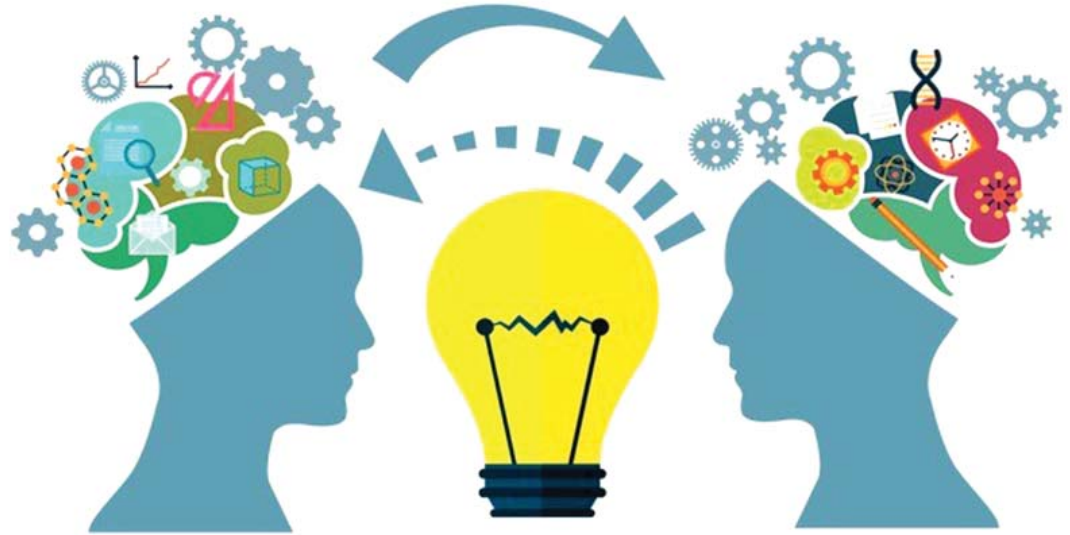


## Capture Company Knowledge

When employees leave an organization, they take important company knowledge that is essential for the organization's operations. It leaves current team members attempting to put the puzzle of projects, internal systems, vendor agreements, and staff management together. This can ultimately lead to chaos, frustration, and lack of productivity.



A knowledge transfer plan can help you minimize downtime and help

create a plan to protect against knowledge loss. A knowledge transfer plan captures, stores, and disseminates the most essential of operational information. This plan can help boost productivity and increase employee satisfaction and retention.

### CREATE A KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PLAN

#### Discover and Capture Key Information

Decide what company knowledge is most important to capture by asking a few key questions:

- ▲ Which functions and employees are most critical to business operations?
- ▲ What knowledge is exclusive to only a particular person or department?
- ▲ What tools are necessary for employees to do their jobs?
- ▲ What skills does each job require, and which skills do current employees have?

The answers can help you determine what you need to know to continue operating at a high level if one or more employees leave. Lean on technology and company managers to help you identify and gather information.

Knowledge capture should be a year-round process, and a knowledge transfer plan should include opportunities to collect that knowledge from various sources. There are two types of knowledge:

- ▲ Explicit knowledge is more easily recorded and shared—for example, how to process a biweekly payroll or onboard a new employee.
- ▲ Tacit knowledge is less obvious and harder to share. This type of knowledge is often gained through experience or observation, such as a manager learning how to handle an employee reacting unfavorably to a performance review.

Some employees need help to accurately reflect in writing what they do and how they do it. That's why it may be more beneficial to have a manager or another employee shadow a departing employee for a day or two or for an employee to record their day-to-day duties.

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**Important knowledge can also be collected by:**

- ▲ Interviewing or surveying staff about their duties.
- ▲ Conducting regular skills assessments to learn which skills are required for which positions, which skills your employees currently have, and where you have skills gaps.
- ▲ Pouring through policy and procedure manuals or shared collaboration documents.
- ▲ Holding meetings or focus groups with the sole purpose of collecting knowledge.

**Process, Store and Share**

How you store company knowledge is almost as important as the information itself. Keep privacy and security concerns in mind and ensure that knowledge is easy to access. After all, siloed information is a major barrier to employee satisfaction and collaboration.

Company knowledge should be easily searchable. It's recommended that standardization policies be established, such as naming conventions for folders, files, and shared drive storage, as well as requirements for documenting progress on ongoing projects.

Also, be sure to inspect what you expect regularly. It's important to allow employees autonomy in their roles and ensure that company processes are followed. For example, managers can set aside monthly time to check files and ensure documents are stored using the preferred method.

A knowledge transfer plan can help you minimize downtime and create a plan to protect against company knowledge loss. A knowledge transfer plan can capture, store, and disseminate the most important operational information. By having this plan in place, it can help boost productivity, increase employee satisfaction, and retention.

As you collect and store your company's most vital information, experiment with the best ways to share that information across the organization. Job shadowing is one of the most effective ways for a new employee or cross-training—teaching employee's specific tasks or skills. It's also a great way to broaden workers' skill sets

and ensure coverage for essential tasks when an employee leaves, becomes sick, or goes on vacation. Allowing employees to share best practices and skills, such as through brown-bag lunch-and-learns or recorded tutorials, can also help disseminate knowledge throughout the organization.

**Benefits of Testing the Plan**

How do you know if your knowledge transfer plan is working? See what happens when an employee goes on vacation. While it's natural for the workflow

to be bumpier while they're gone, important work shouldn't come to a standstill.

Additionally, you can set knowledge transfer goals, such as requiring managers to identify and cross-train a set number of employees in a given period, and then allow those employees to flex their new skills.

Certain key performance indicators are good signs of whether your knowledge transfer plan is producing unwanted results, such as changes in customer or employee satisfaction scores, employee productivity levels or the time it takes for new team members to ramp up.

Inevitably, when an employee leaves an organization, time and resources are lost, but a quality knowledge transfer plan means managers don't have to start from scratch. Instead, they have a foundation of knowledge to help train a new worker, even after the original employee doing the job leaves.

**Knowledge Management Cycle**

