

Sharing Tacit Knowledge: The Essence of Knowledge Management

Authors : Ayesha Khatun

Abstract : In 21st century where markets are unstable, technologies rapidly proliferate, competitors multiply, products and services become obsolete almost overnight and customers demand low cost high value product, leveraging and harnessing knowledge is not just a potential source of competitive advantage rather a necessity in technology based and information intensive industries. Knowledge management focuses on leveraging the available knowledge and sharing the same among the individuals in the organization so that the employees can make best use of it towards achieving the organizational goals. Knowledge is not a discrete object. It is embedded in people and so difficult to transfer outside the immediate context that it becomes a major competitive advantage. However, internal transfer of knowledge among the employees is essential to maximize the use of knowledge available in the organization in an unstructured manner. But as knowledge is the source of competitive advantage for the organization it is also the source of competitive advantage for the individuals. People think that knowledge is power and sharing the same may lead to lose the competitive position. Moreover, the very nature of tacit knowledge poses many difficulties in sharing the same. But sharing tacit knowledge is the vital part of knowledge management process because it is the tacit knowledge which is inimitable. Knowledge management has been made synonymous with the use of software and technology leading to the management of explicit knowledge only ignoring personal interaction and forming of informal networks which are considered as the most successful means of sharing tacit knowledge. Factors responsible for effective sharing of tacit knowledge are grouped into -individual, organizational and technological factors. Different factors under each category have been identified. Creating a positive organizational culture, encouraging personal interaction, practicing reward system are some of the strategies that can help to overcome many of the barriers to effective sharing of tacit knowledge. Methodology applied here is completely secondary. Extensive review of relevant literature has been undertaken for the purpose.

Keywords : knowledge, tacit knowledge, knowledge management, sustainable competitive advantage, organization, knowledge sharing

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