What is organizational knowledge sharing?

Knowledge Sharing is about individuals and groups actively collecting and immersing knowledge from each other. It is also about individuals and groups actively communicating their knowledge and seeking people who may find their knowledge useful. According to Foss et al. (2010), "knowledge sharing is designed to transform individual [knowledge] to organizational knowledge".

An average worker spends nearly a third of their workday simply searching for information*. By creating a culture that fosters knowledge sharing and makes information easy to find, employees can work more productively and efficiently. Knowledge sharing creates opportunities for personal and professional growth, accelerates learning and increases innovation. So, let’s dive into the world of knowledge sharing to see how You can make the best use out of it.

“Knowledge Sharing is designed to transform individual knowledge to organizational knowledge”

Foss et. al (2010)

10 Benefits: Knowledge Sharing

1. **Boosts Innovation**
   With a working knowledge sharing culture in place, employees are able to share ideas and learn from each other. With knowledge silos broken down, innovations happen faster and more organically.

2. **Cuts Down Trials and Errors**
   People are able to be open about their failures and poorly executed processes. Instead of seeing trials and errors being repeated over and over, you are more likely to see well-prepared projects based on the avoidance of error, learned from others.

3. **Improves Productivity**
   As your workforce no longer spends hours every day simply seeking for information, they will be able to receive vital information faster and more intuitively. This means they will spend more time focusing on creating the best ideas on how to bring the best value for their customers.

4. **Improves Collaboration**
   In a working knowledge sharing culture, people can seek help, advice, and ideas from anyone, not only those closest to them. Interdepartmental collaboration tackles problems better and leads to new perspectives.

5. **Improves Employee Well-being**
   Knowledge sharing enables employees to grow within their own titles, find new meaning in their work, boost their professional self-esteem and become more motivated.

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**Pros of Knowledge Sharing**

- Increased Innovation
- Learning From Mistakes
- Improved Productivity
- Improved Collaboration
- Increased Morale and Motivation
Extends Networks
Knowledge sharing enables your employees to stay on top of events in the entire organization, over department, country and even continent and time zone barriers. Expanding networks lead to new opportunities.

Cuts Down Transfer Resources
As you get your digital workplace running, your employees are able to work with each other remotely, across countries and even continents. Once your employees can stay up-to-date on how other team members are doing, the quality of digital cooperation will improve, thus enabling you to cut down on travel expenses and the time lost traveling.

Lets You Leverage Internal Competence
As you develop a better understanding of what your employees know and can do, you may be able to leverage your inner workforce competence to teach your employees new skills. You cut down on having to find and pay for an external trainer. This also helps boost your employees’ self-confidence and sense of recognition.

Accelerates Learning
With improved peer-to-peer learning and the ability to find the right information quickly and effectively, your employees will be learning faster and better.

Closes the Knowledge Gap Between Management and Employees
As employees gain more cross-departmental insight, they and will gain a fuller picture of organizational goals as a whole. As knowledge sharing becomes more than top-to-bottom information transferring and becomes more equal, managers will have a better understanding of the everyday working life of their employees.
Tips on Getting Started

- Choose the **correct tools** for knowledge sharing
- Provide **resources** and **training** for learning the tools
- Create and enable physical **open spaces** for informal knowledge exchange
- Provide **supporting materials** such as instructions, how-to’s and manuals - ask the people with the most expertise to write them
- Enable a social, **open culture** by providing opportunities for outings and less formal events
- Advocate a more **talkative culture** by enabling a quiet place to those who need to focus - the rest may chit-chat whenever needed
- Encourage **mentor programs**, including interdepartmental ones
- Encourage newcomers to provide knowledge from their **previous place** of work or study as well as the more experienced ones to share their knowledge
- Assign **work pairs** from different departments to follow each other’s work days and learn their ways of thinking and doing.
Explicit Knowledge

Explicit knowledge is the official, written-down knowledge found in office manuals and instructions. To improve explicit knowledge sharing, follow these guidelines:

• Make sure your content hub is up-to-date and easy to navigate and manage.
• Assign people to be in charge of content and information management and distribution.
• Make sure everyone in your company is familiar with your knowledge management system.

Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge is internal, first-hand learned knowledge employees have that they may not have shared with anyone. It is possible this information only exists in a person’s head as an experience or as an abstract piece of information, and they are missing right tools and opportunities to share this knowledge. To improve your tacit knowledge sharing, make sure your company culture supports cooperation, communications, and learning.
Having a culture of trust and transparency, where knowledge flows seamlessly and effectively to reach everyone within the company requires a certain kind of culture.

Leaders have a crucial role in supporting knowledge management in companies. They can establish and support initiatives and technology for sharing knowledge and act as examples for other employees. This can help build a culture that bleeds into all aspects of working. Knowledge sharing should not be an exception but an everyday way of working.

The top management has an essential role in supporting programs aimed at knowledge management, reveals a case study on leadership and knowledge sharing*.

Culture, and especially one built on knowledge sharing, requires effort from all parties. In practice, this means valuing and encouraging all parties’ contributions to sharing information internally.

Motivations for Knowledge Sharing

There are two types of individual motivations for knowledge sharing: extrinsic and intrinsic. People with intrinsic motivation towards knowledge sharing are driven by their internal interest towards their task and the belief that sharing knowledge with others increases their own knowledge and skill base. They believe that by knowledge sharing, they help both themselves and the organization. They also gain joy from sharing knowledge.

It is important to keep these people engaged and motivated in their task because they are not only likely to help around and share their good advice, they may be passing along important tacit knowledge for newer or less experienced employees.

People who share knowledge based on extrinsic motivations, are more inclined to perform knowledge sharing when they review they have more to gain than to lose due to it. These people respond better to incentives and rewards to motivate them in knowledge sharing. The reward may also be knowledge-share based, as gaining knowledge can also be viewed as rewarding by for example, boosting an individual’s social standing.

Ways to Motivate to Share Knowledge

- Show the benefits
- Offer growth opportunities
- Recognize proactiveness
- Recognize Competence
- Compliment good performance
- Encourage Learning
- Reward Successful Cooperation
- Gamify experiences
How to Reward Knowledge Sharing

Rewards have a great role in motivating knowledge sharing. However, studies* show it is not necessarily monetary rewards which motivate employees the most, but psychological rewards instead.

Studies have shown** that a knowledge sharing culture fosters when employees receive psychological rewards as a result. Main psychological rewards which have a positive effect on knowledge sharing include:

- A sense of connecting with others and sharing common values. When people co-operate and share knowledge, they develop a feeling of belonging and connecting with other employees and the company values.
- A sense of achievement and success. Being able to transfer their knowledge and utilize their competence to benefit others makes employees feel a sense of achievement. Being able to gain new information from others leads to a higher sense of competence.
- A sense of usefulness. Instructing other employees and giving them advice makes employees feel useful and recognized.
- A sense of respect and trust. Employees develop trust-networks based on knowledge sharing sessions, and positive feedback makes them feel respected.
- Improved reputation. Employees feel their social capital rises as they gain social recognition and feedback on their competence.

*https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e6d6/5ddbcbd19baaff3782f59a678118867330d10.pdf  
**https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814059540
Keys to Success

- Knowledge Sharing is recognized in the organization
- Knowledge Sharing is encouraged in the organization
- Knowledge sharing has a central part in the organization
- Organization has a reward system
- Management encourages knowledge sharing

Threats to Success

- Lack of contribution from colleagues
- Lack of recognition from colleagues
- Lack of participation from colleagues
- Knowledge sharing doesn’t create enough business value
- Lack of managerial support
- Lack of managerial recognition

Choosing the Right Platform

Having a culture that supports knowledge sharing is an important starting point. But the key to a successful knowledge sharing program is in choosing the correct technical elements and the right platform. As more and more workplaces go digital, it is vital your knowledge sharing processes work smoothly in digital workplaces. With the correct knowledge sharing platform, you’ll be able to:

**Personify** content streams while making sure all employees have easy access to the most important resources.

**Measure** your content’s engagement and reach, and measure the engagement of your employees.

Boost **innovation** and **creativity** by encouraging knowledge sharing and content production.

**Gamify** the employee experience and **reward** successes.

Maintain a content hub that is **simple to manage** and **use**, making sure that every single person knows how to make the best out of it.

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**Your Knowledge Sharing Platform Should Be**

- Personifiable
- Measurable
- Inspiring
- Rewarding
- Simple (Enough)
About Smarp

Smarp is a communication and engagement platform that connects employees and employers, no matter where in the world they are. Smarp improves employee engagement, internal communications, and employee advocacy. We make knowledge sharing simple and rewarding.

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