



IV Semester M.B.A. Degree Examination, June/July 2012  
(2007-08 Scheme)

Management

H-5 : KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ORGANISATION

Time : 3 Hours

Max. Marks : 75

SECTION – A

1. Answer **any five** questions. (6x2=12)

- a) What is learning organization ?
- b) What is knowledge management ?
- c) What is fusioning ?
- d) What is brain storming ?
- e) Which are called knowledge intensive organisations ?
- f) What is vision and strategy ?
- g) What is convergent thinking ?
- h) What do you understand by morphological analysis ?

SECTION – B

Answer **any three** questions. (3x8=24)

2. Analyze the paradigm of learning organizations.
3. Explain the model of life long Gratuity.
4. What are the three phases of learning ?
5. "Learning implies unlearning". Comment.
6. Briefly explain the drivers of knowledge.

P.T.O.



## SECTION - C

Answer **any two** of the following questions.

(2×12=24)

7. Discuss the nature of learning enterprise. Also explain the skills needed by learning organisations.
8. What should be infrastructure for knowledge management ? What is the role of information technology in knowledge management ?
9. What are the issues, challenges and benefits of knowledge management systems ?

## SECTION - D

**Case Study :**

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**JOHNSONVILLE FOODS**

This company was started in 1945 as a sausage making family business in Johnsonville, a small town in Wisconsin. In 1968, the company employed 12 persons. By 1980, its turnover was \$ 15 million, and the number of employees was 200. In 1978, Ralph Stayer, the owner's son, took over as CEO, and decided that the organization needed to change. He found people uninterested in their performance, prone to errors, and lacking in responsibility. He was also concerned about both regional and national competition, and wondered about the company's ability to survive any serious competitive challenge. He therefore, initiated a comprehensive programme of organizational transformation.

Stayer conceived an organization in which people would be responsible for their own performance. The changeover was shaped by his extensive discussions with managers and groups of employees. It was accomplished by recasting four fundamental and interrelated systems of the organization : performance, information/ feedback, reward , and people. The centre piece of the transformation process was the creation of highly autonomous, or, self-managing teams.

Members in a typical dozen-person work group at the company carry out wide ranging tasks which include the following (Peters, 1993):



- recruit, hire, evaluate, and fire (if necessary) on their own;
- regularly acquire new skills as they see fit, then train one another as necessary;
- formulate and then track and amend, their own budget;
- make capital investment proposals as needed (after doing the supporting analysis, making appropriate visits to equipment vendors, etc.);
- handle quality control, inspection, subsequent trouble shooting, and problem solving;
- take on the task of constantly improving every process and product;
- develop quantitative standards for productivity and quality, and then monitor them
- suggest and then develop prototypes of possible new products, packaging etc;
- routinely work on teams fully integrated with counterparts from sales, marketing, and product development;
- participate in "corporate-level" projects.

The transformation effort was successful. The company's revenue rose to \$ 130 million in 1991. Says CEO, "watching people grow is my number one joy".

"Continuous learning" and "lifetime learning" are a reality at Johnsonville. Most workers are literate in economics. They have taken a professional course in the subject which was developed with the local community college. This has enabled them to develop and track budgets easily. More important is the fact that workers are encouraged, with company financial support, to study anything which interests them irrespective of its being related to their job, or, not.

The company's Member Development Programme provides the resources to help members determine what they need, and to resources those needs. The responsibility for their development, however, remains with the members themselves. Employees are called members. One such resource provided is \$ 100 for each member to spend every year on any development activity he/she chooses. The activity may range from buying books to attending industry training. Another programme provides any member the opportunity to spend a day with any other member. This opportunity enables a member to understand better the job requirements of any other member, and learn from the latter's experience and skills. An extensive e-mail system allows members to share their successes with each other.



An example of organization-wide team learning, collective interpretation of reality, and collaborative problem-solving, is provided by a situation the company faced in 1985. The company had to decide about accepting an offer from a food-processing company to buy large quantities of product on a regular basis. The company did not have the requisite capacity to take on the new business. Earlier, CEO would have made a strategic decision after analysing carefully the issues involved with the help of his team of managers. In the new post-transformation situation, CEO called a meeting of the whole organization, gave them all the information he had, and asked them to work in teams to answer three questions : What will it take to make it work ? Is it possible to reduce the downside ? Do we want to do it ? The teams explored and examined the questions for two weeks in terms of the considerable risks involved, and the mode of operation required to accomplish substantial increase in production. Finally, the team decided almost unanimously to take on the new business (Dixon, 1994).

The whole company has become a collection of projects. Each team is involved in projects. Each person can generate projects. The focus of projects however, is not so much on coping with existing problems as on moving forward. Team members show strong social disapproval towards anyone not interested, or, involved in the "personal growth" business.

Says CEO, the architect of transformation :

"It's far more difficult to work at Johnsonville than at any other place. It takes a different class of person, a person who really wants to excel, because nothing else is accepted. We're here to give you an opportunity to achieve whatever it is you want to achieve in life. We'll also help you figure out what that is. We'll give you resources to do it. we're also going to give you a little push in that direction. But if you don't have a goal, if you don't see yourself as improving, you're not going to make it here. It's that simple. Because you're going to be letting down not only yourself; but all of your fellow workers... This is a way of life. You set the values that you cherish, that you will not deviate from. And then all of the other things flow from that... If you're really going to change how you do things, you have to change everything" (quoted by Peters, 1993).

Question :

Analyse the case and give your suggestion and recommendations.