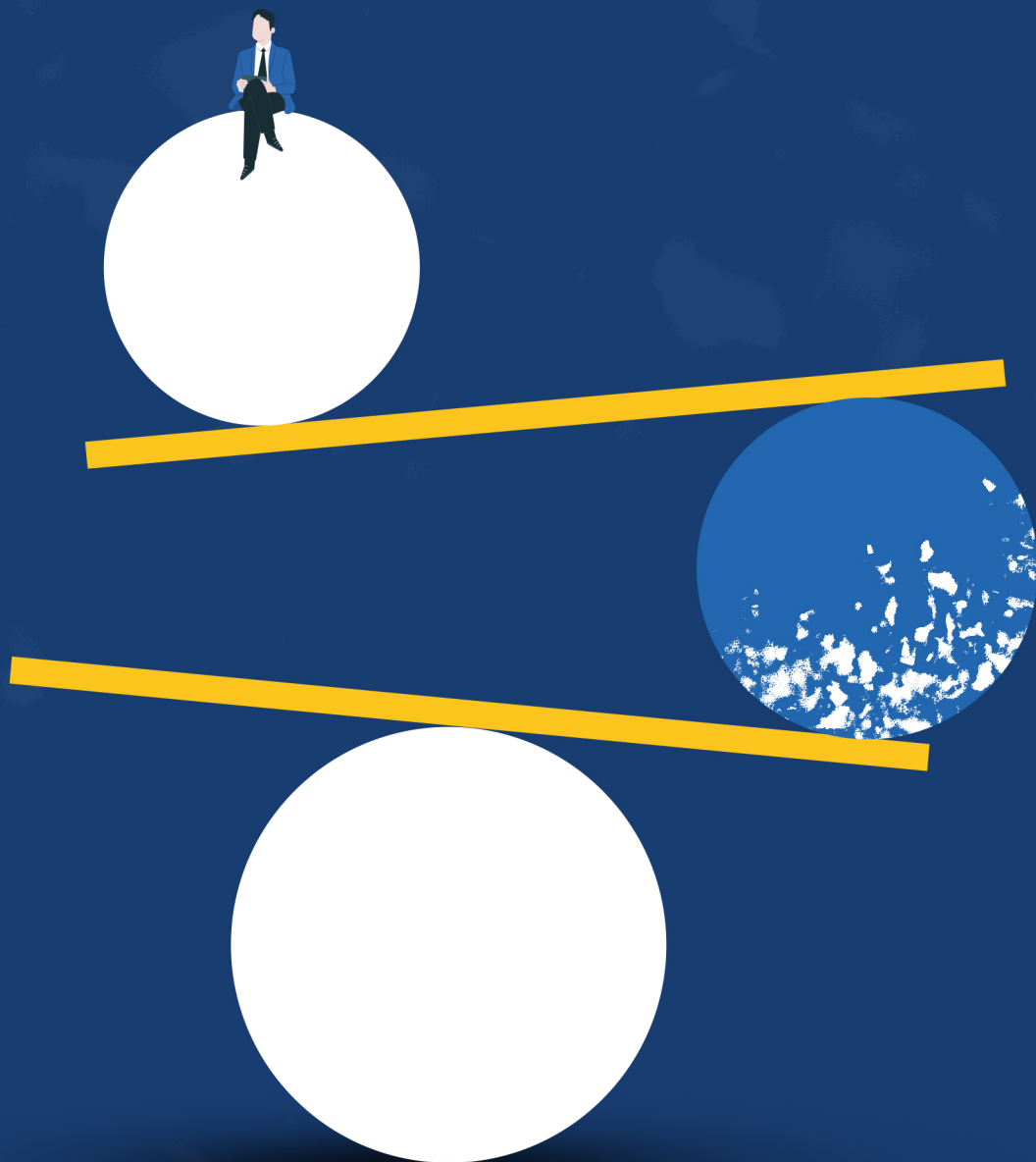


Tacit Knowledge Sharing and **Knowledge Management** at the Workplace





Introduction

In the modern business landscape, characterized by fast changes and extreme competition, organizations recognize the paramount importance of effectively leveraging their intellectual capital. Knowledge sharing, encompassing both tacit and explicit knowledge both, has emerged as a critical driver of organizational learning and performance (Dahou et al., 2019). Tacit knowledge represents the experiential and intuitive knowledge embedded within individuals, while explicit knowledge entails codified and readily transferable information.

This article aims to comprehensively explore the significance of tacit knowledge sharing in the workplace and Knowledge Sharing practices in organizations. To survive in a rapidly evolving and competitive business environment, tacit, explicit, and implicit knowledge sharing is indispensable for organizations. While explicit knowledge is easy to share and readily available, tacit knowledge is difficult to share. Strategies are pivotal to facilitating tacit knowledge sharing.

In modern philosophical discussion, epistemological definitions of knowledge challenges are drawn from agreement that knowledge is dichotomous: procedural or declarative, personal or organizational, tacit or explicit (Gamble, 2020). Tacit knowledge means “know-how” that is not in tangible form and is only available in the minds of humans. While explicit knowledge means “Know-what” & and is closely correlated with data and information, the root of tacit knowledge originates from an inability to form clear definitions and data (Styhre, 2004).



Tacit Knowledge



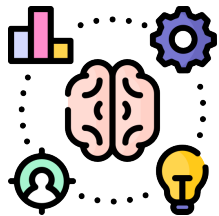
Tacit knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills, insights, and understanding that individuals possess and apply intuitively without conscious awareness or the ability to articulate them explicitly. It is deeply rooted in an individual's experiences, expertise, and context, making it difficult to transfer or codify in a traditional manner. Tacit knowledge is deeply ingrained in the minds of the knowers without any tangible data. People do not document their knowledge because they do not get any incentive for it (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The most important difference between tacit & explicit knowledge is the transferability of knowledge (S.L. Berman et al., 2002). Tacit Knowledge becomes accessible to others when it is shared in openly in conferences or through other channels (Bassi, 1997). Factors that lead to tacit knowledge sharing are intrinsic motivators, while extrinsic motivators (Osterloh & Frey, 2000) inspire explicit knowledge sharing.



Explicit Knowledge

Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that can be easily articulated, codified, and communicated in a formal and systematic manner. It is information that is documented, recorded, or expressed in a tangible form, such as documents, manuals, databases, or explicit guidelines. Explicit knowledge is typically structured and organized, making it accessible and transferable across individuals and organizations.

The knowledge that can be stored, articulated, and spread formally & systematically, like manuals and computer files is explicit knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). To operate with explicit knowledge information technology is used. Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be codified or documented and has verifiable evidence. Explicit knowledge is information that is available in the form of documents such as manuals, reports, policies, procedures, and so forth (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).



Salient features of tacit & explicit knowledge

Implicit Knowledge

Implicit knowledge, also known as implicit or unconscious knowledge, refers to the knowledge that individuals possess and apply effortlessly without consciously being aware of it. Unlike explicit knowledge, which can be easily articulated and codified, implicit knowledge resides in the subconscious mind and is developed through experiences, observations, and repeated practice (Schacter, 1992). It includes skills, intuitions, insights, and cognitive processes that influence our actions and decision-making without conscious deliberation. Implicit knowledge is often deeply ingrained and difficult to articulate explicitly, making it challenging to transfer or teach to others. In summary, implicit knowledge is a subset of tacit knowledge, specifically referring to skills and know-how that are difficult to verbalize. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, encompasses a broader range of both implicit and explicit knowledge that individuals possess but may not have fully articulated or documented.

Features	Tacit knowledge (i.e. skills & experience of employees)	Explicit knowledge (i.e. documents, codes, tools)
Content	Non Codified	Codified
Articulation	Difficult	Easy
Location	Human Brains	Computers, Artefacts
Communication	Difficult	Easy
Media	Face-to-face contact, storytelling	Information technology & other archives
Storage	Difficult	Easy
Ownership	Organization & its members	Organization

Sajjad M. Jasimuddin, Jonathan H. Klein & Con Connell , 2016



Knowledge Sharing Motivation

The actions of individuals largely depend on their motivation. The persistence and energy an individual puts into work depend on the level of motivation they possess. Adequately motivated individuals put more effort into their work than those who are less motivated. There are two types of motivation: Extrinsic and Intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation denotes all factors by which people indirectly satisfy their needs (Osterloh & Frey, 2000).

If an individual derives satisfaction from external consequences, he is called extrinsically motivated. However, all factors through which employees directly satisfy their needs are intrinsic motivators. If the individual derive their motivation from behavior, he is intrinsically motivated. Organization can induce knowledge sharing by offering incentives (Wasko & Faraj, 2005).



Tacit Knowledge Management

Among all the definitions existing, the one that is widely accepted is by Polanyi (1969), as he encapsulated the true meaning in the phrase 'we know more than we can tell. It can further be clarified as having the capacity to distinguish human faces but being unable to express how it is done. Tacit Knowledge is the knowledge of techniques, methods, and designs that work in a specific way and with specific consequences.

The nature of Tacit Knowledge is personal, hard to formalize, and difficult to communicate to others (Nonaka, 1991). In addition, he mentioned that there are two dimensions of tacit knowledge: the first is the technical dimension based on the know-how, and the second is the cognitive dimension based on the beliefs and values that humans generally take for granted (Nonaka & Konno, 1998).



Evolution of Tacit Knowledge/Spiral Model of Knowledge

Nonaka et al. (2000) come up with the spiral model of knowledge: an individual creates new knowledge. The individual knowledge of the work is transformed into organizational knowledge, which then spreads to the whole organization. Individuals always create new Knowledge. An innovation-creating company should make personal knowledge sharing a central activity.

Knowledge conversion is a continuous process. Four modes of knowledge conversion are below:

1. Socialization is from tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge
2. Externalization is from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge
3. Combination is from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge
4. Internalization is from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge

A spiral is formed from these modes of knowledge, the SECI process. Knowledge creation through this model is continuous, and this spiral model triggers a new knowledge spiral, which can expand vertically and horizontally. This spiraling process can take place within and outside the organization. An example of tacit knowledge is the tacit knowledge articulation possessed by customers that they cannot share further. When customers give meaning to the product by purchasing, adapting, consuming, or not buying it.

The actions of the customers are then reflected in the innovation process of the organization and a new spiral of organizational knowledge starts again. An open culture in the organization is the prerequisite for tacit knowledge that can support innovation (Madeuf, 1984).

Tacit knowledge creation requires trust among employees. Tacit knowledge creation, sharing, and usage in the innovation process can be done by building trust amongst members of the organization. Tacit knowledge can be shared better in informal settings instead of formal ones. Therefore, management should motivate the creation of tacit knowledge and create an environment where everyone feels safe and motivated to share his or her knowledge (Siedler et al., 2004).

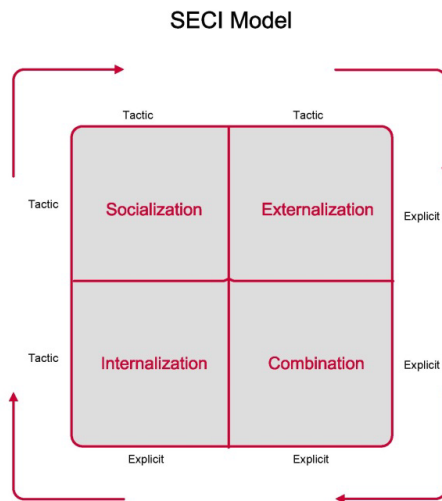


Figure 1: The SECI Process
(Nonaka et al. 2000)

Barriers to Knowledge Sharing & Practices to Promote Knowledge Sharing

Barrier 1: Lack of Trust among Team

Teams with low levels of trust do not participate in knowledge sharing. Trust is the foundation of effective knowledge sharing in the workplace. Trust teams have low trust in each other; they may be reluctant to share important insights or information due to criticism or a loss of competitive advantage. Several Factors contribute to lack of trust, including Communication Barriers and misunderstandings.

To resolve this issue of trust and increase knowledge sharing, there is a need to build relationships through open and transparent communication channels that can develop trust among the team members. Addressing conflicts is also important. Furthermore, virtual collaboration can bridge the geographical distance and increase relationships among remote team members, which helps build trust except for the physical distance. Briefly, trust among team members is crucial for promoting knowledge sharing in the workplace. Organization can build an environment where team members can feel comfortable and have more trust in each other through open communication, collaboration, and effective conflict resolution.

Barrier 2: Time Constraints and Time Pressure

In Organizations, employees have time constraints; they have limited working hours along with numerous assignments and a constant pressure for submission. They are constantly under pressure and have no time to think about anything else. To engage employees in knowledge-sharing activities, it is important to get their attention because they get distracted easily.

Barrier 3: Organizational Culture

The culture of an organization can either promote or hinder knowledge sharing. In organizations where the culture does not promote knowledge sharing, employees feel less motivated because they do not get any recognition for their efforts towards knowledge sharing. It is important to recognize the efforts of the employees towards knowledge sharing.

Barrier 4: Technological Constraints

Outdated or inefficient knowledge sharing platforms or a lack of technological infrastructure can impede the seamless exchange and accessibility of knowledge within an organization. Difficulties in accessing or sharing information can hinder effective knowledge sharing.

Methods & Practices in Market for Tacit Knowledge Sharing

1. Project Management Lesson Learnt

Project completion is a complex task and is majorly dependent on the teams learning and knowledge sharing. Lesson Learnt document is extremely effective for knowledge management. The Lesson Learnt is closely linked with Tacit Knowledge Management.

A Lesson Learnt Document is to be prepared by the team for all the individual projects, which are the assets of the organization. In order to ensure all deliverables committed are delivered to client and avoid any conflict, project documentation such as proposal, contract, project charter, and accepted deliverables shall be consulted. Organizational process assets such as templates, policies and procedures, historical data will also be useful. A project is not considered closed until Lesson Learnt document has been developed, which also includes a complete variance analysis. Lesson Learnt Document helps to store tacit knowledge.



2. Performance Appraisal

The Performance Appraisal form includes Knowledge Sharing objective. Recognizing the significance of Tacit Knowledge is important, because employees expertise and insights through experience is valuable. This Objective aims to create a culture of open communication and collaboration so employees can freely exchange their Tacit Knowledge.

By emphasizing knowledge, sharing in performance appraisal process organizations emphasize the role of tacit knowledge in enhancing problem solving capabilities, increasing innovation. The company is committed to harnessing and leveraging the collective wisdom and expertise of its employees to achieve optimal performance and deliver exceptional results to clients.

The Probation Evaluation Form includes a specific score for tacit knowledge management, highlighting the company's commitment to harnessing and leveraging the valuable expertise gained through experience. This score assesses the employees ability to effectively share and transfer tacit knowledge within the organization. By assessing employee's knowledge sharing proficiency, in knowledge sharing a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing of tacit knowledge can be established.

3. Orientation Training

Orientation Training plays a vital role in knowledge sharing. New employees are introduced to the new concepts and experiences of seniors. Through interactive workshops, collaborative exercises, and knowledge-sharing sessions, new employees are encouraged to actively participate in sharing their tacit knowledge with their colleagues. Such as improved problem-solving abilities, enhanced innovation, and increased productivity. By instilling a culture of open communication and knowledge exchange from the beginning,

orientation training lays a solid foundation for a collaborative and learning-oriented environment where tacit knowledge sharing becomes an integral part of the company's DNA.



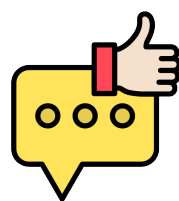
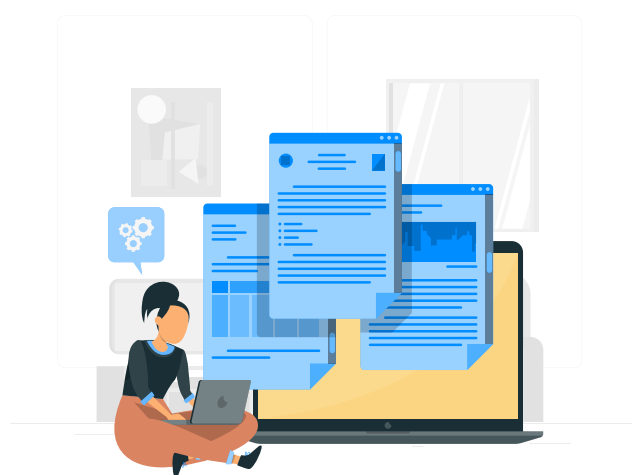
4. Centre of Expertise Session

In today's competitive market landscape, the concept of hosting expertise-sharing sessions for tacit knowledge sharing has emerged as a strategic tool for businesses aiming to gain a competitive edge. These sessions serve as a dynamic platform for industry experts to share their invaluable insights, refined skills, and nuanced experiences with peers and stakeholders. By digging into the depths of tacit knowledge through engaging workshops, interactive discussions, and real-world case studies, companies can unlock hidden potential and foster innovation. This approach not only enhances the collective expertise within the organization but also cultivates a culture of continuous learning and adaptability.

By harnessing tacit knowledge and facilitating its exchange, businesses can navigate complexities, anticipate market shifts, and ultimately position themselves as thought leaders within their respective domains, driving growth and success in an ever-evolving market.

5. Digital Work file Storage

Establishing a secure online repository for the storage of tacit knowledge is of paramount importance within organizations. A safe digital space is imperative for preserving, sharing, and accessing this valuable resource. By leveraging platforms such as enterprise knowledge, management systems, encrypted cloud storage solutions, and specialized collaboration tools, organizations can ensure the confidentiality and controlled accessibility of tacit knowledge assets. Through such file, storage organizations can cultivate a culture of knowledge sharing while safeguarding sensitive information, fostering innovation, and enhancing the collective expertise that propels the organization forward in an ever-evolving landscape.



Recommendations

1. Organizational Storytelling

Organizations can embrace organizational storytelling as a method to facilitate tacit knowledge sharing. Organizational storytelling harnesses the power of narratives to capture and convey experiential knowledge, making it accessible and actionable for employees throughout the organization. By implementing an organizational storytelling program, Organizations can create a culture of storytelling, empowering employees to share their valuable insights, best practices, and lessons learned. Through this approach, organizations can not only unlock the hidden expertise within its workforce but also foster collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning, thereby gaining a competitive edge.

Forward-thinking organizations advantage gamified storytelling to unlock tacit knowledge. By merging gaming allure with narratives, this approach engages employees deeply. Interactive scenarios and immersive journeys mirror challenges, allowing organic knowledge absorption.

Conclusion

Gamified elements foster engagement, innovation, and competition, creating a reservoir of collective wisdom for enhanced efficiency and success.

2. Knowledge Sharing Platform

Organizations can greatly benefit from the implementation of knowledge-sharing platforms dedicated to tacit knowledge sharing by leveraging digital platforms such as internal social networks. These platforms provide a space for employees to ask questions, seek advice, and share their valuable experiences, insights, and best practices. Furthermore, the platforms can facilitate connections between employees across departments and locations, promoting cross-functional collaboration and enabling the transfer of tacit knowledge across the organization.

3. Document Best Practices

Establish a system for capturing and documenting best practices within the organization. Encourage employees to document their successful approaches, techniques, and strategies, making them easily accessible for others to learn from and apply.

Organizations can achieve a competitive advantage by using their employees' tacit knowledge. Employees sharing with each other what they know and have learned can create new knowledge. The obstacle in the way of creating new knowledge is that humans are not very interested in sharing their knowledge due to a lack of incentives. Knowledge sharing should be tied to corporate financial variables. Vital knowledge vanishes when companies undergo any change, like merging or reorganizing. The need is to increase training and practices to share tacit knowledge among employees as well as make it explicit. The strong desire to use the tacit knowledge of others can change the momentum of knowledge sharing and eventually increase organizational learning. It is extremely vital to give employees room & space to talk with each other as knowledge can be created when employees talk with each other individually otherwise knowledge will stay untapped (Desouza, 2003). Organizations should create long-term value by spending on tacit knowledge management.





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