

# **Building a Better Business**

**Making a Difference Through Knowledge Sharing**

# Building Relationships

Networking

Consideration  
and  
Recognition

Trust  
and  
Empowerment

## Making a Difference Through Knowledge Sharing

Gathering  
and  
Developing  
Knowledge

Applying  
Expertise

Managing  
and Sharing  
Information

Communicating  
Knowledge

**Building a  
Knowledge  
Base**

**Building  
Knowledge  
Value**

**Building a Better Business**

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## **What it is:**

Seeking contacts and building relationships with others.

Knowing who has specific skills, experience and knowledge and how to contact them.

Involving people with relevant expertise in projects and activities.

## **What it is not:**

Wasting time “re-inventing the wheel” by not involving the right people.

Focusing solely on your own area of the business and treating your own department as an island to be defended.

Limiting the knowledge base that you draw on to make decisions.

Working separately from others and/or competing with them.

## ***Building Relationships***

# Networking

## Developing this competency

- ✓ Identify key people and key teams across the business who you need to cooperate with. Arrange meetings and discuss how you can work together more effectively.
- ✓ Maintain a list of people who can provide you with assistance. Record their areas of expertise and contact details. Alternatively, use your organisation's skills database if it exists – and keep your own record updated in the system.
- ✓ Participate in appropriate forums and professional bodies.
- ✓ Contact people in your network regularly to foster mutually beneficial relationships. Don't just contact them when you need something.

## Influence of personality

People who are ambitious and concerned about things going well and about how others see them, place more importance on networking as a matter of course. Those who set themselves less ambitious work targets or don't worry about the views of others, may need to pay more attention to developing this competency.

## **What it is:**

Listening attentively to the contributions of others.

Reacting to others with consideration and tolerance.

Building rapport and motivating others through recognition, encouragement and reward.

## **What it is not:**

Forcing your own opinions onto other people.

Ignoring input from others.

Making assumptions about what others are thinking.

Claiming the glory for yourself and not acknowledging the wider contribution.

# Consideration and Recognition

***Building Relationships***

## Developing this competency

- ✓ When a colleague is communicating an idea, listen, and ensure that you understand what he or she has said before you respond. Check understanding by asking questions or by reflecting back what has been said by paraphrasing the key points of what you have heard.
- ✓ Try to understand another's point of view based on who they are, the likely pressures they are under and their goals.
- ✓ Be objective and non-judgemental when interacting with others. Confront the issues, not the person.
- ✓ Use people's names when you speak to them.

## Influence of personality

People who are keen to achieve high standards, are outgoing and comfortable in social situations and are keen to present a positive image of themselves may find it easier to build rapport with others and recognise the contribution that other people can make. A pragmatic and common sense approach to life can also make it more likely that someone will be tolerant and considerate to others. In contrast, people who set less ambitious targets, are reserved, self-critical and/or have a particularly conceptual view of the world, may need to pay more attention to developing this competency.

## **What it is:**

Providing others with the knowledge, tools, and other resources to complete a task successfully.

Considering knowledge as a resource to be used for the 'common good'.

Openly sharing knowledge that others may find useful or relevant.

Treating others in a fair and consistent manner.

## **What it is not:**

Preventing others from making significant contributions.

Keeping key pieces of information to oneself.

Using information as power.

Ignoring opportunities to coach or provide feedback to others.

## ***Building Relationships***



## Developing this competency

- ✓ Actively seek to receive feedback about your behaviour with regard to knowledge sharing.
- ✓ Improve the level of genuine and honest feedback you provide to others.
- ✓ Find ways to coach others in real time. Offer to act as a coach for a particularly stressful event by giving the opportunity to rehearse before and debrief afterwards.
- ✓ Identify tasks that would be challenging to others and delegate to them where appropriate.
- ✓ Set the terms of reference for work and not the detailed plan.

## Influence of personality

People who are keen to meet high standards, are confident with others and are supportive and tolerant of the needs of others are more likely to act fairly and give people the authority and resources they need to succeed. In contrast, those who set less ambitious targets, don't necessarily worry about how things will turn out and prefer their own company may be less interested in the needs of others and may need to focus on developing this competency.

## **What it is:**

Continual regard to personal and professional development.

Working to build on previous experience.

Seeking out ideas and opinions from other people.

Aiming to keep your own knowledge up-to-date.

## **What it is not:**

Failing to take advantage of knowledge and skills across your organisation.

Ignoring coaching or feedback opportunities.

Disregarding own development needs.

Alienating yourself from others at work.

***Building a Knowledge Base***

**Gathering and Developing  
Knowledge**

## Developing this competency

- ✓ Always be willing to learn. Encourage your colleagues to express ideas to you openly.
- ✓ Find a mentor with whom you can regularly review progress and who will provide constructive feedback and give coaching where necessary.
- ✓ Find every opportunity to discuss your work with others (other teams, senior managers, etc) and to find out about their projects.
- ✓ Organise lunch meetings where individuals can share best practice on key work issues.
- ✓ Visit leading edge firms that have a reputation for being 'Learning Organisations' and transfer ideas back to your team.

## Influence of personality

People who are ambitious, keen to achieve high standards and are outgoing and interested in other people may find it easier to develop and keep their knowledge up-to-date. In contrast, people who set themselves lower targets and are relatively less comfortable with and interested in other people, may need to focus on developing this competency.

## **What it is:**

Creating and supporting systems and procedures that individuals can use to file, catalogue and share knowledge.

Making effective use of available media to share knowledge across the organisation.

Encouraging others to use knowledge sharing systems.

Encouraging communication and collaboration.

## **What it is not:**

Waiting to be asked for information rather than offering it to others.

Adopting a silo mentality within teams and departments.

Taking a back seat in discussions rather than offering relevant knowledge or the benefit of your experience.

Failing to keep everyone up to date with progress.

## ***Building a Knowledge Base***

## Developing this competency

- ✓ Remember that sharing your information might save someone “re-inventing the wheel.”
- ✓ Ensure that you have access to, and are able to use the systems available for sharing knowledge in the organisation.
- ✓ When receiving new information, ask who else would be interested or who needs it.
- ✓ Volunteer knowledge, views and opinions before being asked.
- ✓ Share what you have learnt from your experiences – successes and failures.
- ✓ Participate actively in communities relating to your work practices.

## Influence of personality

People who are ambitious and keen to meet high standards may tend to use and encourage others to use knowledge management and information management systems in the organization. In contrast, people who are less ambitious and set lower targets and/or place their priorities outside of work, may need to pay more attention to developing this competency.

## **What it is:**

Explaining and expressing ideas, concepts and opinions in a clear and fluent manner both in writing and via presentations.

Adapting your presentation style according to the communication channel / audience.

Being aware of the needs of the audience.

## **What it is not:**

Providing knowledge that recipients do not need.

Not allowing the opportunity for people to check that they have understood your message.

Failing to adapt your approach to the audience.

Communicating the 'nice to know' rather than the 'need to know.'

Communicating  
Knowledge

***Building Knowledge Value***

## Developing this competency

- ✓ Research the needs and points of view of those attending your presentations and reading your documents.
- ✓ Be clear about the purpose of the communication.
- ✓ Ask others to give a summary of what you have said to check how well you have communicated.
- ✓ Ask a colleague to evaluate your work critically and give you some tips on areas of improvement.
- ✓ Make an effort to mix with a variety of people, inside and outside your organisation, and try consciously to identify the different styles that they adopt. Practice adapting your style to fit with theirs.

## Influence of personality

People who find that they enjoy explaining their ideas to others may be particularly creative and enjoy thinking about new ideas in general. If they are also relatively outgoing, even though they may be tense before important events, then they are likely to find it easier to adapt the style of a presentation or document to the needs of the audience. In contrast, people who are particularly pragmatic, tend to be nonchalant and /or are reserved with strangers, may need to pay attention to developing this competency.

## **What it is:**

Understanding the technical aspects of your job.

Ensuring that you apply your knowledge and previous experience effectively.

Making the most of available technologies to ensure that work is completed effectively and efficiently.

## **What it is not:**

“Re-inventing the wheel” by failing to look at the work others have already carried out.

Withholding information that you know will be useful to others.

Failing to take action that you know is appropriate.

***Building Knowledge Value***



## Developing this competency

- ✓ Review your current level of knowledge in your job and identify any key gaps. Seek out training and development opportunities to fill each of the identified gaps.
- ✓ Seek opportunities for involvement in a technically challenging project where you will have to update your skills and knowledge.
- ✓ Identify areas of future technical or commercial knowledge or skill that are likely to become critical to success in your job and focus on developing these.
- ✓ Organise discussions at work with other specialists in your field. Meet regularly to review and discuss relevant and topical issues. Participate in relevant communities of practice and professional associations.

## Influence of personality

People who are intellectually curious and keen to meet high standards (including worrying about how things will turn out) are likely to pay particular attention to applying technical expertise and job knowledge. In contrast, those who adopt a more down to earth approach, place their priorities outside of work and are easy-going and even nonchalant, may need to work harder to develop this competency.

With Thanks to All Those Who Contributed to this Research Project.

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Professor Dave Bartram (SHL)

Professor Malcolm Higgs (HMC)

Mary Allmark (Qinetiq)

John Burrows (Buckman)

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**HENLEY**  
UNIVERSITY OF READING



The Henley Knowledge Management Forum was established in 2000. Membership currently includes more than 30 private and public sector organizations, many of which are global organizations.

Between 2001 and 2003, a Working Group of members studied the relationship between knowledge sharing behaviours and personality. SHL Group plc, an international provider of workplace measurement and assessment co-championed the project, and provided access to its personality assessment tools (OPQ32 and Images) and the use of its Competency Framework. Using these tools and data provided by members of the Forum, the present knowledge sharing model was developed together with a Knowledge Sharing Competency Inventory. The research explored the relationships between these knowledge sharing behaviours and personality attributes.

This workbook describes the framework of knowledge sharing behaviours – expressed as a generic competency framework – that has emerged from the research carried out by the Working Group and the co-champions.

*More information about the Henley Knowledge Management Forum is available from:  
[www.henley.reading.ac.uk/kmforum](http://www.henley.reading.ac.uk/kmforum)*

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*More information on the SHL Knowledge Sharing Competency inventory and personality assessment is available from SHL (Research Division), The Pavilion, 1 Atwell Place, Thames Ditton, KT7 0NE. Telephone 020 8335 8000*