

## THE ROLE OF THRUST IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

<sup>a</sup> JOANNA GAJDA

*Czestochowa University of Technology, Dąbrowskiego 69,  
Częstochowa, Poland  
Email: "joannagajda@vp.pl"*

**Abstract:** Organizations operating knowledge properly understand what's the source of their success. Knowledge management in business is related to the creation, dissemination and use of knowledge for the organization's competitive advantage. To be able to effectively use the knowledge, it is necessary to meet the basic condition involving the building of trust. Therefore, it should be noted that trust is an important factor for the efficient flow of knowledge.

In this article, the author focuses on the role of trust in knowledge management in contemporary organizations.

**Keywords:** trust, organization, knowledge management

### Introduction

In a knowledge-based organization is particularly important to trust, because it is scarce and extremely valuable in the management of the organization. It is worth examining the role of trust in knowledge management due to the fact that it can be for the organization provides practical benefits. From the point of view of the organization of the trust is an intangible asset affecting maximize its economic value, as it helps to improve the efficiency of the system and produce more goods and this leads to achieve profitability.

The purpose of this article is to present the role of trust in knowledge management organization based on the review of the literature in the field of management.

### 1 Trust in knowledge management

In the subject literature, trust is interpreted in many ways. W. Grudzewski, A. Sankowska, M. Wańtuchowicz direct attention to several approaches to defining this concept. This, it can be accepted that trust is<sup>1</sup>:

- a disposition, and this a mental approach of a subjective nature towards another person,
- a decision that can be relied upon, which causes the trusting person to remain dependent on a second party,
- a behavior that results from entrusting something to another person.

In the workplace, a state of trust where there is a common conviction of the mutual reliability of subordinates and management staff, as well as acceptance of attitudes and decisions, which results from such conviction, is desired. Agreement occurring in any relations within an organization has an effect on achievement of benefits in business as a result of trust<sup>2</sup>.

It turns out that the factor conditioning the flow of knowledge in an organization is trust. It is the basic element based on which the learning process can take place successfully. Many knowledge management models can be found in the literature on the subject of knowledge management, and in these models, the importance of trust in the proper progression of processes related to the exchange of knowledge is emphasized. According to modern concepts of knowledge management, trust is a critical component. In his knowledge system, D. Snowden distinguished four primary elements comprising it, namely:

- hidden or overt knowledge,
- knowledge assets,

- trust,
- certainty or uncertainty of decision concerning objectives and causal relationships<sup>3</sup>.

The subject literature provides many approaches to tasks of an operational nature performed within the framework of knowledge management, which are present in the form of a process. The cyclic approach to the knowledge megaprocess developed by A. Kowalczyk and B. Nogalski is deserving of attention. Within the framework of the knowledge management system, they lay out the following main tasks realized at the operational level: localization, acquisition, development, sharing of knowledge, utilization and maintenance of knowledge<sup>4</sup>. The processes listed above form an integrated system supporting knowledge management. The process approach is considered to be functional because it is based on experiences and practical solutions that find applications even in large organizations.

Localization of knowledge makes it possible to maintain already existing and easily accessible knowledge in both the internal and external environment. Sometimes people are not aware of which knowledge resources may be available. It is difficult to simply determine where experts that can be helpful in specific fields can be found, while also considering information concerning the available competencies and experiences gained by employees<sup>5</sup>. Localization of knowledge can serve not only for finding required information, but it also provides the capability of finding out which sources are worthy of trust. Organizations are capable of utilizing methods of knowledge localization so that they do not lose time searching for knowledge of interest, and these methods should be adapted to structures so that they do not generate excessive costs compared to expected benefits. J. Paliszkievicz enumerates several methods enabling localization of knowledge sources<sup>6</sup>:

- two-dimensional knowledge matrices, by means of which intellectual assets and the persons having them at their disposal are presented;
- knowledge maps, enabling graphical representation of mutual relations between the intellectual links found within an organization and knowledge sources and their structures.

The knowledge maps used most often by organizations are: information resource maps (helping to determine their layout and method of storage), knowledge source maps (enabling identification of persons possessing knowledge resources of particular value that can be used if the need arises), typographic knowledge maps (provide the capability of locating persons with specific skills and levels of knowledge), geographical information systems (make it possible to determine the geographical distribution of knowledge resources), fast reaction system (finds applications in management of knowledge gained during the execution of projects), revealing of the communication network, intangible and legal values, compilation of data about experts in a given organization (in the form of address books).

Knowledge acquisition is a process within the framework of which knowledge flows from the organization's external environment to its internal surroundings. This is also the process by which employees gain knowledge based on internal sources, that is, from their colleagues, from documentation, databases, generally available books and periodicals. Organizations gain knowledge by utilizing the benchmarking method, based on searching for knowledge about competing products or even

<sup>1</sup>W. Grudzewski, A. Sankowska, M. Wańtuchowicz, Zarządzanie zaufaniem w przedsiębiorstwie, Oficyna Wolters Kluwer Business, Kraków 2009, s. 17.

<sup>2</sup>B. Józefowicz, Zaufanie jako determinanta organizacyjnego uczenia się przedsiębiorstw, (w:) B. Olszewska, M. Czarniecki, E. Piwoni-Krzyszowska (red.), Przedsiębiorstwo jako organizacja ucząca się, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2013, s. 204.

<sup>3</sup>W. Grudzewski, A. Sankowska, M. Wańtuchowicz, Zarządzanie zaufaniem w przedsiębiorstwie, Oficyna a Wolters Kluwer Business, Kraków 2009, s. 123.

<sup>4</sup>A. Kowalczyk, B. Nogalski, Zarządzanie wiedzą. Koncepcja i narzędzia, Difin, Warszawa 2007, s. 81.

<sup>5</sup>G. Probst, Zarządzanie wiedzą w organizacji, E-mentor nr 3/2004.

<sup>6</sup>J. Paliszkievicz, Zarządzanie wiedzą w małych i średnich przedsiębiorstwach – koncepcja oceny i modele, Wyd. SGGW, Warszawa 2007, s. 87.

processes. Knowledge acquisition most often takes place through active participation in training or over the course of establishment of informal relations with other people. One of the basic sources of knowledge acquisition from the external environment can be knowledge from persons who are participants in the market. This, it becomes necessary to remain in constant contact with shareholders, suppliers, customers, and recipients of the company's services. Experts from outside the company, that is consulting companies and market research agencies, are a valuable source of knowledge acquisition. Organizations remain in constant contact with them when they are unable to acquire and update information. One of the main channels of knowledge acquisition is its purchase. Certain companies decide to purchase patents and software with applications in individual branches of the organization. A specific type of software is selected to match the nature of the organization, so that it is implemented in an effective way in a specific sector of the company's activity<sup>7</sup>

The Internet is a basic tool for knowledge acquisition. Organizations with broad access to the internet acquire information en masse. However, an excess of knowledge is a serious problem, and the skill of selecting relevant information is important. Broad access to information is linked to the incapability of securing information that has been introduced into the network as well as to a lack of total control over uploaded information<sup>8</sup>.

Ensuring the availability of knowledge is a significant problem in an organization. In order for employees to voluntarily share information, trust is imperative. Organizational trust is considered to be an important factor encouraging the transfer of knowledge. This results from the fact that sharing of knowledge, particularly hidden knowledge, is related to the risk of its improper application and low quality. Thanks to trust, there is a high probability that people will exhibit readiness to share information and utilize the benefits this information brings without being forced to and without doubts as to unethical behaviors. Besides this, a lack of trust causes employees to store knowledge out of fear of losses resulting from its exchange<sup>9</sup>. Building trust in the process of sharing knowledge takes place in several dimensions: personality, calculation, institution, and perception. Individual dimensions can be described as follows:

- trust in the dimension of calculation is based on calculation of the costs and benefits resulting from specific relations. The advantage of this dimension is that it has a well thought out motivational system and engages employees in the activity of the organization and in organizational identity;
- trust in the dimension of personality is dependent on the personality structure of members of the organization. The tendency to trust is indicated by such qualities of an individual as: empathy, based on the ability to put oneself in another person's shoes, responsibility, sensitivity, emotional restraint;
- institutional trust is formed based on formal regulations. It is based on the tendency to provide oneself with a sense of safety based on safeguards of a formal nature;
- perceptual trust is a process based on tendencies to perceive the behaviors of co-workers. This dimension relates to human cognitive qualities and characterizes trust resulting from observation of mutual behaviors and reactions<sup>10</sup>.

The essence of knowledge management should be to utilize knowledge productively in order for the organization to achieve

constant profit. In this light, knowledge in an organization should be perceived in categories of potential planned for utilization for the purpose of achieving the high standards desired in the organization's activity<sup>11</sup>.

There are many possibilities of encouraging employees to utilize knowledge. Usually, organizations strive to achieve this objective by:

- conducting workstation training, which fosters the application of knowledge in practice,
- building informational centers where employees participate in the exchange of information and views,
- utilization of legible documents (e.g. with a clear graphical layout),
- creation of the appropriate working conditions for employees.

A good solution, in this respect, is to properly arrange workstations, which will translate to improvement of communication between employees and exchange of knowledge. For the individual knowledge of employees to become the property of the organization, it is purposeful to record it in an IT system. Knowledge maintenance releases specialists from routine inspection activities and causes them to focus directly on improving and perfecting the processes entering into the scope of this system. Organizations undertake to maintain their own knowledge, so that it is utilized in the future. For this purpose, they initiate three processes: selection of the knowledge worth maintaining, endowing the selected information with the appropriate form, in which it will be stored, and updating of the organization's memory<sup>12</sup>.

When considering maintenance of knowledge, care should be taken that it does not lose its value and is not reduced to the role of information or data. For an organization to prevent this, B. Wyrzykowska and K. Karbowski indicate the necessity of adhering to basic principles in the knowledge maintenance process, formulated by G. Probst, S. Raub, K. Romhadt. Here are several principles to which the cited authors direct attention<sup>13</sup>:

- The management staff should establish the objectives that will be fulfilled by the maintained knowledge,
- Management staff should identify the various forms of knowledge used by the organization without difficulty;
- Management staff is obligated to assess knowledge in terms of its usefulness and the possibility of its maintenance;
- Management staff should identify a medium that may contribute to safeguarding and disseminating knowledge.

## Conclusion

Organizations basing their operations to the ever growing dependence on the knowledge to understand that factor in its proper flow is an atmosphere of trust. Relationship of trust with the management of knowledge is undeniable. The trust has a significant impact on the normal processes of knowledge management. Demonstrated a strong dependence on the basis of an analysis of the literature should be the starting point for the management of the organization, for which development based on knowledge is a prerequisite for business.

## Bibliography:

1. Błaszczak W., *Metody organizacji i zarządzania*, Wyd. Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006.

<sup>7</sup>J. Cyga, *Organizacyjne uczenie się w praktyce zarządzania na przykładzie firmy Impel Business Solutions sp. z O.O.*, (w:) B. Olszewska, M. Czarnecki, E. Piwoni-Krzyszowska, (red.), *Przedsiębiorstwo jako organizacja ucząca się*, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2013, s. 303.

<sup>8</sup>J. Paliszkievicz, *Metoda oceny pozyskiwania i rozwijania wiedzy w małych i średnich przedsiębiorstwach*, *Problemy Jakości*, nr 4/2007, s. 27.

<sup>9</sup>A. Sankowska, *Wpływ zaufania na zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem*, Difin, Warszawa 2011, s. 123.

<sup>10</sup>M. Bratnicki, J. Strużyna, *Przedsiębiorczość i kapitał intelektualny*, Wyd. Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Katowice 2001, s. 158-162.

<sup>11</sup>W. Błaszczak, *Metody organizacji i zarządzania*, Wyd. Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, s. 217.

<sup>12</sup>B. Wyrzykowska, *Współczesne tendencje w zarządzaniu wiedzą w agrobiznesie*, (w:) S. Makarski (red.) *Transfer wiedzy i działań innowacyjnych w obszarze agrobiznesu*, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2007, s. 75.

<sup>13</sup>B. Wyrzykowska, K. Karbowski, *Kierowanie zasobami ludzkimi w organizacji*, Wyd. SGGW, Warszawa 2009, s. 212.

2. Bratnicki M., Strużyna J., Przedsiębiorczość i kapitał intelektualny, Wyd. Akademii Ekonomicznej w Katowicach, Katowice 2001.
3. Cyga J., Organizacyjne uczenie się w praktyce zarządzania na przykładzie firmy Impel Business Solutions sp. Z O.O, (w:) B. Olszewska, M. Czarnecki, E. Piwoni-Krzeszowska, (red.), Przedsiębiorstwo jako organizacja ucząca się, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2013.
4. Grudzewski W., Sankowska A., Wańtuchowicz M., Zarządzanie zaufaniem w przedsiębiorstwie, Oficyna Wolters Kluwer Business, Kraków 2009.
5. Józefowicz B. Zaufanie jako determinanta organizacyjnego uczenia się przedsiębiorstw, (w:) B. Olszewska, M. Czarnecki, E. Piwoni-Krzeszowska (red.), Przedsiębiorstwo jako organizacja ucząca się, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2013.
6. Kowalczyk A., Nogalski B., Zarządzanie wiedzą. Koncepcja i narzędzia, Difin, Warszawa 2007.
7. Paliszkievicz J., Metoda oceny pozyskiwania i rozwijania wiedzy w małych i średnich przedsiębiorstwach, Problemy Jakości, nr 4/2007.
8. Paliszkievicz J., Zarządzanie wiedzą w małych i średnich przedsiębiorstwach – koncepcja oceny i modele, Wyd. SGGW, Warszawa 2007.
9. Probst G., Zarządzanie wiedzą w organizacji, E-mentor nr 3/2004.
10. Sankowska A., Wpływ zaufania na zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem, Difin, Warszawa 2011.
11. Wyrzykowska B., Współczesne tendencje w zarządzaniu wiedzą w agrobiznesie, (w:) S. Makarski (red.) Transfer wiedzy i działań innowacyjnych w obszarze agrobiznesu, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2007.
12. Wyrzykowska B., Karbowski K., Kierowanie zasobami ludzkimi w organizacji, Wyd. SGGW, Warszawa 2009.

**Primary Paper Section: A**

**Secondary Paper Section: AE**