

Knowledge Management; The Password for Positive Change

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1. Introduction

Knowledge is a much sought after word in today's world, rather it has always been. For centuries, the philosophers, the scientists, the psychologists, the academicians have all been searching the real meaning of knowledge. We would say, their quest was for a path.. a road map that would lead the awareness, the intellect, the information , the facts into a complete re-acquiring and re-discovering of what is known, which would not just be beneficial to self, but to the entire community. Knowledge was not to be left bounded into books and in great minds. It was... it is for everyone to understand and reuse it to the best of his intellect. Knowledge as defined by dictionaries is a fact or state of knowing with the perception of fact or truth having clear and certain mental apprehension. It is awareness of fact and circumstances.

Management—a process of dealing with or controlling things is management. It is a process of reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other organizational resources with the best of the abilities. Some people have even have defined management as a trickery, a deceit to achieve the goals and objectives determined by an organization.

Hence, now if we have to club these two words together and give it a fair definition, it would turn up as fresh new practice with lots of historical data for reference.

Knowledge x Management=Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management can be defined as “A road map, awareness, a researching technique with facts and detailed analysis of situation utilizing the resources available to the optimal for achieving the organizational goals and objectives”

Knowledge management is a practice which is happening in many organizations. Some think it as a major contributor in the achievements and there are many for whom

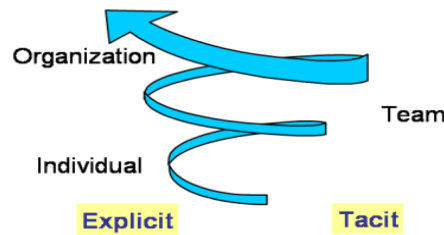
this practice is more of an expenditure, perhaps still a taboo. Knowledge Management (KM), is not expenditure rather if utilized properly and in the right manner this process, this practice can curtail many unnecessary expenditure of an organization thereby giving it a process which is completely loss proof.

A noteworthy KM works with the systematic synergy of **Tacit knowledge** (people are not often aware of the knowledge they possess or how it can be valuable to others) and **Explicit Knowledge** (documented, read and acquired knowledge).

Effective transfer of tacit knowledge generally requires extensive personal contact, regular interaction and trust. This kind of knowledge can only be revealed through practice in a particular context and when this knowledge works in a synchronized synergy with the explicit knowledge it becomes more productive.

KM is a new developing business model and like any other business model it needs to be strategized and implemented. It is an interdisciplinary model which deals with every level of the organization.

KM is the process of capturing and utilizing an organization's collective expertise anywhere in the business- on paper, documents or in people's heads. Its about doing right things and not doing the things right.



2. The Background

We work in the region of Bundelkhand, UP. Uttar Pradesh in itself is a tough market for knowledge dissemination. The people here are more into power sharing, political show offs. It is not just difficult, but a herculean task to impart the RIGHT knowledge. We have a training firm which is into training of people in three major verticals Institutions, Corporate and Spiritual. When we began our operations in Jhansi, a major educational hub of the region of Bundelkhand, with a full fledged university, and numerous institutions, we had (atleast in our heads we thought) the best market for growing a new business. Keeping Micheal Porter's 5 forces model in mind, we knew that we have no competition at all in the region with our kind of training methodology.

Oops!! We were not just shocked but startled with the kind of mental blocks that we faced. But this is not what we are sharing here. The trouble was internal. We wanted to hire trainers from the region for various training programs and we were successful in building up a team of trainers. At the initial stages, well, all was well, the trainers were all motivated and the productivity of the organization was growing. But this did not last for long and we could soon feel and see lots of politicking, low levels of performance and slowly the productivity was on a declined mode.

This was an alarm. If we soon did not think of a model, the organization would face serious consequences.

3. What we did?

Training is a business which is dependent on knowledge sharing. The more you gain knowledge the more you can share. It's a two way process of gaining and sharing knowledge. A trainer becomes stale when this process of gaining and sharing stops. We had to come up with a solution of this problem where the trainers of the organization were slowly getting stale, thereby, getting demotivated.

We resorted to Knowledge Management. Developing a methodology for the trainers that would not just help them rejuvenate but would also widen their horizon and eventually help the organization in gaining more business.

4. Our Strategy

One thing for which we were sure was the implementation of KM in the organization will bring about CHANGE.

Yes, Change, besides knowledge, the other word that we all hear the most is CHANGE. Change, not a very welcoming word yet it is mandatory, compulsory and inevitable. We strive hard not to break our comfort zones and push the incoming change a little more further. We push, it moves and this happens for umpteen times. And this, eventually results in our failures, personally or professionally. It is true that change under right knowledge will bring more synergy, more impact in the working of an organization. The right knowledge (tacit or explicit) has to be managed immaculately.

We were seeking a desperate change in the attitude of our people and the KM strategy that we were implementing would make this possible.

We were sure that by implementing a good knowledge process model we shall be able to overcome this issue.

We can divide KM for any organization into 7 layers

Layer 1: Training & Developing–Building Skill Base

Layer 2: Information Sharing–Knowing Best Practices

Layer 3: Using Information–Extracting Contextual Knowledge

Layer 4: Leveraging sources of competence–Ease of access, visibility and dialogue

Layer 5: Mobilizing Action Teams–creating new initiatives

Layer 6: Facilitating Discovery–Incorporating diverse insights

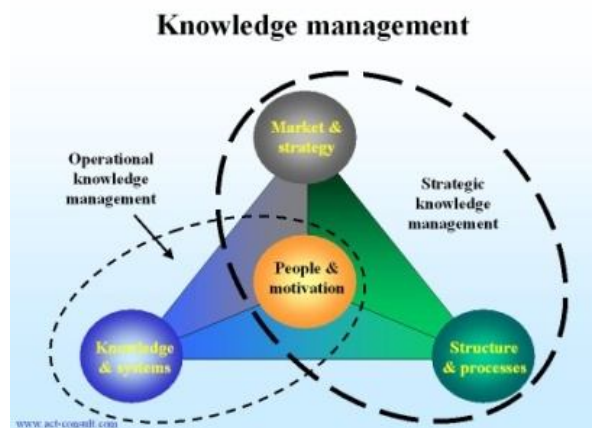
Layer 7: Co-Creating value–Creating next practices. These 7 layers give a direction for moving with the KM approach.

5. Strategy Implementation: Password Phase 1

As the very first phase of our strategy we wanted our people to accept our methods and new implementations. It's a tendency, it is very obvious that people are not very positive with the idea of Change. The fear of breaking of comfort zone is too much for

them to deal. We focused on this. Removing the barriers to KM implementation was our very first move.

Coaching and counseling were the two steps that we followed. It was a complete marketing plan for KM that we developed, inculcated a need for change in the employees. The Barriers were removed slowly. Our ideas started to make way into their psyche, making them believe that this strategy is for their own good. Our first password phase to change in the organization.



6. Strategy Implementation: Password Phase 2

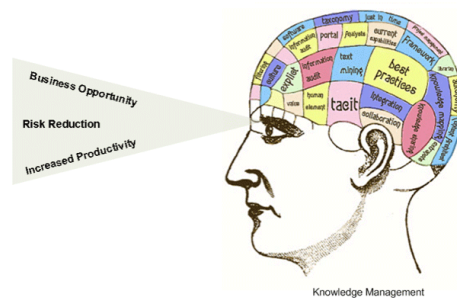
Our main aim was to develop the trainers as people who use all forms of knowledge; explicit and implicit for the betterment of the trainees. The mental block was removed and the trainers were more open to our idea. We wanted them to be knowledge workers. People, working for the positive dissemination of knowledge. A KM Man has a vision which is not just for him but for the organization and in the long run for the society.

For developing the KM Man in every trainer we began by giving them 10 Commandments to follow, which were:

- a. Willingness to take risk
- b. Decisiveness in the midst of turmoil
- c. Not many friends in Business, there is a thin line between colleagues and friends.
- d. Speak Less
- e. Keep your promises, the big ones and the little ones
- f. Every Transaction has a life of its own
- g. Commit yourself to quality
- h. Be nice to people
- i. Do not be afraid to say “ I don’t know”
- j. Do not hog the credit, Share credit with colleagues



These commandments were to be followed by every trainer at every level. A booklet for self marking and self monitoring were provided for them to keep a track of their own mistakes in following the commandments. These commandments were like a feedback that they were giving to themselves. With every feedback we could feel the change coming in. This was the second level of password for positive change.



7. Strategy Implementation: Password Phase 3

Now was the time to move on to teams and groups rather than focusing on individual self. As our level three of the strategy implementation we developed “ **Knowledge Worker Career Ambitious Personal Effectiveness Forum**”. The main aim behind the creation of this forum was to get everyone involved in our KM Implementation strategy. This forum was working on a 8 point agenda:

1. After Action Reviews (AAR): To capture lessons learnt during and after an activity or project
2. Practice Communities: to link people all across and share their knowledge, experience and expertise.
3. Knowledge Audit: A systematic process for identifying the need of resources, flows and how can a better KM be used
4. Identifying and Sharing Best Practices: Learning from various organizations, practices that helped.
5. Knowledge Centers: Developing small kiosks like digital libraries, books etc for the people to take in and use the resources
6. Knowledge Harvesting: Talks, discussions with experts, documenting it and using it.

7. Story Telling: Using the ancient art of storytelling to share knowledge in a more meaningful way
8. White Pages: This is like a staff directory which is an online/offline resource allowing people to find colleagues with specific knowledge and expertise.

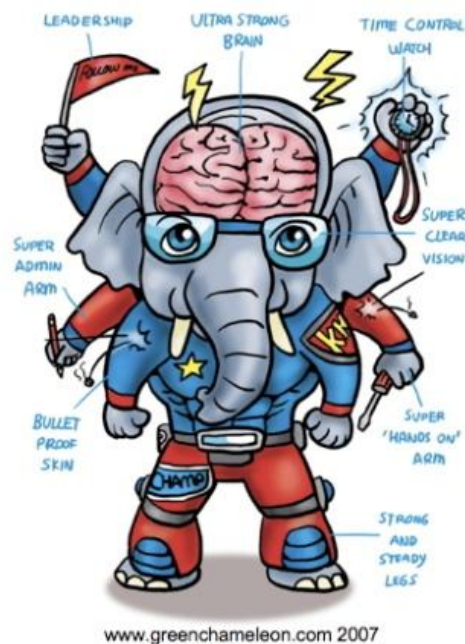
8. Strategy Implementation: Final Password Phase

KM gives us three golden words to use for an effective model. **Insight**, the vision to for see what is coming as a newer trend in the market, what is the probable cause and reasons behind a problem etc. **Intellect**, use of correct knowledge to create the positive situation is intellect. **Impact**, with the vision working clearly and the mind giving positive directions, the impact, the force of a work done would be more effective and productive. These three words, the mantra was given to the trainers to remember and to give it forward.

9. Conclusion

Our strategy was simple and it was a four phase process. This is an ongoing process and it is indeed giving positive results in terms of more motivated, more impactful, more trained and more knowledgeable workforce.

The password for change is simple:



WE ENABLE, ENHANCE and EMPOWER.

This Change gives us a KM Man who stands on the pillars of Knowledge Management.