

## Six Benefits to Sharing What You've Learned with Others



by Jakob Hutter

[Oscar Wilde](#) once said, "The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on. It is never of any use to oneself." When we talk about the role of knowledge in our organizations, we must understand it is essential to pass on the knowledge that we have gained from our training and experience to enable others to achieve organizational success. This post aims to explore a few reasons why knowledge sharing is important for organizations and individuals to capitalize on.

But first, why should you care about sharing your knowledge? It is safe to assume you have worked hard to obtain your knowledge through personal education and experience. It may even be safe to assume you sometimes have reservations about sharing it with [others](#). Whether through unwillingness to give up some power, believing there is not enough time, or simply not trusting the recipient, sharing your knowledge can sometimes be a challenge. However, holding onto it can potentially be more detrimental to the organization than simply sharing what you know.

### Individual Benefits

- **Professional Satisfaction.** Frederick Herzberg's [Two-Factor Motivation Theory](#) describes two professional forms of motivation: workplace motivating factors (factors within the actual job) and workplace hygiene factors (influences that surround the job). When it comes to knowledge sharing, leaders can utilize this model to create a command climate that motivates Soldiers while also giving them the opportunity to grow. This will ultimately lead to personal satisfaction in creating a positive environment for the organization.

- **Strengthens Personal Knowledge.** Everyone has their own strengths that they bring to their unit. These strengths allow them to be a contributing member to the team and make everyone more successful. When leaders open themselves to share their knowledge and experience with others they can set the tone that, in turn, builds honesty and trust within the organization. Furthermore, it can open a dialogue with others to share their own knowledge. This process will make everyone better and serve as a vehicle for personal/professional development.
- **Enhances Own Growth.** When we are willing to share our knowledge with others, they are more apt to reciprocate with their own experiences. This can help us as leaders see things from different perspectives, allowing us to further improve our own knowledge base.

### Organizational Benefits

- **Mitigates “reinventing the wheel.”** Learning from others can be incredibly important for organizations, especially when leaders take their newfound knowledge to a new organization. Typically this is done with a [continuity binder](#) or catalogue of after-action reviews that provides a one-stop shop for all information and prior lessons learned. The practice of sharing knowledge avoids repeating old mistakes and wasting time reinventing systems and processes.

- **Takes advantage of existing knowledge and expertise.** Effective organizations willingly share their knowledge and expertise to make everyone better. Everyone can integrate best practices, which can save time. It also encourages the team to openly communicate and gives others the opportunity to share what they know. Effective leaders will value their subordinate's contributions, taking their input and feedback to make the team more productive.
  
- **Stimulates innovation and growth.** Lastly, knowledge sharing usually has an unintended benefit: it stimulates innovation and growth. However, this must start with the organizational culture and setting a precedent that knowledge sharing will be valued and recognized. This culture can be a decisive factor in promoting innovative initiatives that will ultimately improve performance. It also allows members to respond faster to potential issues, which can be a competitive advantage in austere environments.

Effective leaders have an obligation and responsibility to serve their organizations to the best of their abilities. Sharing knowledge and expertise can be both personally and organizationally satisfying. It is important for leaders to be aware that they will eventually leave their assignment; creating a culture where knowledge sharing is encouraged will most certainly leave the organization better even when they have moved on.

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