inter-organizational, can be even more complicated, because it involves different cultures which influence how people process, interpret and make use of knowledge. (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, Tsang, 2008)

Knowledge hiding was defined as an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another person. Also might be motivated by a number of different reasons, e.g. pro-social, instrumental, laziness, etc., whereas a lack of knowledge sharing is likely only driven by an absence of the knowledge itself. An employee may receive a request for knowledge and choose to share it. However, it is possible that individual is not in possession of the knowledge to share. This person is not intentionally attempting to hide this knowledge, rather is individual simply unable to engage in the sharing behavior. That is, knowledge hiding does not include cases where an employee fails to share knowledge by mistake, accident or ignorance. In contrast, if individual receives a request for knowledge and engages in a behavior designed to conceal the knowledge – pretending individual does not have this knowledge. (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, Trougakos, 2011)

### **2.1 *Learning in organization***

Organization learning is defined in different ways. The core of most definition is that organizational learning is a change in the organization that occurs as the organization acquires experience. Also can be described as a change in the organization's knowledge that occurs as a function of experience. Knowledge can represent itself in changes in cognitions or behavior and include both explicit and tacit or difficult – to – articulate components. The knowledge could be embedded in a variety of repositories including individuals, routines and transitive memory systems. Knowledge represents a challenging concept to define and measure,

especially at the organizational level of analysis. Organizational knowledge can be measured by measuring of cognitions of organizational members. Approaches to assessing knowledge by measuring changes in practices or performance have the advantage of capturing tacit as well as explicit knowledge. Current approaches to measuring knowledge by assessing changes in cognitions through questionnaires and verbal protocols are not able to capture tacit or difficult – to – articulate knowledge. Knowledge acquired by learning is embedded in the organization's context and thereby changes the context. Knowledge can be embedded in the active context of members, tools and tasks and their networks. Also can be embedded in aspects of the organization's latent context such as its culture. Knowledge acquired through learning is embedded in the context and affects future learning. Organization's knowledge is contained in its products or services, which flow out of the organization. Knowledge can be easily characterized in many dimensions. Knowledge may vary from explicit knowledge, which can be articulated to tacit knowledge, which is difficult to explain and articulate. Organizational experience is beginning of learning. The most important theme in organizational learning is characterizing experience at a fine-grained level along various dimensions. Experience can include successful or unsuccessful units of task performance. (Argote, Miron-Spektor, 2011)

### **2.2 Motivation of employees**

Time is a rare resource in organizations, extrinsic rewards signal to employees that time spent sharing knowledge is deemed important by the organization. Practitioners and researchers have identified nontrivial extrinsic rewards for knowledge sharing as an important motivator. A number of interpersonal transactions in organizations are motivated by impression management concerns or the desire to influence the image others have of one-self. The idea of using knowledge as a means of enhancing one's organizational influence and reputation is consistent with a strategic contingency view of power that argues that organizational members who maintain control over valued resources and are able to reduce uncertainty will enjoy more power. Managing the dissemination of knowledge therefore can help individuals gain influence in the organization. Also it is likely to result in strategies in which information is shared selectively and strategically rather than freely, and where a great deal of effort is put into seeking information, in order to acquire this important resource. Workplace relationships have been shown to be an important conduit for information sharing. Knowledge sharing has been shown to be more likely among employees with strong social networks, leading student to recommend that firms provide opportunities for employees to create social relationships in order to enhance knowledge transfer. In exchange relationships, benefits are given within the norm of reciprocity, in which the expectation is that the recipient will pay benefits back to the giver. In contrast, in communal relationships, benefits are given based on other's need, without the expectation of reciprocation. (Burgess, 2005)

The strategy of utilizing a Knowledge Management System to capture and distribute knowledge requires that individuals contribute their knowledge to a system instead of keeping it to themselves or sharing it directly with known others only through conversations or written personal exchanges. Knowledge of firm is the result of years of organizational activity in which the knowledge of individuals is combined into a collective whole. The company imposed strict demands by monitoring employees by observing them closely, and by routinely checking up on them. Management instituted mandatory meetings, deadlines and extra work to ensure that the employees were working in the best interest of the company. Some organizations utilize a very different means of motivating their knowledge workers. The managers of knowledge workers should institute team-based management styles if they wish

to get the most out of their employees. Social exchange theory posits that people contribute to others commensurate with the contributions that they perceive are being made by others to them. This theory views the contributions that individuals make to an organization as element of reciprocal arrangements. Reciprocal arrangements occur when an individual performs some type of action for another individual, group or organization. The action is performed without a specific economic contract that ensures that the action will be repaid. The individuals who perform the action does so because they generally believes that the action will be reciprocated at some future time, though the exact time and nature of the reciprocal act is unknown and unimportant. Unlike an economic exchange relationship, in the social exchange relationship the potential result of any behavior is based on a trust that the relationship will proceed as in past exchanges. The relationship of mutual exchange can exist between individuals or between an individual and an organization. (King, Marks, 2008)

### **2.3 *Cultural differences of knowledge transfer***

Cultural differences can also lead to learning due to diversity and increased knowledge base. This is especially the case for related international acquisition where differences in beliefs, values and practices are likely to foster learning an innovation. Different beliefs, values and practices are related to the different forms of knowledge that may be useful for the other party. International acquisitions provide access to a potentially valuable repository of knowledge and capabilities embedded in the local environment of the merging organizations. Acquisitions in culturally distant countries are more valuable because a greater cultural distance makes it more likely that the target firm will have capabilities that are significantly different from the acquirer's own set; thus *ceteris paribus* complementarities are more likely to exist. Cultural differences may also create problems for transferring knowledge across units. Knowledge transfer depends on the receiving unit's potential absorptive capacity as has been demonstrated in the strong positive relationship found between absorptive capacity and knowledge transfer. Potential absorptive capacity consist of both motivation and ability on the part of the receiving organization to acquire an assimilate capabilities. Both organizational and national cultural differences will have a bearing on the success of the knowledge transfer. Differences in organizational culture between the acquiring and the acquired firms are less positively associated with knowledge transfer than are differences in national culture. The greater organizational cultural differences, the more difficulties people in the receiving unit may have in evaluating the potential advantages stemming from the adoption of certain practices from the other organization. Incompatibilities in the beliefs, values and norms may turn out to be significant impediment to successful knowledge transfer. (Vaara, Sarala, Stahl, Björkman, 2010)

### **3 Conclusion**

Knowledge Transfer as a one of the most important Knowledge Cycle activities, can be considered for the one of most important parts of Knowledge Management. It is necessary to focus on whole Knowledge Management System process, because individual parts such as Knowledge Creation, Sharing, Using, and Transfer are unable to exist individually. These activities create one functional system, which leads to improve some company's properties. Motivation of employees helps to improve all of Knowledge Management System parts. Individual access of knowledge employees can influence creating and improving of Knowledge Management System in company. Employees - people represents rare source of power, which can effectively create another rare component of company – knowledge. It is supported by suitable motivational factors influencing on knowledge workers for achieving

satisfactory results in Knowledge Transfer – the core of Knowledge Transfer is based on interpersonal communication, relationships between employees, corporate culture and cultural differences. Contribution of these factors and technical means – informational and communication technologies can be reached good results in practice of Knowledge Transfer activities, what leads to improve enterprise's goals and results.

### Acknowledgement

*This publication has been prepared as a partial output in the research project: Project ref. no.: 1/0055/13, VEGA No. 13 Commission for Economic and Legal Sciences - project title: Systemization impact factors and conditions of knowledge management in the context of business strategy on work motivation and its reflection in growth of efficiency, respectively sustainable levels of business.*

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