

Capturing Knowledge

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Hire employees and keep them for 30 years - that's a vision that few companies still possess. Today's companies are more likely to see employees come and go much more frequently. And when people leave, no matter what the reason, they may leave their replacements to fend for themselves with little information and even less knowledge on how to use that information successfully. As knowledge plays a critical role in the new information-based economy, companies are realizing that the lack of preservation of knowledge threatens the success of the organization itself.

"The capture and transfer of knowledge is a strategy that pays off in our ever-transient workplace."

Knowledge Continuity

Whether an employee leaves due to retirement, layoff, transfer or termination, the challenge is the same: *Will the knowledge that an employee has gained be lost when the employee leaves?*

Knowledge continuity is an organizations' ability to capture and use knowledge both during and after an employee leaves. This is a huge challenge for organizations who for years have relied on informal methods to share knowledge and have few systems in place to house that knowledge. And capturing knowledge is only part of the challenge. It's often at the point of leaving that the employer hopes to capture the employee's knowledge, at a time when the employee may be unwilling or unable to share it.

Knowledge vs. Information

Organizations have become very good at capturing information. In fact, in many cases they have overloaded employees with information. Just look at the rise in IT over the past 20 years as evidence. What's lacking is the capturing of knowledge: the understanding, interpretation and application of information. Within that knowledge base, it is the tacit knowledge, or knowledge stored in the heads of employees, that is the most crucial to capture. Tacit knowledge is gained over time, through on-job experience, trial and error, successes and failures. Tacit knowledge is at the heart of innovations and essential for the development of intellectual property.

As organizations develop a more strategic approach to learning, knowledge continuity is becoming a crucial element to that strategy. The capture and transfer of knowledge is a strategy that pays off in our ever-transient workplace.

