

On-the-job knowledge sharing: how to train employees to share job knowledge

Thanmoli Peariasamy

moli68my@yahoo.co.in

National University of Singapore

Nur Naha Abu Mansor

Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Abstract

One of the challenging issues many organizations are facing is to find the best ways to encourage employees share what they have learned on their jobs. Rewarding employees may be one of the techniques used to promote knowledge sharing but there are still psychological barriers preventing employees from sharing knowledge. In many cases, rewarding employees for sharing knowledge ends up in developing the behaviour of hoarding knowledge among employees. Based on a review of existing literature, this article explains how employers can make employees practice knowledge sharing in their daily work activities. The article introduces 12 approaches on how knowledge sharing can be cultivated in the job and train employees to accept that it is their job to share knowledge. Some of the methods discussed include; peer assist, training and mentoring, challenging projects, job description, job rotation, cross training, and sharing sessions. The article also discusses how on-the-job knowledge sharing can promote individual performance among employees. The intention of this article is to provide a framework that helps organizations to choose various methods of knowledge sharing that suit the organization's needs in order to cultivate sharing of job knowledge and to save the knowledge as an asset.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Job-Embedded Learning*

Introduction

In today's highly competitive business environment, organizations with the best information have greater opportunity to succeed (Md. Som *et al.*, 2004). A successful organization needs to have the ability to learn and utilize knowledge while equipping itself with the best information (Yeo *et al.*, 2006). A more successful organization will have a team of employees who are able to learn and implement the knowledge in a fastest mode (Rampersad, 2002). Knowledge management (KM) is a formal process of determining what information an organization has that can benefit employees in the organization and making the information easily available for use by those who need it (Carlson, 1999). "It protects intellectual assets from decay, seeks opportunities to enhance decisions, services and products through adding intelligence, increasing value and providing flexibility" (Asian Productivity Organization, 2002). One of the goals of many knowledge management projects is to encourage the sharing of knowledge among employees. There are many reasons why knowledge sharing is essential to the survival of most organizations. Robertson (2004) elaborated that the "growing need for information on products, ideas and work processes in organizations initiate the need for

knowledge sharing practice, hence, the application of new knowledge or so called 'innovation' is creating a challenging competitive mode among organizations". As such, when an experienced employee leaves an organization, their valuable knowledge also walks out of the organization door. The organization apparently not only loses a great deal of effort that it has taken all the years in bringing up the employee but also loosening its credibility to maintain its status as having competitive knowledge workers. Therefore, it is crucial for the organization to constantly run the knowledge among its employees so that at any time even when one employee leaves, the rest will be able to continuously maintain the knowledge needed for the job.

Robertson (2004) pointed out that although knowledge sharing is a desirable goal, for many organizations, however, in practice it is difficult to achieve. He explains that employees are reluctant to share knowledge but are willing to do work activities that are required in their jobs. He added that knowledge sharing in their terms is "updating client details, discussing project schedules", and completing given assignments. Chaudhry (2005) in his research on knowledge sharing practices in Singapore institutions revealed that "career advancement and performance appraisal seem to be creating a mentality of fear called 'kiasuism' (afraid to lose mentality) discouraging employees from sharing knowledge in organisations in Singapore". He explains that most people who hoard their knowledge are almost fearful of losing their job or feel insecure. Many purposefully refuse to document procedures and information about certain tasks because they do not want to lose their knowledge power to others. They want to remain as the ones who 'know how' to do something when others do not. It is a general belief that people are reluctant to share knowledge because they are afraid of losing their 'exclusiveness'. Chaudhry (2005) added that 'knowledge is power' mentality act as one of the barriers to knowledge sharing activities.

As such, many organizations feel that in order to motivate sharing of knowledge, the idea of providing rewards for those who shares knowledge may help. Despite of many researches supporting to the need of providing rewards for knowledge sharing, Milne (2001), however, argues that reward initiates stronger competition to hoard knowledge among employees. Although she does agree that "rewards are being implemented with the basic assumption that they encourage employee loyalty, foster teamwork and ultimately facilitate the development of the desired culture based on knowledge sharing", but she pointed out that "employees tend to focus on their own targets and see competition with others" even with rewards. She explains that the common behaviour of an employee is that when an employer offers reward for sharing, the employee will carry out duties with the intention of striving for the reward for himself rather than sharing his best knowledge with his colleagues. Similarly, Stevens (2000) argues that traditional incentives such as bonuses and performance rewards are not always enough to change behaviour of employees toward sharing knowledge. Hall (2006) from another point of view mentioned that although employees are told that they will be "rewarded in economic and career terms for knowledge sharing", however, this is difficult to achieve in practice because it is "difficult to measure the level of individual knowledge sharing probably due to so much of team working". In the end, employees continue to hoard knowledge to outstand their individual job performance.

In view of the barriers to knowledge sharing, it is important for an organization to develop effective ways to prevent their employees from hoarding job knowledge. The intention of this article is to suggest methods how the behaviour of sharing job knowledge can be cultured and restored within the organization for present and future use, for current and new employees.

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is at the heart of the concept of KM and it is all about sharing knowledge and not owning or hoarding it (Milne, 2001). Knowledge is ultimately what one knows. Dudley (2006)'s perspective about sharing knowledge is that when knowledge is applied and shared, those using it advance to new levels of understanding. He explains that "knowledge flows from one person to another and in that flow it becomes richer in meaning and gains in usefulness. Ultimately, as knowledge is used, results are shared, and understanding is multiplied, the knowledge becomes tacit. This eventually allows those who possess the knowledge to address new challenges successfully, and it results in wisdom". Theodore (2006) defines knowledge sharing as a commitment of collaboration to inform, translate and educate the peers. It involves active listening and learning. "The information shared involves visions, aims, supports, feelings, opinion and questions besides the work aspects that will increase the job performance and increase the quality of work in the department" (Grey, 1996). Knowledge sharing across the organization is increasingly used as a "strategic tool, to boost customer service, decrease product development times, and to share best practice" (Skyrme, 1997). Effective knowledge sharing practices enables reuse and regeneration of knowledge at individual and organizational level (Chaudhry, 2005). Specialist Library (2005) stated that effective sharing of best practices can help organizations to replace ineffective practices, improve employee performance, avoid reinventing the wheel of process, reduce rejects, save cost through improved productivity and efficiency and improve service delivery.

There are four factors of knowledge sharing that enable an employee to share knowledge with colleagues. The factors are:

(1) **Openness:** One determining factor is the person's openness in terms of willingness to share knowledge and partner interaction. Openness explains the partner's willingness to put all cards on the table, eliminate hidden agendas, make their motives, feelings, and biases known, and invite other opinions and points of view.

(2) **Channels of Interaction:** According to Wathne *et al.* (1996), partner representatives working on projects share experience with each other in various ways, such as mail, telephone, computer conferences, and face to face. Interaction is one of the most important channels of knowledge sharing.

(3) **Trust:** Trust is an important facilitator in communication that creates good relationship and people are more willing to engage in knowledge sharing (Sharratt and Usoro, 2003). Trust is developed upon a reliable person, someone who is honest and can be counted on after a long-term relationship that gives way for better knowledge sharing. Ives *et al.* (2001) believe that knowledge sharing is a human behaviour and cannot be fostered without genuine trust and care.

(4) **Prior Experience:** Prior experience helps effective knowledge sharing between partners when prior knowledge is used in exploring new knowledge in the organization.

An employee, however, based on any one of the factors can share knowledge with his colleagues in the intention of improving his job. Skyrme (2002) pointed out that although there are factors that encourage knowledge sharing in workplace, but there are also factors that discourage sharing of knowledge. He has identified five common reasons, why employees do not share knowledge. The reasons include fear of losing trade secrets, pride in not seeking

advice from others, unaware the usefulness of particular knowledge, lack of trust and lack of time.

Other than the ones identified by Skyrme (2002), previous researchers found that there are more psychological barriers to knowledge sharing in the organization. The barriers include not having good relationship with colleagues, fear of losing knowledge power and eventually their job, the feeling that management doesn't care of their sharing and some colleagues are being stingy and want to work on their own. If barriers to knowledge sharing continue, this can negatively influence the productivity of an organization in the long run. Therefore, it is crucial for the organization to minimize the barriers to avoid any one employee to own the knowledge that is supposedly being the asset of the organization.

Job-embedded learning

“Job-embedded learning is the outcome of people share what they have learned from their experiences, with colleagues about specific work experience to uncover new understanding, and listening to colleagues share best practices they have discovered while trying out new projects” (Wood and McQuarrie, 1999). Job-embedded learning practically involves interaction between two or more members of the organization. “Learning on the job is a form of acquiring new knowledge that allows employees develop the skills they need without having to stop doing what they need to do at that moment and yet able to grasp the new knowledge about another job that they might be involved later in their work environment” (Alberta Government, 2005). Most of what being learned on the job is from experienced employees who are willing to share their hard earned knowledge (Dexter, 2004). Researchers on job-embedded learning claim that employees learn much better doing a job than reading about it or watching a how-to-do video. The benefits of job-embedded learning do not only promote practical learning but less time taken away from the job compared to conventional training courses (National Staff Development Council, 2006). “It promotes immediate application of what is learned; reduces costs compared to paying high-priced consultants to conduct training; and supports adult learning” (Wood and McQuairrie, 1999). More importantly, job-embedded learning directly involves sharing of knowledge in the job itself.

Cultivating knowledge sharing behaviour in the job

Many suggestions on how to encourage sharing of knowledge within the job environment have been discussed by previous researchers. Most of these approaches are enforcing the practice of sharing job knowledge in the job, based on well-organized and formal instructed plans. Such activities are proposed to create an environment, where one should feel that it is their duty to share knowledge to contribute to the organization and to develop themselves to be successful in his or her job. Listed below are the recommended methods:

Communicate key business – bring awareness of knowledge sharing

Ryan (2006) recommends “identifying key business needs and then communicating these initiatives in business language that matches the problem being solved and the staff being targeted”. The organization needs to point out to its employees of what it is heading for and what it hopes for from the employees in order to achieve its vision and mission. The management needs to make a clear message to its employees about the organization's production targets and how soon they want the targets to be achieved. The management should also stress the importance of knowledge sharing and to what extent it appreciates the sharing behaviour. American Productivity and Quality Centre (1994-2002), explains that if the

organization wants its employees to share what they know with the organization, then the employees need to know why sharing knowledge is going to be good for the organization and for the employees themselves. If people believe they will benefit from sharing knowledge, they are more likely to share (The Specialist Library, 2005). The organization needs to establish a compelling reason for the employees to embrace the change. Some people feel that it's not worth sharing their knowledge with someone because they are unaware of the importance of sharing knowledge to the organisation and to themselves (Tech Republic, 2000). The management could focus on a specific problem and encourage its employees to come up with ideas and actions to overcome such problems. Communicating key business clearly projects the start of an organizational culture which eventually motivates employees to support the needs of the organization. Knowledge sharing through this way works automatically within the work environment and this could "improve the coordination of project teams, or increase consistency of interaction with customers, or reduce processing errors" (Ryan, 2006). To communicate such needs, Ryan (2006) suggested appointing a work leader who can cultivate workplace culture. Employees' leader has the capability of changing from a competing to a sharing work environment. The leader could present a report at the end of the project on how each team member worked towards achieving the plan. As such, employees may want to show the leader their highest contribution to the needs of the organization and tend to perform harder by sharing ideas and knowledge.

Peer assist

"A peer assist is simply a process where a team of people who are working on a project or activity call a meeting or workshop to seek knowledge and insights from people in other teams" (Specialist Library, 2005). It involves a group of employees with the intention of sharing feedback and learning new ideas from other participants' knowledge and experience with topics related to a problem or activity. Faul & Camacho (2004) suggest that the department could select a facilitator who is able to lead the peer-assist plan and discussions. They added that the facilitator needs to clarify the purpose and define the specific challenge or problem for which the group is seeking help. The facilitator needs to set a schedule (time, date, job knowledge and participants) for the peer assist and later invite participants with a diversity of knowledge, skills and expertise, tailored to the objectives of the peer assist. The purpose is to learn how other colleagues would approach the issue to develop ideas and solutions to the problems. Peer assist could help to simplify the plans by sharing their feedback and ideas to the problem. Through this way, employees learn new approaches or methods to solving problems and at the same time develop stronger bonds with colleagues. This is a clear effort of knowledge sharing without much expectation of reward. Employee performance equally increases due to improvement in the job.

Training and mentoring

Baastrop (2003) recommended that training and mentoring within the department could be one-way an employee can share knowledge with other employees. A mentor might use a variety of approaches such as coaching, training, discussion, and counseling to transfer his or her best practices. The process of mentoring is more of encouraging experienced workers to share their knowledge with those who are less experienced as well as encouraging them to take further training. The impact of the on-the-job coaching is merely to improve employee skills (Barkley and Bianco, 2003). American Productivity Quality Centre (1994-2002) conducted a study on mentoring and 60% of the employees who were mentoring were doing it because they are intrinsically motivated to share knowledge and they thought it was the right thing to do and they got internal satisfaction by doing it. As such, knowledge can best be

shared if employee mentors are selected in the department to guide and teach colleagues or junior employees. A mentor will make sure that a new employee learns everything that is required in the job. He can also teach other senior employees skills and techniques needed if they were to take over new assignments in the future. Through this way, no employees are left out in the competition of hoarding knowledge. Nobscot Corporation (2003-2006) opines that in training and mentoring, “the knowledge retained in key individuals is the most valuable part of the organization”. This according to them, not only benefit the organization by “reducing the risk of loss of key skills and knowledge”, but it also helps “reduce the load on the key employees”.

Teamwork

Teamwork is the concept of people working together cooperatively (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2006). “Teamwork is commitment to a shared vision and objectives, depending on one another, pulling together and sharing knowledge and learning” (Aviva, 2006). “Teamwork helps employees develop characteristics that will make them successful in ways to care about others, work with others, be unselfish, be responsible and dependable, develop self-discipline and adapt to difficult situations” (USA Hockey, 2006). According to Erasmus University Rotterdam (2005), teamwork means sharing of knowledge and also sharing of success. They say “keeping one’s promises, doing what is expected of one, helping and inspiring one another” is another form of teamwork. It also means communicating with each other openly and clearly, and calling one another to account and being accountable to each other. In terms of knowledge sharing, teamwork allows each team member share his or her own knowledge and skills by teaching other team members, and at the same time learns from others any skills and knowledge that he or she does not possess (Hererra, 2001). This could begin with the organization emphasizing its interest in teamwork with workers. Teamwork can be formed as different groups for different projects or the whole community of the department can work as one big group with properly planned job descriptions that allow each other to communicate and share knowledge in order to accomplish the assignments. In order to discourage individual knowledge hoarding among the team members, a supervisor or a project coordinator could be appointed to coordinate or put together various parts of jobs in that project. The supervisor can make sure that enough knowledge about the job is passed on to another worker before the worker continues to complete the job.

Challenging projects

Skyrme (2002) recommends challenging knowledge hoarders by giving them challenging job that will engage them in knowledge sharing and seeking activities. According to him, challenging jobs can be in the form of small projects to enhance innovation or brainstorm meetings to improve existing problems or even encouraging new work procedures. Such challenging jobs can be outside the job scope of the employees and this will further increase their knowledge level and job scope. New work assignments can provide employees opportunities to develop new skills by exploring, seeking, learning knowledge from colleagues. Knowledge sharing tends to flow from one member to another effectively when a lot of interaction, discussion and agreement take place (Skyrme, 2002). Groups can take on challenges larger than they can actually accomplish. The supervisor could act as a leader or a leader could be selected from one of the employees who can represent the group where the leader can forward new innovative suggestions to the management about what they are dreaming beyond their capabilities and budget (Dexter, 2004).

Job descriptions

The other method is that to make knowledge work part of everyone's job. Of all the reasons people have for not sharing knowledge is being too busy with real job and not having the time (Specialist Library, 2005). Therefore, Specialist Library suggest that by making knowledge sharing a formal part of employees' responsibilities, using it in job description, and incorporating it into performance appraisal processes, the importance of knowledge sharing can be demonstrated. Two employees can possibly share the same responsibilities but with an equally divided workload. For example, an assignment can be divided 60% to one staff and the remaining 40% to the other staff so that the two persons will follow-up with each other in order to finish the assignment. This process can also involve more than two people. Hence, this will enable two employees to learn the same responsibilities as the employees will assist each other and sharing knowledge will not be a problem. Denning (2004) recommends to add some key responsibilities to their job so that knowledge sharing takes place as the job goes on. He urges to add specific descriptions to the job to encourage employees to share knowledge through the organization's operational business processes and systems; and also share experiences across communities of practice, business units, and networks on innovative approaches in knowledge sharing. Through this way, employees cannot say that they have no time to share because they need to share in order to complete their job.

New developmental assignment

Alberta Government (2004) suggests making employees take part in developmental assignment that provides employees with an alternative work experience that allows for ongoing experiential learning. Developmental assignments give additional opportunities for employees to broaden their skills, gain knowledge, and enhance their personal and professional growth (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2006). Assignments may involve an exchange of individuals normally engaged in the same functional job and this could take place within the department, between departments or with other organizations. For example, an employee who is handling documents related to recruitment in his or her present department may be given a chance to learn from another colleague from a different department who is also handling documents related to recruitment. The employee will have the opportunity to know how another employee handles the same job. Knowledge sharing takes place as both the employees share with each other their working methods to handle the same documents. The employee can either learn to improve her present method from the other employees or even suggest to improve the other employee's working method based on his or her own. This process can also take place in the same department if more than one employee is handling the same job. More importantly, developmental assignments serve to enhance the performance of participants in their present job as well as increasing their knowledge on other related job in the organizations (Alberta Government, 2004).

Job rotation

Many organizations are now concern about their employees being, so called a "multi-tasker". Multi-tasking is addressed to an employee who is able to handle many jobs outside the person's job scope (Wikipedia, 2006). Such person is able to do any job that is assigned to him and this gives the management more confident that the person can be depend on even when other employees are not around. Moreover, having employees with multi-tasking capabilities is an asset to the organization because this at the same time reduces the need for more manpower. Job rotation is one way of developing an employee to multi-task (Wood and Mcquarrie, 1999). It is an assignment to another position in the same or similar field of work,

usually within the same department. According to Canadian Research Policy Networks (2006), “one way to provide more opportunities for employees to use their skills, do a variety of tasks, and have more influence over their work is to conduct a planned job rotation within the department”. Job rotation is believed to boost innovation and will expose employees to other types of jobs within the department that apparently promotes a better understanding of what others in the department do and how each employee contribute to the entire administration (Canadian Research Policy Networks, 2006). Ryan (2006) suggests “designating an information broker who would survey the employees for an inventory of their skills and then match employees who want to learn with those who have the right information”. With proper planning and schedule, employees can learn step by step from their colleagues about how each job is done in the department. Through this way, knowledge sharing takes place and an employee is able to learn and cover the lacking of knowledge in certain areas in his or her job; hence a multi-skilled workforce can be expected.

Cross training

Redstone (2006) explains that the need to promote cross training of employees is “to impart a variety of managerial or technical skills and knowledge” which will improve the capability of the organization and its employees. An employee can learn a lot by working together with another employee in the same department and spend time learning each other’s job duties (Alberta Government, 2004). Management’s involvement is important in setting up a proper schedule for their employees for such cross training to occur. In this situation, the employee stays in their present job but at the same time he or she gets the opportunity to learn other jobs, more of responsibilities from higher positions from their colleagues in the department. Belilos (1999) finds cross training as “one of the best techniques to motivate employees to share knowledge and organizational goals”. According to him, with background support, employees can have one day training in the role of department manager or supervisor. Such training can help the manager to decide which employee is capable to take roles to replace him when he is temporarily away. At the same time employees must be encouraged to give feedback and make suggestions for improvement when they are given the opportunity to take roles. The feedback provides an opportunity to the manager to improve his or her supervision and performance. Belilos (1999) suggests that cross training can be used to “shake up” supervisors and employees who have lapsed in poor performance.

Sharing sessions

Sharing sessions are small discussion groups focusing on sharing ideas and practices for a particular job. They are a gathering of people from the same specialties in the association industry (MSAE, 2006). KM4DEV (2006) suggests creating sharing sessions such as organizing lunch presentations, where employees are willing to share their knowledge freely. As such, inviting all personnel to contribute to a New Year plan for the organization will allow employees to contribute fruitful ideas for the development of the organization. Bickerstaff (1994-2006) finds that the most valuable sharing sessions are “those that bring people together face-to-face”. She invited a 34-year company veteran to give a talk looking back on his career. She expected about 100 employees to give up their lunch hour to hear the talk, but instead 250 employees showed up creating a standing-room-only situation. She feels that people love to hear what others like to tell about their life story. As such, she strongly feels that creating opportunities for people to share what they know will allow the flow of knowledge from one to another. Therefore, management should encourage their employees to write down what they want to achieve in the coming years in their job. Alternatively,

employees could also present their personnel competencies in the get-together. Management can decide on how long and how many times to organize happy hours with their employees.

Enforcement on the use of technology

Gurteen (1999) stressed that “technology is crucial in changing a corporate culture to a knowledge sharing culture where there are opportunities that allow employees to work collaboratively with anyone beside an easy access to information and knowledge about the organization”. In terms of knowledge sharing within the department, knowledge can best be spread via the organization intranet. Stylusinc (2006) claims that online chatting and e-mailing is no longer a taboo in the workplace but more of a standard channel of communication with team members where sharing information and collaborating tasks such as online meetings and seminars through a server takes place. It is the duty of the manager to emphasize the use of ‘e-mails’ and carbon copies ‘cc’ among its employees. Stylusinc mentioned that a special instruction needs to be told to all employees to carbon copy all important information required for the completion of an assignment and the results of their work to their colleagues. Members who can be included in the list of carbon copies via e-mail are the managers and supervisors, colleagues who are directly involved, colleagues who need to know the progress of the work that is related to their job and colleagues who are indirectly involved who may help to give information when the person is not around. Through this way, knowledge sharing works simultaneously as the employee works on his assignments. Knowledge hoarding can easily be avoided as the employees feel that it is their duty to abide the rules of the organization, hence to share information with their respective colleagues.

A self-development scorecard

Rampersad (2002) suggests encouraging employees to formulate their own Personal Balanced Scorecard to cultivate a positive attitude toward improvement, learning and developing. The purpose of formulating a so called employee ‘Total Performance Scorecard’ is “to create a live climate of self-motivation, pleasure, passion, motivation and enthusiasm” (TPS International, 2006). Rampersad (2002) explains that a Personal Balanced Scorecard is “a personal improvement and self-coaching instrument for individuals, which focuses on their personal well-being and success in the organization. It enables the employee to distance himself from his own mindsets and allows him to improve his behaviour and create his own future”. The Scorecard can have a list of plan an employee aims to achieve in his present job. One of the plans in the Scorecard can be to have a complete job description of the employee’s present job, whereby the employee can see his own progress in mastering his job for each job description. The employee can write down the actions he has taken to master his job and at what level he is progressing. Another plan could be to list down the employee’s future plans to learn new skills for his career advancement. He may list down steps he will be taking to learn the skills, by when he is planning to achieve and from whom he will be learning the skills. The other self-development plan in the Scorecard could be how the employee is taking steps to improve his behaviour (based on feedback from the manager) to a more developed and suitable behaviour for the department. Such plan could actually motivate employees to improve their present behaviour and they tend to help each other and share knowledge to complete the self-development Scorecard.

On-the-job knowledge sharing improve employee performance

Every organization wants to see its employees performing and contributing their best for the benefit of the organization. Researches concerning rewards and performance indicate that

rewards can be used effectively to enhance interest and performance (Yeo *et al.*, 2006). In view of knowledge sharing, many organizations offer special rewards to employees just to share and contribute knowledge. Although many researchers argue that reward do not really promote knowledge sharing (Milne 2001; Wunram 2001; Vinson 2005), however, the idea is still being implemented by many organizations. In the usual case of expecting employees' performance, most business organizations use pay, bonuses or other types of rewards to encourage high levels of performance. Employees are measured based on their job strength that shows how much of effort been put in their job. Rewards are awarded according to the level of contribution to the organization (Economic Research Institute, 2000-2004); hence, payment of performance rewards differs from one employee to another.

Smaller organizations, however, may face difficulties providing special rewards for knowledge sharing due to lack of resources and financial help. Smaller organizations more likely depend on employees' own effort to share knowledge as they may not have enough profit to offer special rewards. Therefore, it is more important for organizations to train employees to perform based on the benefits of sharing behaviour instead of inviting them to focus on reward. Job-embedded learning focuses on sharing of knowledge with less commitment to reward and recognition. Nevertheless, both reward and no reward policy can still improve and develop the behaviour of sharing job knowledge, provided the techniques of job-embedded learning are implemented in the job.

Almost all employees know that what they receive in terms of reward is for what they have performed based on their individual effort and knowledge (Milne, 2001). In the usual case, when a job is given to an employee, he will work hard in terms of 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' to prove good performance in order to gain a performance reward or special sharing reward. But in the case of on-the-job knowledge sharing, the same employee, despite of performing in his regular job scope, he will work harder to learn and share knowledge to update his personal development scorecard (TPS International, 2006) and also to get a better performance reward. The fear of losing a reward will not only motivate him to perform better in his job, but to also put more effort in seeking information and learning new skills to develop himself. Some of the approaches such as, job rotation, cross training, peer assist, sharing sessions open easy opportunities to the employee in seeking new skills and ability. The employee at the same time have more confidence that the opportunities given to him and his capabilities in learning new skills will help in his career advancement in the future in the department. The employee will feel motivated and will try to prove to the management that he is constantly upgrading his skills as well as weakness in his job.

Such behaviour of improving individual performance, however, also works for employees who are not offered any special reward by the employer. The point is that individual performance plays an important role when reward is not offered. In today's competitive business environment and economic crisis, retrenchment and early retirement among employees can easily happen in organizations; hence, it is crucial for employees to focus on their best performance in order to retain their job in the organization. Job-embedded learning strongly encourages employees to work for their best performance and to also show that their indispensable in the organization. At the same they could also try to win a regular promotion or even to win the title as 'best employee'.

The difference between 'regular hardwork' and 'on-the-job sharing hardwork' is that regular hardwork emphasises more on individual performance where knowledge hoarding can still take place without involving other members in the department. However, on-the-job sharing hardwork involves high level of knowledge sharing that involves interaction and participation

of other members in the department and fast spreading of job knowledge from one employee to another (Alberta Government, 2005). In both cases, employees compete for either sharing reward or individual performance reward, however, on-the-job knowledge sharing is a healthy competition that encourages employees to capture organizational information and best practices from all sources. Employees will feel that it is their job to share knowledge in order to be successful in the department. Similarly, for new employees, on-the-job sharing helps a lot in the learning process and gives confidence to be part of the team workers in the department. They will feel more accepted by the seniors.

Conclusion

The intention of this article is to provide a framework that helps organizations to choose various methods of knowledge sharing that suit the organization's needs in order to cultivate sharing of job knowledge and to save the knowledge as an asset. In this article, we have discussed the importance and factors of knowledge management and knowledge sharing in organizations. We have listed some of the main reasons why employees hoard knowledge and for that very reason; we have shown examples how employers can train employees to share their job knowledge within the job environment scope and at the same time retaining the knowledge for the benefit of the organization as a whole.

Through the discussion and findings from previous researchers, a conclusion can be made that job-embedded learning could have strong impact on knowledge sharing behaviour at workplace (Wood and Mcquarrie, 1999). The success of on-the-job sharing is about how it works within the job scope of the employees and not being an extra burden for the employees to seek and share knowledge. On-the-job sharing not only increases sharing of information but equally improves employee performance. Apparently, employees have little choice to think whether they should hoard knowledge if they were to compete with each other for promotion because their job requires them to share knowledge in order to qualify for a promotion. The implementation of a well-planned job description that involves high level of on-the-job knowledge sharing equally proves to the employees that the organization is giving importance to knowledge sharing. Precisely, this increases employee willingness to share knowledge among each other. In addition, to qualify for a good performance reward, an employee will work harder to accomplish his personal development plan or even fulfilling his job description.

Looking back at the barriers to knowledge sharing, job embedded learning can overcome some of the issues such as; lack of trust, poor relationship, stingy with knowledge, lack of time (Skyrme, 2002) and fear of losing knowledge power (Chaudhry, 2005). In addition, various practice of on-the-job knowledge sharing could develop multi-skilled team workers in the department. Organization's concern of losing job knowledge to the "know-all" employee who leaves the organization could be overcome since more employees of the organization have the required knowledge to continue with the business (Management Issues, 2000-2006). Besides, on-the-job sharing could be one of the best and fastest ways to teach new employees to master the new job knowledge (Wood and Mcquarrie, 1999; Rampersad, 2002). This also contributes to cost-saving. Therefore, hoarding of knowledge can be reduced and productivity and service will eventually improve.

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