

KNOWLEDGE WORKER- A NEW GENERATION OF WORKFORCE

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Abstract

Organizations survive and thrive with the contributions of its workers and employees. That is, with the help of its workforce. Workers are the blood and heart of a business. They are the life of a business. Without workers, a business cannot be thought of. Moreso, if it is of a productive type. No production is possible without the labour and without the contribution of its workers. As work is increasingly turning to be of a thinking type, the need for a new type of worker is emerging. A worker who thinks, who has intellect, who cannot be technically seen as working. A worker who does his job through brain, who cannot be observed as doing certain number of hours in a day. This new type of worker is addressed as 'knowledge worker'. Experts believe that as technology is improving and getting accustomed to new technology is increasingly difficult, this gives rise to a new generation of workforce- the knowledge worker. Knowledge workers create original knowledge product or add value. But on this parameter, they cannot be called creative workers. They handle and distribute information and may not necessarily be creative. Knowledge workers search for information most of their time and increase their dependency on information technology. One may look around and may find such people everywhere, in offices, in airport lounge, etc. researches have shown that they spend about forty percent of their time searching for information. All information is not knowledge. The information that is put to use at work is knowledge. Hence the term 'Knowledge worker'. Organizations are experiencing a new generation of such workers coming up in a big way. They are the future workforce. They are on the rise. A new generation is rising- the Knowledge Worker.

Key words: worker, knowledge, generation, workforce, rise

Introduction:

Knowledge worker can be understood as the worker who earns a living by doing a job that requires them to think. His job entails more of thinking than doing. A knowledge worker can be defined as the 'worker of the future'. Peter F. Drucker, coined the term for such a person in an organization as 'knowledge worker'. Probably, because he believed that in the coming years in the business world, a new generation of workers will rise whose job will be more of a thinking nature than doing job with the help of instruments of production. Knowledge worker's job efforts will keep on changing. It will

be of a more dynamic nature. His work will require more freedom and autonomy. What does that mean actually? Does that mean a knowledge worker's job will never remain the same? Or it's nature will be of a different kind? Are we implying that he will have to keep on acquiring new capabilities? Probably, it's true. Knowledge worker is dynamic, is flexible, possesses divergent thinking capability as well as convergent thinking and is able to provide answers to all the questions arising in his day-to-day work.

The Rise of New Generation:

Knowledge worker has good knowledge of his work. Sometimes, more than what his bosses know of it. More than his supervisors, more than his managers. Since he knows more than everyone else, he is expected to be innovative. Everyone in the organization expects knowledge worker to be experimental in his approach to work. When he experiments, tries new ideas, he is expected to solve many of the problems in his daily work. He is expected to be an expert in his area of work. Be it job of an academician, or of an engineer, of a scientist, of an accountant, of a lawyer, of a physician, of a pharmacist, of an architect, of a scientist, of an editor, or a programmer. Hundreds of such jobs exist that require thinking ability in order to be discharged well. If that is Ok, does that mean all workers are knowledge workers? Some experts give an affirmative answer, while some disagree. Though it is true that each member of the workforce is an expert in something, we shall not say all workers are knowledge workers by that logic. Equally true is the fact that business managers can not call some jobs as mindless and of routine nature and hence can be withered away. Jobs of highly routine nature may also require some improvement on a frequent basis and may require application of judgement power in complex or ambiguous situations. Application of unique knowledge by knowledge workers in problem-solving plays a vital role. They are capable of solving problems in a very creative manner. Thereby adding value to their work, adding value to their roles, adding value to the organization as a whole.

Experts believe that as technology is improving and getting accustomed to new technology is increasingly difficult, this gives rise to a new generation of workforce- the knowledge worker. Knowledge workers create original knowledge product or add value. But on this parameter, they can not be called creative workers. They handle and distribute information and may not necessarily be creative. Knowledge workers search for information most of their time and thus, increase their dependency on information technology. One may look around and may find such people everywhere, in offices, in airport lounge, etc. researches have shown that they spend about forty percent of their time searching for information. All information is not knowledge. The information that is put to use at work is knowledge. Information applied to specific work performance can be classified as

knowledge. We all must also agree that only human beings can convert information into knowledge with their brain power.

In technological times, people learn anytime, anywhere. People working in the business world, or anywhere else find it convenient, easy and comfortable to explore information, gather information and put it to judicial use. The information is better applied by knowledge workers as they are always on the path of learning. In fact, learning more and more. Such knowledge worker are capable of taking organizations they work for on the path of success, on the path of generating more revenues, on the path of innovation and creativity, on the path of sustainability, and on the path of true success. As they provide a solid foundation to their respective organizations, they may not like to be overseen or managed. If at all, managed by someone, they themselves be called knowledge workers as well. Knowledge workers spend approximately two-fifth of their time looking for information. Sometimes, this class is also called learning workers by many. They may often be known as 'gold collars' as their remuneration is quite high.

The Generation of Knowledge Worker

The proportion of knowledge workers in the total workforce is increasing in many organizations, and it will continue to rise in the coming decades. Industry experts predict that knowledge workers are the future of workforce. They quickly learn, adapt faster and succeed in their respective jobs. They also help others around them to grow and learn in their careers. Knowledge workers innovate and interact with all stakeholders in advanced manner. Social media tools help them collaborate in better ways. They also engage in peer-to peer knowledge sharing for mutual benefit. In this manner, a network of expertise is formed. Networking and collaboration is the future of a business enterprise to survive and sustain. Exchange of knowledge in a free manner is good for society as well.

Knowledge workers are on the rise. It is rising as a new generation. A generation that organizations will look forward to. Knowledge workers may outnumber other workers in many nations, especially the developed ones. And the trend may be seen very soon in less-developed ones too. Rapid global expansion is giving rise to information-based activities and transactions on day -to-day basis. This is encouraging more workers to explore information and learn from it. Estimates indicates more than ten lakh jobs of knowledge workers might add to employment statistics on a yearly basis.

Global organizations encourage and emphasize on providing a conducive work atmosphere to its knowledge workers to learn, experiment and pass on their knowledge and experience to others. This helps the organizations to be competitive and successful. The new generation of knowledge workers gets encouraged and feel free to work in their own ways. They avoid being managed. As they know better, they know more than their bosses, they are in demand, in great demand. Lifelong learning is their key. They control their own work.

Knowledge workers use their creative abilities, skills, talents and knowledge for better productivity both in manufacturing industries and service sector. Apart from their generic roles, they perform functions involving brain activity, thinking abilities and mental stamina. People working in the business world, or anywhere else find it convenient, easy and comfortable to explore information, gather information and put it to judicial use. The information is better applied by knowledge workers as they are always on the path of learning. In fact, learning more and more. Such knowledge worker are capable of taking organizations they work for on the path of success, on the path of generating more revenues, on the path of innovation and creativity, on the path of sustainability, and on the path of true success. They are difficult to be managed. Creativity and autonomy will be the order of the business world.

As knowledge work is complex, one shall have both theoretical and factual knowledge. One must be able to find, access, organize and apply useful information in his job. Loads and loads of information may be available, but how to choose and apply relevant information in daily routine is essential. This skill is possessed by new knowledge workers. Sometimes they get trained to attain mastery of information that they may need to use in their roles as a specialist. For example, a sales manager may need training to understand his customers' preferences of products or services. He is expected to have in-depth knowledge of products of his firm. Similarly, a pharmacy person is expected to have thorough knowledge and understanding of the medicines, their chemical combinations, their side effects, caution to be taken, e.g. If it is to be taken empty stomach or after meal or before sleep, it's possible effects on a person like dizziness, tiredness or swelling etc.. Knowledge workers reject the unnecessary information and select the useful one. Doing so, helps them find alternative solutions to problems, find answers to different questions, and help generate new ideas. Knowledge workers transform information into knowledge. They possess a unique skill to apply knowledge in their work and share knowledge with others. This culminates into creation of a learning environment throughout the organization.

CONCLUSION

The world is experiencing a new generation of workforce-the Knowledge Workers. Knowledge workers are on the rise. It is rising as a new generation. A generation that organizations will look forward to. Knowledge workers may outnumber other workers in many nations, especially the developed ones. They are the workers of the future. They may soon outnumber the traditional workers. They are difficult to be managed. Creativity and autonomy will be the order of the business world. A generation that organizations will look forward to.

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