

**BENEFICIAL COALITIONS: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT**

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Organisations, ul. Podgórna 50, 64-246 Zielona Góra, Poland, m.moczulska@wez.u.zgora.pl**Keywords:** knowledge management, employee commitment**Abstract:** Presently, knowledge is considered as the most strategic resource of organizations. The literature on the subject often raises the issues of commitment. The purpose of the article was to discuss the associations between knowledge management and employee commitment. The article presents the stages of knowledge management and describes the category of commitment, taking account of several criteria. In the opinion of the authors, from the point of view of knowledge management particular importance can be attained to the way qualifications, skills, predispositions and knowledge of employees will be used, which, in turn, depends on "quality" of their commitment (its type, intensity, dimension and direction) in achieving organizational goals.**1 Introduction**

At present, knowledge is considered as the most strategic resource of organizations. The publications with regard to management sciences devote much attention to the problem of knowledge management, in particular such issues as: knowledge development, knowledge codification, knowledge sharing, knowledge application or transfer. At the same time, in publications of this type it is also often emphasized that efficient functioning of economic entities, their innovativeness and adaptability to changes occurring in the external environment depend on the human factor. What is important, it is emphasized that the possibilities of improving actions inside the organization, increasing innovativeness of the company, or fulfilling customer needs better are determined not only by "characteristics" of employees (their qualifications, predispositions and knowledge), but the way these qualifications, skills, predispositions and knowledge will be used. Thus, growing interest in the issues of commitment, both on the part of management practitioners and theoreticians, does not arouse surprise. The purpose of the article is to discuss the associations between knowledge management and employee commitment.

environment, along with the specification of content of these sources (i.e. importance of knowledge that can be obtained from them from the point of view of the organizational needs related to satisfying information needs and levelling competence gaps).

- *Knowledge acquisition* – namely obtaining specified knowledge resource (among others, from customers, suppliers, stakeholders, subcontractors).
- *Knowledge development* – namely development (creation) of new knowledge in the organization.
- *Knowledge distribution* – namely making available (transferring) knowledge to all employees who need it to perform their tasks in the organization.
- *Knowledge storage* – namely "retention" of knowledge in the organization to enable its future use, where necessary (development of organizational "memory").
- *Knowledge application* – namely use of knowledge in action.

**2 Knowledge management process in the organization**

Classically, quoting G. Probst, S. Raub and K. Romhardt, in the knowledge management process the following stages are distinguished [quot.: 1]:

- *Knowledge identification* – namely identification of sources of knowledge in the organization and in its

Regardless of the way of our perception of knowledge (as a state of mind, object, process, set of conditions of access to information, or ability) it is - as "appurtenant" to the individual – unique. Knowledge is connected with the ability to use information, learn and gain experience in interpretation of information as well as in defining which information is necessary and what is its usefulness for the needs of making a specific decision. Therefore, the

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implementation of each stage of knowledge management requires employees to participate [2]. At the same time, it is worth emphasizing that findings of the research conducted by A. K. Gup and V. Govindarajan [3] indicated that the effectiveness of actions related to knowledge management:

- decreases along with decreasing tendency of the source to share knowledge,
- increases along with increasing value of knowledge in the recipient's opinion,
- increases along with increasing level of motivation of the recipient to acquire knowledge,
- increases with the application of various knowledge transfer channels,
- improves at larger possibilities of the recipient to absorb knowledge.

**3 Employee commitment – theoretical perspective<sup>1</sup>**

As emphasized by B.L. Rich, J.A. LePine and E.R. Crawford, commitment is a multidimensional motivational construct that involves the simultaneous investment of an individual's complete and full self into the performance of a role [4]. When individuals are engaged they are investing their hands, head, and heart in their performance (ibidem). Commitment, among others, defines the extent to which employees identify themselves with the mission, values, goals of the company, performed tasks, exercised procession or social environment in which they are working [5].

Employee commitment can be characterized by various intensity. It is determined, among others, by the character of dependency between the employee and the company. The intensity of effort made by the employee will vary depending on whether or not the essence of the relation between the employee and the organization can be described more by [6]:

- "I must", when the employee does not have any alternative employment) (commitment type: Continuance),
- "I should", when the employee complies with some social standards and feels obliged in respect of the company to continue employment in it (commitment type: Normative)
- "I want" to be in the organization, when the employee is emotionally associated the company and any performed work (commitment type: Affective) – (Table 1).

<sup>1</sup> The words "involvement" and "engagement" are used as synonymous in this article.

*Table 1 Matrix of satisfaction*

Type of relation worker-organization	Commitment type	Commitment intensity	Made effort
"I must"	Continuance	low	For the purpose of achieving the required minimum
"I should"	Normative	average	For the purpose of doing good job (without value added)
"I want"	Affective	high	For the purpose of the organization (value added)

Source: *own construction*

From the practical point of view, it is important that essentially the higher the level of commitment, the higher the degree of employees who join in helping the organization and work better than required to maintain its position [7].

At this point, it is worth mentioning that: firstly, activity of employees constituting "a sign" of their commitment may have emotional, physical or intellectual dimension, secondly this activity can be focused on: pursuing goals of the company (direction in the organization), ways of performing daily tasks and obligations (direction: in work), actions taken in the scope of professional development direction in job) [8], or shaping relationships with superior and co-workers (in social environment).

**4 Employee commitment and knowledge management**

In the context of the discussed issues, it should be noted that "Continuance" type of commitment may threaten knowledge management. The employees who manifest it may not disclose information valuable for the organization. Also members of the organization, manifesting "Normative" commitment resulting from the sense of obligation (duty) – although they will share information, will select this information and restrict undertaken actions only to the specified requirements and some adopted principles. Only Affective type of commitment, as characterized by the desired intensity, resulting from the willingness of performing work in a given organization, triggers activity undertaken voluntarily by the employees, in the scope of their

competences and possibilities. It is worth anticipating factors having effect on promoting positive relations employee-company and, at the same time, the level of commitment.

On the other hand, each of the mentioned dimensions (emotional, intellectual, physical, which remain strongly interrelated), as well as "directions" of actions (to the: "organization", "job", "profession", "supervisor") being "a derivative of commitment" – may have a significant value for knowledge management (Table 2, Table 3, Table 4).

Table 2 Area of possible value added for knowledge management (part I)

Direction of commitment	I	IN THE ORGANIZATION		
		Physical	Intellectual	Emotional
Dimension of commitment	II			
Sign of commitment	III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- being a spokesperson of the company</li> <li>- initiating changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on long-term employment (lack of interest in change of the job)</li> <li>- support for organizational policy</li> <li>- focus on organizational goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pride in work in a given organization</li> <li>- identification with the organization</li> <li>- readiness for defending the company and its products</li> </ul>
Consequence of commitment	IV	I voluntarily participate in activities fostering the organizational development	I opt for participation in the functioning of the organization	I want to accept (bear) responsibility
Area of possible value added for knowledge management	V	(Knowledge identification. Knowledge acquisition. Knowledge development. Knowledge distribution. Knowledge storage. Knowledge application)		

Source: own construction

Table 3 Area of possible value added for knowledge management (part II)

I	IN JOB			IN WORK		
	Physical	Intellectual	Emotional	Physical	Intellectual	Emotional
II						
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participation in trainings</li> <li>- developing skills,</li> <li>- initiating actively situations ensuring gaining experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focus on being a specialist ( professional),</li> <li>- understanding for the purpose of development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- determination to succeed</li> <li>- passion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- availability</li> <li>- demonstrating activity and initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understanding for additional obligations</li> <li>- consent to working in extra hours, if required by situation</li> <li>- focus on responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pride in the performed scope of obligations</li> <li>- determination to overcome difficulties</li> <li>- readiness for devotions</li> </ul>
IV	I learn, I share knowledge	I opt for expanding knowledge and developing passion	I want to develop	by taking care of quality I improve the way of performing tasks	I opt for caring about quality and results, I opt for undertaking effort related to looking for (developing) ways of raising quality	I want to prove myself (be appreciated)
V	(Knowledge identification. Knowledge acquisition. Knowledge development)			(Knowledge identification. Knowledge acquisition. Knowledge development. Knowledge application)		

Source: own construction

Table 4 Area of possible value added for knowledge management (part III)

**BENEFICIAL COALITIONS: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT**

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<b>IN SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	<i>Emotional</i>	- respect towards superiors and co-workers - trust in superiors and co-workers	I want to have good bonds /I want to work in the atmosphere of respect, trust and reciprocity/	<i>(Knowledge distribution. Knowledge storage. Knowledge application)</i>
	<i>Intellectual</i>	- focus on loyalty towards superiors and co-workers.	I opt for conscious relations building	
	<i>Physical</i>	- care for relations	I build relations based on trust and openness in communication	
	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	

Source: own construction

**Conclusion**

At the same time, it should be noted that effective knowledge management requires that the employee commitment be multidirectional (rather than unidirectional).

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