

Knowledge Management: A tool for Effective Leadership

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Abstract

Knowledge is the sensible outcome of perceptions, learning and reasoning. By work, art, love and knowledge a soul is made cheerful. The growth factor of an individual, an organization or a nation depends on how an individual's knowledge is executed in the form of results or outputs. In recent times, when technological, research and development elements are considered important factors for success achievement; knowledge asset possessed by individuals many times fades off due to poor leadership practices applied. In spite of application of various knowledge management models, most of the times there is lack of maximum output of Knowledge and talents possessed by an employee or an individual concerned with the organization. Here in this paper we attempt to work on some leadership approaches concerned with employees' job satisfaction so as to achieve best out of one's knowledge. We focus on favorable leadership practices to have modified vision and set goals so that application of knowledge works like artificial intelligence, anthropology, linguistics; neuroscience etc. must have proper directions to flow on. We also propose a model for these approaches. This attempt assumes to idealize a balance between an individual's knowledge energy and growth output.

Keywords: Knowledge, Leadership, knowledge works, Vision, Goal.

Introduction

Knowledge can be taken as a combination of information, data and wisdom that are gained through education and experiences effected by the atmosphere one lives in. In the form of subjective insights, intuitions and hunches it falls in the category of Tacit Knowledge. When tacit Knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers which can be easily shared in the form of hard data, scientific formula, and codified procedures, it comes out in the form known Explicit Knowledge. In early times, people used to apply Indigenous Knowledge which was examined and experienced by them in nature's laboratory. But in recent times, Scientific Knowledge is in trend which is a product of scientific and analogous logics. Use of Knowledge in proper direction using resources to their maximum enables any business to adjust in changing circumstances. As Knowledge is also a kind of resource that resides in a Human mind, it contributes a lot in growth and development of any business securing individual's work satisfaction. Knowledge Management efforts typically focus on organizational objectives such as improved performance,

competitive advantage, innovation, the sharing of lessons learned, integration and continuous improvement of the organization.

A worker is said to be knowledge worker if by virtue of once position or knowledge, one is responsible for a contribution that materially affects the capacity of the organization to obtain results. The term Knowledge worker was first coined by Peter Drucker in 1959. They are individuals who are valued for their ability to act and communicate with knowledge within a specific subject area. The characteristics that define the knowledge worker are formal education, practical work experiences, intensity to learn, trainings and motivations availed which helps one to gain monetary benefits and work satisfaction. There is a fine line between information and knowledge. All information is not knowledge and all Knowledge is not valuable. Only valuable knowledge can be fruitful to an individual or to an organization. Presence of Knowledge workers may be found across a variety of information roles, but also among professionals like teachers, librarians, lawyers, architects, physicians, nurses, engineers and scientists.

Leader as a Knowledge Manager

Leadership is the process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. Knowledge manager is about involving the creation and maintenance of knowledge repositories to one that involves influencing the culture of an organization toward improved knowledge sharing, reuse, learning, collaboration and innovation. Knowledge management functions are associated with different departments in different organizations. It may be combined with Quality, Sales, HR, Innovation, Operations etc. and is likely to be determined by the KM motivation of that particular organization.

A Leader as a knowledge manager makes the knowledge workers work in the direction by which he can be aware of why, how, what, where and when to apply his knowledge to the maximum. As businesses are increasing their dependency on information technology, the number of fields in which knowledge workers must operate has expanded dramatically. We here focus on some leadership points by which knowledge worker can gain monetary and work benefits to maximum.

Purpose, Objectives and Methodology of the study

The purpose of this study lies in working on the leadership approaches in concern with the Performance of knowledge workers to objectify the maximum use of their knowledge.

To guide this study the following objectives were formulated: -

- Describe the knowledge work in coming times.
- Describe the roles of knowledge worker, their distribution in different industries, global skill and knowledge race.
- Hypothetical view regarding relations of leadership and knowledge workers is concerned.
- Describe leadership challenges with the help of online SWOT analysis of knowledge workers, a model for that is also proposed.

Knowledge work in the 21st century

The work culture and communication ways are being commuted frequently in the present times. Expansion of information based transactions and interactions conducted via Internet increases the demand for knowledge workforce. Knowledge workers form networks of expertise via knowledge sharing across organizational and company boundaries. Some of these are open to the public. Copyright and Intellectual property laws have much weight-age and identification in the knowledge market.

In current times, there is alliance of public (government) and private (commercial) knowledge workers. The Open-sourceLinux operating system and the Human Genome Project are examples where knowledge is being freely exchanged, with commercial value being realized. The public and private education systems focus on lifelong learning to enable students to receive knowledge and skills necessary. There is enhancement of Digital taylorism which involves extraction, codification and digitalization of knowledge into software prescripts and packages that can be transmitted and manipulated by anyone.

Distribution of Knowledge Workers among industries

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and Science-industries exhibit, in aggregate, relatively high concentrations of knowledge workers. The share of knowledge workers in science and technology environments increased rapidly during the 1990s. This creates the impression that skilled workers are very less in new economy sectors such as ICT and science.

The global skill and knowledge race

Every nation focus on creating high-skilled, high-knowledge and high-waged economy by upgrading the education and skills of its workforce. It is assumed to be the route to economic prosperity, reduced income inequalities and social cohesion. It is the knowledge economy where innovative ideas and technical expertise hold the key to the new global competitive challenge. Recent success of China and India in moving into the production of high value-added, high-technology products has caused political leaders and their advisors to re-evaluate the global economic challenge. The OECD (Organization for Economic and Cooperation Development) recently acknowledges that China and India are moving up the value chain to compete with Western companies for high-tech products and Research and Development investment creating a win-win scenario for developing nations. Innovation and entrepreneurship are supported by producing 'knowledge skilled workers' in order to sustain a shift toward high value-added activities.

Contributions of Knowledge worker in an organization

Besides imputed routine work, a knowledge worker contributes in following:

- 1) Maintaining a balance between Convergent and Divergent Thinking
- 2) Ability to focus
- 3) Attain maximum knowledge benefits with resources available
- 4) Analysis of data and information
- 5) Change Management
- 6) Identification of the hurdles in a project
- 7) Maintaining strategic environment
- 8) Application of brainstorming ideas
- 9) Creating interest and hopes with the on work projects
- 10) Setting priorities with proper inputs

Leadership Challenges towards Knowledge worker

Besides application of so many models, practically there are some factors dealing with leadership which if paid attention can polish out the effects of these models. Every role and challenge concerned with leadership lies somewhere in the following chain providing flawless work for the followers.

AWARENESS → CLEAR VISION → SET GOALS → POWERFUL STRATEGIES →
VERACIOUS ACTIONS → EXPECTED RESULTS → FEEDBACK →
SUCCESS → SATISFACTION → NEW GOALS

On the basis of online research and SWOT ANALYSIS of personal individual traits of knowledge workers, we come out with following consequences on which few leadership approaches would be worked out

- **Strengths** : Education, technical knowledge, work experience communication skills (thoughts, writing, listening, expressing ideas), research, planning, developing human relations, awareness of working in healthy atmosphere, financial support, motivation and support, coordination by time management, decision making, discipline, pressure handling capacity, good contacts, profit sharing mottoes
- **Weakness** : Lack of work experience, lack of goal setting capacity, lack of self-awareness, poor work ethic, lack of motivation, indecisiveness, being too much emotional, lack of vision

- **Opportunities** : Enhancement of education and knowledge, getting a field to prove oneself in all round development, Geographical opportunities, opportunities by strong network
- **Threats** : Competition from colleagues in terms of better schooling, college, family background, obsolete skills and experiences, demotivation from self-perceptions and surroundings, feeling of work dissatisfaction

Here we will discuss some leadership approaches which can nurture knowledge workers to maximum.

Application of favorable leadership styles

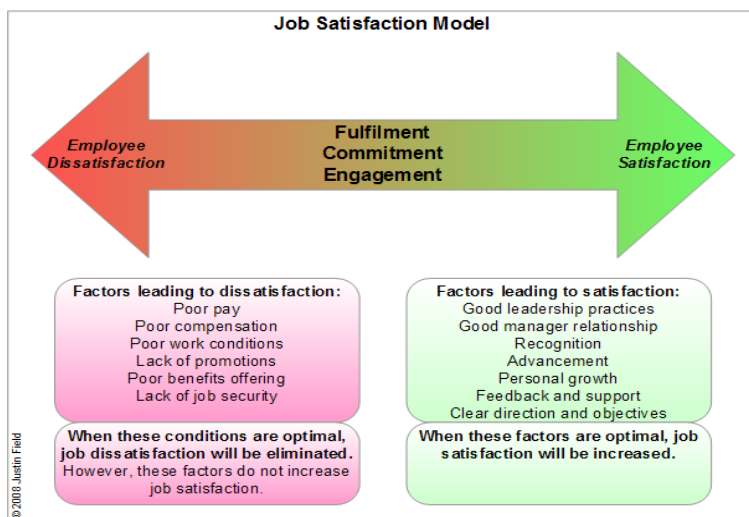
A blend of positive styles of leadership applied so as to consciously or subconsciously have a choice to influence knowledge workers to ensure satisfaction among them.

- a) Benevolent: Value individuals and their emotions ensuring better communication, sharing of ideas, building trust.
- b) Coaching: Apply SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threats) analysis to employees aligning them with personal goals and career aspirations making them aware of best platform to work on.
- c) Democratic : Bringing responsibility and flexibility for decision making which influences work style
- d) Authoritative: Being clear in why and what is to be done and instilling same clarity in Knowledge workers.

Looking for monetary gains, fringe benefits and Status gains with job satisfaction

Monetary gain is an important factor of work satisfaction. Model given by Justin field can be concerned for this.

Job Satisfaction Model proposed by Justin Field



Knowledge worker productivity requires that the knowledge worker is both seen and treated as an "asset" rather than a "cost."

Managing Knowledge functions

The systematic process of creating, maintaining and nurturing an organization to make the best use of one's knowledge, talent and efficiency to create business value and generate competitive advantage could be implied by a balanced application of one's Tacit and Explicit knowledge.

Tacit knowledge: Football players works by experience, skill and muscle power is an example of tacit form of knowledge.

Explicit knowledge: Physics student writing equations of a ball propelled in space is an example of explicit form of knowledge.

A sound leadership deals with both forms of knowledge in balanced condition to develop clarity of vision, goals, strategies and actions in Knowledge workers with easy communication. A 3-dimensional vision provides the direction in which an organization needs to move in concern with the multidirectional aspects of the project. An easy communication between the leader and followers chalk out strategies to achieve the goals.

Utilization of latest reckoners and application of cognitive science

Application of latest reckoners' technologies and application of cognitive science provides diligence for understanding mind mapping, philosophy, psychology, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, linguistics, and anthropology in concern with the knowledge workers

Structure the physical environment to maximize productivity

The physical environment must be healthy enough enabling good working status and facilities for workers. Regarding this, views or suggestions from knowledge workers should also be encouraged

Linguistics in the process of growth of an individual

Considering our own motherland India where more than 30 languages are spoken, when we talk of knowledge management, linguistic approach is important. Though different models for knowledge management do not fail but if implemented with proper language trainings, they would be more fruitful

Innovation and change management

There is a saying that you must become a change you want to see. Adoption of Innovative learning and Change management by knowledge workers would secure long term survival of the organization by bringing changes and reconstruction whenever turbulence occurs.

Apprentice of Knowledge workers with experienced seniors

Arrangement of apprentice sessions and conferences would let senior executives share their mature and practical experiences with knowledge workers to provide them flawless and impeccable quality knowledge gains

Imposing the responsibility of self-management and self-assignment of tasks for increased productivity

Developing a sense of responsibility for self-management by alignment of time and wisdom with tasks to reach set goals is an important consideration for knowledge workers

Assessment of performance and Appraisal of the Knowledge workers

Performance measurement and grading the knowledge workers with proper appraisal in terms of rewards and promotions would keep the energy and motivation of knowledge workers charged.

Sound association of leadership and managerial practices Competency Management System allows the management to identify and assess individual competencies to continue safe operations, increase opportunities and ensure long-term viability of the company.

Conclusion

At a basic level, our objective in this paper has been to draw attention to few leadership practices relevant to efficiency of Knowledge workers applicable with any of the knowledge management models. We assume that if the factors responsible for maximum output of knowledge workers are studied, the hypothetical view for relation between positive leadership approaches and knowledge workers will be positive. This assumption is based on the SWOT analysis of individuals compared with the approachable leadership qualities. This attempt could definitely reduce the weaknesses and threats to knowledge workers. We can simulate that industries via their investments in human capital along with research and development processes can significantly contribute to individual's growth, industry-growth and economic-growth. There is focus on knowledge workers assuming they yield a different set of growth output influenced by positive leadership perceptions. Apart from other characteristics of high-technology environments such as high rates of technology innovation, knowledge management and development should also be centered upon.

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