**Explicit Knowledge:** Knowledge that is easy to articulate, write down, and share.

**Implicit Knowledge:** The application of explicit knowledge. Skills that are transferable from one job to another are one example of implicit knowledge.

**Tacit Knowledge:** Knowledge gained from personal experience that is more difficult to express.

Tacit, Explicit, and Implicit Knowledge: What’s the Difference?

If you get into a conversation with a knowledge management expert, be prepared for exact definitions of characterizations of knowledge. So, while we truly believe it doesn’t matter what kind of knowledge you’re dealing with (it’s all valuable), let’s dive into the definitions of each:

Explicit Knowledge

Explicit knowledge is the most basic form of knowledge and is easy to pass along because it’s written down and accessible. When data is processed, organized, structured, and interpreted, the result is explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easily articulated, recorded, communicated, and most importantly in the world of knowledge management, *stored*.

If you need an example of explicit knowledge, simply open your knowledge management platform and take a look around. Your company data sheets, white papers, research reports, etc. are all explicit company knowledge.

Implicit Knowledge

Implicit knowledge is the practical application of explicit knowledge. There are likely instances of implicit knowledge all around your organization. For example, consider asking a team member how to perform a task. This could spark a conversation about the range of options to perform the task, as well as the potential outcomes, leading to a thoughtful process to determine the best course of action. It is that team member’s implicit knowledge that educates the conversation of how to do something and what could happen. Additionally, best practices and skills that are transferable from job to job are examples of implicit knowledge.

Tacit Knowledge

Tacit knowledge is the knowledge that we possess that is garnered from personal experience and context. It’s the information that, if asked, would be the most difficult to write down, articulate, or present in a tangible form.

As an example, think of learning how to make your grandmother’s famous recipes. Sure, she gave you the recipe card, but when you try it on your own you feel as if something is missing. After years of experience, she has learned the exact feel for the dough, or exactly how long something should be in the oven. It’s not something she can write down; she can just *feel* it.

In the workplace, tacit knowledge is the application of implicit knowledge that’s specific to your company. As employees move from job to job, the application of their implicit knowledge will change based on what’s unique about your business. An example of this is a sales rep who can not only give a great demo but has also learned specific buying signs while talking to prospects.