

- Tend to act in their own best interests unless there is a greater goal
- Tend to follow the group
- Are subject to their own unique behavior traits

Shaping knowledge worker behavior can be encouraged by addressing the need to be recognized and the tendency to follow the group by promoting exemplary behavior through newsletters and the local newspapers. Similarly, many KM initiatives ignore the uniqueness of every knowledge worker and erroneously assume a homogeneous, intelligent, motivated workforce. However, this assumption is valid only to the extent that the human resources department is able to recruit the appropriate knowledge workers through screening and job placement.

In theory, a flat organization that lacks a managing knowledge gatekeeper may offer greater opportunity for knowledge sharing. However, allowing every knowledge worker to share and have access to all available information can be counterproductive, given that everyone desires to control his or her own environment, needs recognition, and tends to address personal interests first. It's impossible for knowledge workers to double as managers when they should be focused on getting their jobs done. Thus leadership, whether in the form of a corporate manager or someone appointed by self-organizing group, is key to the smooth operation of every knowledge organization.

The next chapter continues exploring KM principles and challenges by examining the processes involved in a knowledge organization.

Summary

Knowledge workers are central to the operation of a knowledge organization. Not only do they represent the greatest potential for multiplying the value of a company, but they also represent the greatest risk to value