Knowledge Workers' Ethical & Social Responsibilities

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Abstract
This paper elaborates the Knowledge Workers' social responsibilities and ethics. Research work contains a number of resources that were used to blend the research content along with Information System and IT activities into an exciting and practical working experience. The study focuses the general attitude of knowledge workers and provides recommendations to help every executive who wants to understand the ethical and social responsibilities of the knowledge workers in the info-tech environment. Through practical survey report, it was tried to analyze the workforce attitude about their responsibilities. The paper also provides recommendations for productive results of employees in the Info-Tech environment based on the executives' strategy before switching from manual to new innovative IT system. The Info-Tech level of organizations that relate the efforts to get executives involved with the concept s they are supporting to modify their existing set up from manual to computerized one for productive results is the focus area for research where executives face more complicated situations based on the reality of understanding while switching form functional management to knowledge management. It was tried to prove that the efficiency in the organization's operation management because of the knowledge workers' attitude that affects the overall results of organization efficiently and effectively.
Keywords: Knowledge Worker, Social Responsibilities and Ethics, Knowledge Management, Information & Communication Technology (ICT), Organizational Productivity.

1. Introduction
Computers are everywhere affecting us in every aspect of our lives. As businesses strive to become and remain competitive in the global market the demand for rapidly improving technology continues to rise. Because of advanced IT Application so many aspects of production and information processing are managed with computers business expect new employees to have a basic understanding of computers and competency in using common applications such as spreadsheets, word processors and databases.

The executives have also realized that knowledge workers play most important role in the success of organization and computer further enhances their efficiency. As the world is changing and the working environment is moving form manual to computerized system at the same time knowledge workers are the key of success but the challenge for executives is the productive results without losing knowledge workers. In the changing world knowledge workers are expected to balance their social responsibilities and ethics. In simple words any one responsible to deal with data, information or knowledge in any organization is called knowledge worker. The knowledge worker is always considered as a key player of success in today's knowledge-based economy in every part of the world. This knowledge worker is also expected to fully consider and understand his/her social responsibilities and ethics while dealing with knowledge for the productive result of organization. In this paper I would like to focus the ethical and social responsibilities of these workers for long lasting productive achievements.

We need to further elaborate and clear the concept and definition of knowledge worker before any discussion about their social responsibilities and ethics for better efficiency and achievements in the overall performance of any organization:
"So who is a knowledge worker?
- A problem solver versus a production worker;
- A person who uses intellectual rather than manual skills to earn a living;
- An individual who requires a high level of autonomy;
- A manipulator of symbols; someone paid for quality of judgment rather than speed of work;
- A worker who uses unique processes;
- Someone who possesses un-codified knowledge which is difficult to duplicate;
- A worker who sources between his ears;
- Someone who uses knowledge and information to add to deeper knowledge and information."

2. Two Main Types of Knowledge Worker
From a practical perspective it can be useful to consider two distinct types of knowledge worker, namely 'core knowledge workers' and 'everyone else'.
1. Core knowledge workers are those in specific 'knowledge management' roles. Examples include Chief Information/Knowledge Officers, Knowledge Managers, Librarians, Content Managers, Information

Officers, Knowledge Analysts, etc.

2. 'Everyone else' constitutes all the other knowledge workers including doctors, nurses, dentist, pharmacists, managers, technicians, administrators, etc.

Of course there is not always a clear dividing line between the two, but the distinction can be a useful one when starting out, it can be particularly useful in helping people to understand that everyone is a knowledge worker to some degree, and knowledge work is everyone's responsibility, not just that of a few people with 'information' or 'knowledge' in their job title.

3. Definition of Knowledge Worker

There is a range of ideas about what a 'knowledge worker' I and what characterizes them. Let us study the following definition of KW given by some knowledge management experts:

The term "knowledge worker" was coined by Peter Drucker in mid seventies to describe someone who adds value by processing existing information to create new information which could be used to define and solve problems, examples of knowledge workers include lawyers, doctors, diplomats, law makers, marketers, software developers, managers and bankers…"

According to Miller WC, the Knowledge Worker is the one who uses his/her intellect to convert his/her ideas into product, services or processes "Their main value to an organization is their ability to gather and analyze information and make decisions that will benefit the company. They are able to work collaboratively with and learn from each other; they are willing to take risks, expecting to learn from their mistakes rather be criticized for them"

According to Allee: "Knowledge workers are continually learning, aware that knowledge has a limited shelf life."

I believe that fewer and fewer people are subordinates even in fairly low-level jobs. Increasingly, they are knowledge workers. Knowledge workers cannot be managed as subordinates; they are associates. Once beyond the apprentice stage, knowledge workers must know more about their job than their boss does. The very definition of a knowledge worker is one who knows more about his or her job than anyone else in the organization. As Peter Drucker has highlighted in his book "Management's New Paradigms that what motives workers especially knowledge workers and what does motivate a volunteers. Volunteers we know, have to get more satisfaction from their work than paid employees precisely because they do not get a pay check. They need, above all, challenge. They need to know the organization's mission and to believe in it. They need continuous training. They need to see results. Implicit in this is that employees have to be managed as associates, partners and not in name only. The definition of a partnership is that all partners are equal."

"The productivity of the knowledge worker is still dreadfully low; it has probably not improved in the past 100 or even 200 years for the simple reason that nobody has worked at improving the productivity. All our work on productivity has been on the productivity of the manual worker. The way one maximizes their performance is by capitalizing on their strengths and their knowledge rather than trying to force them into molds."

It is therefore very clear from the above facts and discussion that knowledge workers is the modern terminology used for manpower with outstanding performance and anyone who believes in his/her individual capabilities.

4. Key Characteristics of Knowledge Workers

4.1   Recognize the role of information management in creation value

An organization must recognize and accept the critical role information management plays in the success of an organization and the leadership role the Knowledge Workers must assume in order to maximize the full potential of information technology.

4.2   Position the KW for success

The KW must be recognized as a full participant of the T&D management team and must be given the technical and management skill to meet business needs.

4.3   Ensure the credibility of the KWs in organization.

Without credibility the Knowledge Workers in any organization will not struggle. The KWs must have the commitment of the line management; must accomplish quick, high-impact, visible successes balanced with longer-term strategies; and must learn from partnering with successful leaders in the external information management community.

4.4   Measure success and demonstrate results

Technical measures must be balanced with business measures and manager must continually work to establish active feedback between performance measures and business processes.

4.5   Organization information resources to meet business needs.

In order to execute its responsibilities reliably and efficiently, the Knowledge Management (KM) organization must have a clear understanding of its responsibilities in meeting business needs. The organization should be flexible enough to adapt to change.

4.6   Develop information management human capital.

The KM organization identifies the skills it needs to implement information management in line with business needs; develops innovative ways to attract and retain talent; and provides the training, tools, and methods IT professionals must have to effectively perform their duties.

5. Knowledge Workers & Ethics

Every panacea has its poison. With all the good that computers bring to our society, they also have some negative side effects. In this paper, we discuss the environment in which computing occurs and the way information system helps the managers for better management decision and organizational productivity. Of the five components of every computing system (hardware, software, data, procedures and people) are the most unpredictable and uncontrollable and pose the greatest risk to successful computer operations. *The three major areas of concern for knowledge workers and the executives are security, crime and ethics.*

Workers deal with the data and once computers are installed and operating must be surrounded by a shield of protection against both malicious and accidental harm. The irony is that as the level of protection increases the system becomes less users' friendly. The best computer security comes from hiring highly ethical employees who are well trained in the operation of the computing system and have strong loyalties and commitment to the success of the organization. These workers are the asset and contribute a vital role in the success of future strategic plans. Knowledge workers with strong loyalty and ethical background contribute a lot in day to day operation management.

5.1 Data Security

Computer security refers to the physical protection of computer hardware, software, tape, reels, disk packs, source documents, documentation manuals, computer files and computer programs. Many organizations have formed internal computer security groups to formulate security policies and procedures.

A disaster recovery plan is a written plan for restoring computing operations back to normal in the event of major damage or destruction. An effective plan should provide for an alternate computer facility. A hot site is a fully equipped computer center. A cold site is an empty facility. A disaster recovery consortium is a joint venture in which the member organizations commit funds, equipment and personnel toward the establishment of a separate computer facility.

Internal security measures protect computer hardware and software. Security measures include devices, passwords and data encryption and decryption. Other measures include proper disposal of computer waste such as shredders to make document illegible, file and data logs, EDP audits, the separation of employee duties, software and data protection and the screening of job applicants. Steps can and should be taken to protect microcomputers as well. Microcomputers safety measures include installing a cable lock on the computer, protecting computer equipment from extreme temperatures and using a surge protector.

5.2 Data Privacy

Computer privacy refers to control of personal and confidential information. Mailing lists, telephone conversations and electronics mail all raise issues of privacy. The Fair Credit Reporting Act allows individuals access to their credit records and the right to challenge any information contained in them. The Freedom of Information Act permits citizens to access information collected by federal agencies. The Federal Privacy Act bans secret personal files kept by federal agencies. Everyone should be careful when supplying personal data to others.

5.3 Computer Crime

Four broad categories of computer crime are:

 (1) Sabotage
 (2) Accounting and financial crimes
 (3) Theft of computer equipment
 (4) Theft of computer services

Sabotage is the deliberate injury or destruction to computer hardware or software. A virus is a computer program that can alter or destroy programs and data. Computer viruses are spread via contaminated floppy disks, electronic bulletin boards, and computer networks. Special computer programs called vaccines are available for detecting and curing a virus. Accounting and financial crimes are committed frequently, resulting in large monetary losses. Slicing is the act of transferring fractions of cents into a separate account. Computer hardware and software theft is a growing problem in our society. Computer hacking is the illegal entry into other computer systems, regardless of the motives. One who engages in this practice is known as a computer hacker. Use of company computers for unauthorized personal use is an example of a theft of computer services. Asking the company programmer to help you install and run a personal tax preparation program is another. There must be a clear distinction between personal and business use of computer system.

5.3.1 Crime Prevention
Computer crime prevention involves steps designed to prevent computer crimes before they occur. The National Crime Information Centre (NCIC) in Washington, D.C, provides information to more than 65,000 law enforcement agencies around the country, and uses computers and complex statistical programs to predict the occurrence of crimes *(Washington Time November 2005)*. The Software Publishers Association (SPA) is the large and powerful software industry association's arm charge with the responsibility policing its software licensing agreements and use.

6. Ethics in the Computer Field
Ethics refers to a person's conduct and behavior. Computer ethics refers to a person's conduct and behavior as a computer professional. Several professional computer organizations have, and enforce, a strict code of ethics upon their members. Software piracy is the illegal copying of copyrighted software. A copyright is the legal registration of a person's written products with the U.S. Copyright Office in Washington, D.C. Some software, called public domain software, or freeware, and can be used by anyone without violating copyright laws. Shareware is distributed for free or for a nominal fee, with the proviso that if the user likes the product, he or she will send a license fee to the developer. Employee loyalty pertains to an employee's moral and legal obligations to an employer.

7. Internet Issues
Privacy of messages, the protection of personal information such as credit card numbers and the transmission of pornographic materials are all ethical issues involving the Internet that are currently being debated. Widespread use of the Internet is new and ethical standards will develop over time as we use the Internet more and more.

8. Ethics in the General Attitude
Every Knowledge worker today needs to be more aware about ethics than ever before. Because of globalization we have more opportunity to access international or multinational organization for jobs and business reasons. In order to be successful in long term strategy, one has to be well aware about the ethics and social responsibilities e.g. if one has to find better opportunity should take the existing organization's administration in confidence before maturing his / her decision. We do believe that the executives' must also be very much concern regarding the motivation and satisfaction of employees.

9. A Final Thought
Many of the issues discussed in this paper are a matter of common sense. An illegal action is usually obvious. One definition of an employee is "one who acts on the owner's behalf and best interests when the owner is absent." We owe our honest and loyalty to our employers and we should expect and demand that our fellow workers do the same. Without this ethical behavior, it will become necessary to limit computer access to a select few. The demand of today's fast changing world is the frequent up-gradation both Human & Technology for better results and long lasting benefits. The most important factor of success in the fast changing pace of society is the satisfactory working environment of knowledge workers of any organization. Knowledge workers require today more than ever being more concern with the data security and social responsibility.

10. Survey Report about Ethics & Social Responsibilities
To elaborate the importance of ethics and social responsibilities for knowledge workers, we conducted a survey and completed research at the Federally Chartered Universities where knowledge workers were interviewed and asked for questionnaire survey. As per our report, staffs in these institutions are already coming in the category of knowledge workers where they need to further bring efficiency in their daily performance for overall productivity of the organization while keeping in view their ethical and social responsibilities during duty hours.

10.1Questionnaire (Survey Data)

Q-1   **Are you satisfied from your current position?**
             67% say yes, 25% pass no comments and 8% are not satisfied
Q-2   **Do you feel comfortable within the existing administrative set-up?**
             Only 20% believe that they are very much comfortable while 80% believe that they are just comfortable within the existing setup.
Q-3   **How do you find your job while dealing with information?**
             100% of the employees accept that they are comfortable while dealing data
Q-4   **Are you comfortable with the computerized information system?**
             70% say yes, 10% don't and 20% have no idea about
Q-5   **Do you believe that computerized system improves working efficiency?**
             80% do believe in and 20% have no idea about

Q-6   **Do you understand your social responsibilities & ethics while dealing with date, information and knowledge?**
    80% say yes they do while 20% say that they are not very clear about

Q-7   **Do you deal with information processing system yourself?**
    40% say they do deal most of the time and the 60% say they do deal sometime

Q-8   **Do you accept that information is the key to success?**
    100% of the staff accept that information is the key to success

Q-9   **Do you believe in the free flow of information among employees?**
    100% of them believe in the free flow of information

Q-10   **If you find a better job opportunity will you prefer to join that at once?**
    50% say not at all while 50% say it depends on the package

Q-11   **What are the main problems you face in the existing Job?**
    70% say coordination is the main problem they face, 20% say it is nature of work and 10% say it is environment

Q-12   **What changes you suggest in the existing set up?**
    70% say they want career development and 30% want change in working style

Q-13   **What do you say about the main social responsibility of employees?**
    60% say loyalty 20% say Job-Timing and 20% say productivity

Q-14   **Do you share your job related confidential information with someone else?**
    50% say never while 50% say it depends

Q-15   **What are the main drawbacks in the computerized system?**
    50% say it is training to learn 35% say chances of error & 15% say complication

Q-16   **What are the main advantages of Info-Tech environment in your job?**
    70% say it is productivity 20% say data security and 10% say innovation

Q-17   **I know how to secure my data in my computer?**
    90% say yes they want it while 10% say to some extant

Q-18   **Do you like on job training about ethics from time to time?**
    90% say yes they want it while 10% say to some extant

Q-19   **Are you happy with top management general attitude and behavior?**
    50% say yes they are happy while 50% say to some extant

Q-20   **How do you find yours administration in daily working hours?**
    60% say they find it supportive while 40% say friendly

Q-21   **What charges you suggest to the top level management**?
    80% say it is friendly and 20% say supportive

Q-22   **How can you improve your daily performance?**
    80% want it to announce more incentives while 20% also suggest being friendly

Q-23   **What qualification you have & what skills you enjoy as knowledge worker?**
    80% believe in staff support and coordination while 20% say ethics/responsibility

Q-24   **What option you would like to choose if you select among the following?**
    80% say to be dedicated to the current job while 20% say to the responsible for social and ethical responsibilities and further qualification & self up gradation.

Q-25   **What do you plan for the future?**
    60% say they would like to remain at the same job while 40% prefer to look forward for better opportunities.

Q-26   **What do you say about the social & ethical responsibilities of employees?**
    Many of the staff members believe in that everyone has to be very well aware about the ethical and social responsibilities of knowledge workers. They also want the administration to conduct and organize time to time the workshops on the topic of ethical and social responsibilities.

11. Result

The knowledge workers are the people who deal with data for their particular job responsibilities. It has been observed that every staff member believes that information is the key to success and it is also very important to maintain and secure the data & information as an important social responsibility. It has been observed that the top management must arrange and organize some ethical and social workshops and discussions for better and productive results.

12. Conclusion

Fire has number of advantage in our daily life but at the same time this fire can be very dangerous if we do not make a proper use of it. Internet, computer and all other IT related systems can help us out for comfortable life

and efficiency on our daily working responsibilities but at the same time we need to be very much aware about the proper use of these systems.

Furthermore, information and communication technology such as groupware make free much work from geographical constraints. As the work process structure includes people who are scattered throughout the world, leadership requires much higher levels of interactivity, to create trust and shared understanding of strategic goals. The development of knowledge and shared values combined with leadership that walks the talk can lift people from chip thinking to understanding of organization as a tool to serve human goals rather than a jungle where one succeeds by dominating territory. Social responsibilities and ethics and the awareness about them is very important among all knowledge workers to effectively hit the set targets for the successful organizations.

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