

HRM Practices in Managing Knowledge Workers – An Overview

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Abstract

Organization most important role played by the workers. HRM practices in the sense exercise the workers and managing means carry on or control workers. Its managers must find out an efficient and effective way to manage knowledge workers whose knowledge helps the organization to achieve expected objectives. Knowledge workers may be managed successfully through common and proven (HRM) practices in job design, recruitment, selection and training, performance management, compensation, training and development. Managers to find out the efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge, including voluntary and mutual creation, personal experience, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization. The aim of this paper is analysis the knowledge worker problem and how to solve, and what source using management too.

Key words: Efficient and Effective worker, Exercise, Carry on, Creation, Sharing, Use of Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

What is knowledge?

The answer to this question is not so simple and unambiguous. The word “knowledge” is commonly used in many different meanings (awareness, familiarity, understanding, comprehension, experience, etc.).

Definition of knowledge: To define knowledge, we can use the fact that knowledge is always knowledge of something, has its object, and knowledge of someone, and has its subject (Tondl, 2002).

Knowledge Management Strategy



Objective of knowledge: The object of knowledge is a certain sequence of symbols that describe elements and matters of the real world. We usually call this sequence of symbols “data”. The subject of knowledge is a source of knowledge (he/she/it creates, disseminates and mediates knowledge) or a receiver of knowledge (he/she/it acquires and uses knowledge).

The subject of knowledge is able to demonstrate his/her/its knowledge in some way. One of the possible ways of demonstrating one’s own knowledge is to create and use purpose-built stores of data that we usually call “databases”.

A typical subject of knowledge is a human being that creates and uses various databases in various forms such as documents, periodicals, books, paintings, pictures, multimedia presentations, computer systems and also (and maybe above all) in one’s own memory.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: Knowledge Management is the process of managing knowledge (both explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge) in the organization. The objective is to improve storing, creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization and so improve performance of individual workers and the organization as a whole. Knowledge Management is concerned with the state of knowledge and with the flow of knowledge (Truneček, 2004).

The state of knowledge is related to storing and accessibility of knowledge in the organization. **Explicit knowledge** is usually stored in databases of information systems and is relatively easy accessible. **Tacit knowledge** is stored only in the memory of workers and is not easy accessible.

The flow of knowledge is related to creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization. Explicit knowledge is created, shared and used through information systems and information and communication technologies (IS/ICT). Tacit knowledge is created, shared and used through interaction and communication among workers.

WHO IS A KNOWLEDGE WORKER? A knowledge worker is a worker that has some specific knowledge. This specific knowledge is fundamental to successful operation of the organization. The organization must employ a suitable knowledge worker to gain access to the specific knowledge (Mládková, 2005). A knowledge worker is anyone who works for a living at the tasks of developing or using knowledge (search CRM.com 2002). (These definition have several threads in common knowledge work embodies experience, innovation, creativity, and transformation of experience into knowledge worker for leveraging products and service.) For example, Horse trailer sales people do not sell trailers, but they sell horse transportation solutions. They have to know their customers business the shows they attend, distances to haul horses, frequency of use, and the horse trailer to meet a customer's requirements, in this respect, the **salesperson become a knowledge workers, Managers, Lawyers, Doctors, System analysts, and Accountants** are all knowledge workers.

PERSONALITY AND PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES

1. Holds unique values and understands and adopts the culture of the organization.
2. Adopts an attitude of collaboration and sharing.
3. Innovative capacity and creative mind.
4. Has a clear understanding of the business in which he or she is a part.
5. Is willing to learn, unlearn, and adopt new ways that result in better ways of doing a job.
6. Is in command of self-control and self-learning.

Corporations preparing their human capital to be knowledge workers in a competitive environment must consider several core competencies of the self-directed knowledge worker.

1. Thinking skills.
2. Continuous learning.
3. Innovation team and Team work.
4. Innovation and creativity.
5. Risk taking and potential success.
6. Decisive action making.
7. A culture of responsibility to work knowledge

Management and leadership: In the knowledge management, we distinguish between managers and leaders' traditional managers' focus on the present. They are Action-oriented, spending most of the Time Delegating, Supervising, and Controlling and Ensuring compliance with set procedures. In contrast, smart managers focus on organisational learning to ensure operational excellence. Because of continuing change and improvements in the workplace they cannot be expected to have mastered the work of subordinates. As a result, they take on the role of leaders, where change is the primary goal the challenge is to get the department or the organization moving in the direction of the goal(S) in line with the change.

- Futures
- Developing Strategies
- Sharing Vision through Effective Communication with Knowledge workers. (Learning becomes the key focus for the organisation survival and growth.)

Technology and the Knowledge Worker: Knowledge work forces on thinking, using information for processing, and recommending value-added change. The primary activities of knowledge work are assessment, decision making, monitoring and scheduling. A knowledge worker is a manager, a supervisor or a clerk who is

actually involved in thinking, processing information, analysing, creating or recommending procedures based on experience and cumulative knowledge. In the functions to communicate a knowledge workers activities to the appropriate people at the appropriate time via technology such as (E-mail or Internet) Ex: IT plays a role in the learning organization in three key processes:

1. Knowledge capture
2. Information Distribution
3. Information Interpretation.

Role of Ergonomics: With regular use of the computer day after day, End –user performance and comfort are closely interrelated, No matter how sophisticated the electronic support, a knowledge worker can achieve full productivity with proper design of the work environment. Ergonomics involves COMFORT, FATIGUE, SAFETY, UNDERSTANDING, EASY OF USE, and other areas that affect welfare, satisfaction, and performance of knowledge workers working with user machine system. The list of factors that affect the ergonomic of knowledge workers falls into three categories

1. ENVIRONMENTAL issues that include proper lighting, layout, and temperature
2. HARDWARE issues that focus on furniture, comfortable seating and well-designed workstation.
3. Knowledge worker SYSTEM INTERFACE
 - a. Minimum worker effort and memory.
 - b. Best use of human factor.
 - c. Prompt problem notification.
 - d. Maximum task support.

Smart Leadership Requirements:

- Assessment of the core competency of the organisation. Response to the organisation internal shortcoming.
- The external market and the tricky nature of competition in the market place.
- Online response to the company's external environment.
- Measure the return on time.

Technology and the Knowledge Workers: Knowledge worker forces on thinking, using information for processing and recommending value-added change, the primary activities of knowledge work are assessment, decision making, monitoring, and scheduling.

A knowledge worker is a manager, a supervisor, or a clerk who is actively involved in thinking processing information analysing creating or recommending procedures based on experience and cumulative knowledge.

HOW TO MANAGE KNOWLEDGE WORKERS? Following above mentioned facts, it is quite clear that if an organization wants to be successful, i.e. prosperous, competitive and flexible, its managers must find out an efficient and effective way to manage knowledge workers (below only workers). The workers own specific knowledge that helps the organization to achieve expected objectives. The knowledge, that is fundamental to successful operation of the organization, is mainly tacit (hidden) knowledge that is stored only in the memory of workers, is not easy accessible and is created, shared and used only through interaction and communication among workers. To gain access to the knowledge, the organization must find out an efficient and effective way to find, employ and keep qualified workers that will be competent and willing to create, share and use their knowledge to perform successfully in their jobs (roles) in the organization. In this case, the organization needs efficient and effective Human Resource Management (HRM) and proven HRM practices especially in:

- ❖ Job design
- ❖ Recruitment,
- ❖ selection and orientation,
- ❖ Performance management,
- ❖ Compensation,
- ❖ Training and development.

These HRM practices help the organization and its managers to create conditions for efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge, including voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization.

Job design: Job design is the process of defining tasks and grouping them together to form particular jobs in the organization. In view of efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization, it is important to design jobs that will meet needs both the organization and workers. Jobs in the organization must be motivating – complex, various, significant, autonomous and using regular feedback (Dvořáková et al., 2007). A complex job is integrated and meaningful, with visible output. A various job makes possible to do

various activities and use various practices and so use and develop one's own knowledge, skills, abilities and experience. A significant job gives certain influence on the internal and external surroundings of the organization. An autonomous job makes possible to control one's own work and act relatively independently. Using regular feedback about actual performance and working conditions from managers to workers and from workers to managers enables managers and workers to improve performance and working conditions of individual workers and the organization as a whole. Motivating jobs evoke the sensation of usefulness, importance, responsibility, fellowship and make possible to use and develop one's own knowledge, skills, abilities and experience. They create conditions for voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization.

Recruitment, selection and orientation:

Recruitment is the process of seeking suitable applicants for potential employment in the organization.

Selection is the process of identifying the probably best applicant who has required knowledge, skills, abilities and experience and will be competent and willing to perform successfully in the job. **Orientation** is the process of adaptation of the new worker to conditions and requirements of the job and the organization. In view of efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization, it is important during recruitment, selection and orientation of workers to pay attention to worker's personal characteristics. Workers must be able and willing to cooperate and communicate and accept the way of sharing their knowledge (skills, abilities and experience) based on reciprocity, reputation and altruism (Mládková, 2005). Reciprocity means the practice of voluntary and mutual sharing one's own knowledge in return for knowledge received if necessary. Reputation means the practice of voluntary and mutual sharing one's own knowledge in return for making a good reputation as a qualified worker. Altruism means the practice of voluntary and mutual sharing one's own knowledge in return for the sensation of doing something important and useful. To assess required personal characteristics of applicants and workers we can use interview, psychological tests or assessment centres. The ability and willingness of workers to cooperate and communicate and accept the way of sharing the knowledge (skills, abilities and experience) based on reciprocity, reputation and altruism create and improve conditions for voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization.

Performance management: Performance management is the process of permanent improving performance (abilities, activities and outputs) of individual workers and the organization as a whole. The process of performance management has usually three repeating stages – performance agreement, performance management, performance appraisal – through which managers ensure that workers' abilities, activities and outputs are consistent with expected objectives of the organization. The first stage – performance agreement – includes a written or verbal agreement between a manager and a worker about particular aspects of performance (abilities, activities and outputs) that are relevant to requirements and objectives of the job and the organization. The agreement is always for a certain period (usually for one year). In view of efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization, it is important to agree with the worker also on training and development of his/her knowledge, skills, abilities and experience necessary for successful performance in the job. The second stage – performance management – means everyday management of the worker to meet given requirements and achieve expected objectives of the job and the organization. In view of efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization, it is important to lead the worker to voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of his/her knowledge. The third stage – performance appraisal – provides feedback from the manager to the worker and from the worker to the manager through the appraisal interview at the end of the agreed period. The purpose is to appraise the worker's performance (abilities, activities and outputs), find way to solve eventual problems and agree on performance requirements and objectives for the next period. In view of efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization, it is important to evaluate actual level of worker's knowledge, skills, abilities and experience necessary for successful performance in the job as well as the worker's ability and willingness to cooperate, communicate and accept the voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization. The process of performance management is essential for efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization. **Compensation:** Compensation is the process of offering compensation to workers for work done. A modern compensation system includes both monetary compensations (wages and salaries) and non-monetary compensations (appreciation and benefits like cars, notebooks, mobile phones, flexible hours, home working, housing, insurance, sick leave, medical and dental care, vacation, holidays, leisure activities, training, etc.). In view of efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization, the applied compensation system would have been fair and stimulating to find, employ and keep qualified workers and motivate them to create, share and use their knowledge in the organization voluntarily and mutually. The offering monetary and non-monetary compensations should also motivate workers to permanent and systematic improvement of their performance, knowledge, skills, abilities and experience. **Training and development:** Training is the process of learning

knowledge, skills, abilities and experience that enable workers to perform successfully in their jobs. Development is the process of learning knowledge, skills, abilities and experience that enable workers to meet changes in conditions and requirements of their jobs. The process of workers training and development must be permanent and systematic. Important to motivate workers to permanent and systematic training and development of their knowledge, skills, abilities and experience. Workers who have some specific knowledge, skills, abilities or experience should be involved in the process of workers training and development as lecturers. It increases motivation of the workers as well as improves conditions for voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization.

CONCLUSION

The efficient and effective Human Resource Management (HRM) and the use of proven HRM practices in job design, recruitment, selection and orientation, performance management, compensation, training and development can help the organization and its managers to create conditions for efficient and effective management of workers and their knowledge in the organization. In view of voluntary and mutual creation, sharing and use of knowledge in the organization, it is important: To design motivating jobs (complex, various, significant, autonomous and using regular feedback) that will meet needs both the organization and workers, To recruit, select and orientate workers paying attention to their personal characteristics, especially to their ability and willingness to cooperate and communicate and accept the way of sharing of knowledge, skills, abilities and experience based on reciprocity, reputation and altruism, To apply the process of performance management based on three repeating stages – performance agreement, performance management, performance appraisal – and leading to permanent improvement of performance (abilities, activities and outputs) of individual workers and the organization as a whole, To apply the fair and stimulating monetary and non-monetary compensation system that enables to find, employ and keep qualified workers and motivate them to permanent and systematic improvement of their performance as well as training and development of their knowledge, skills, abilities and experience, To involve workers with some specific knowledge, skills, abilities or experience in the process of workers training and development as lecturers.

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