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creating high performance work teams**

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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COLLABORATION IN  
CREATING HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK TEAMS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Susan Van Gelder

September 2011

Mark Allen, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Harry Way Gong, and my late mother, Connie Martinez Corral. Ever since I was a very young child, my father would encourage me to become a doctor. He saw more potential in me years ago than I found in myself. My mother, Connie, would always say she wanted me to have all the things she did not have, including education. She was so proud when I received my bachelor's degree years ago as I was the first in my family to achieve that milestone. My parents have always supported my endeavors and encouraged me to be the best that I can be. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for raising me to become the woman I am today. I know they are proud of this doctoral accomplishment; my Dad from across the miles, and my Mom smiling down from heaven.

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Sheri was there for me when I really needed someone during the comprehensive examination process. I'll never forget that. She is my cheerleader and someone I can always count on.

In the course of one's career, it becomes necessary to have mentors to help attain our goals and grow into great leaders. I want to thank Ed Schaniel for inspiring me to go for my doctorate degree, which at the time, I hadn't even considered. His words still ring in my ears "leaders are the purveyors of hope." Marta Schaper has been my mentor for many years, probably the longest tenure, and thanks to her, she has stayed on me to finish my degree and never let up. Aside from that, she has encouraged me to believe in myself and her words of wisdom gave me the opportunity to grow in my career. My newest mentor and friend, Carolyn Hodges, has inspired me to remain true to myself and her genuine constructive critique is a true gift to all who receive it.

Within the last year, the requirements for the dissertation have changed from APA 5th edition to APA 6th edition. Thankfully, Suzanne Manness, my editor, successfully transitioned my dissertation accordingly. Because of her, she has ensured the successful editing of my dissertation. I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Tom Granoff for his outstanding assistance in my quantitative research. He has a special gift of interpreting statistical data and explaining it in layman's terms for all to understand. His undying support allowed me to finish my dissertation much sooner than without him, not to mention he was fun to work with.

From the beginning of the doctoral program to the end, Pepperdine University is blessed to have Christie Dailo, facilitator-coordinator extraordinaire at our service. She is the unsung hero, who deserves special recognition. Christie, from behind the scenes,

brings it together for the students and professors, from obtaining our classes, to coordinating with the professors, ensuring we all have what we need to succeed. We would be lost without Christie.

The most important group of people in a doctoral study is the dissertation committee. They are the team that ensures the success of the doctoral student. I want to thank Dr. June Schmieder-Ramirez for taking time out of her super busy schedule to be on my committee. She has given positive and constructive feedback in both the preliminary and final oral defense. I have learned so much from Dr. June in and out of the classroom. She is an outstanding Professor. I want to personally thank Dr. Kami Moghaddam for being on my committee. Dr. Kami has been there for me during the entire doctoral journey. He has taken the time to meet with me and has inspired me to finish and given me the confidence to do so. Without his inspiration, I would have been hard pressed to finish. Dr. Kami is an exceptional mentor to many people and is a leader that is highly sought after. Last but certainly not least, I want to give special thanks to my Chair, Dr. Mark Allen. Words cannot describe his continued uplifting support with my dissertation. In my opinion, he is the best Chair one can have. Dr. Mark has been my Champion and I thank him eternally. He has the uncanny ability to positively critique a dissertation to make it even better. In retrospect, he's turned my idea into a viable study.

There are so many people to thank and be grateful for. I want to thank my friends and family for all their support during my doctoral studies, for their inquiries of where I am at in the process, and their encouragement to keep going. Now I am able to spend more quality time with them which I am looking forward to doing. I dedicate my doctoral accomplishment to my father, Harry Gong and my late mother, Connie Martinez Corral.

They believed in me more than I believed in myself. They inspired me to do whatever I put my mind to do. I appreciate my parents instilling the values I have today.

Lastly, I want to give a special thanks to my husband, Cory. He has been my rock throughout my doctoral process. He has been my researcher for my dissertation, while I was inundated in my new managerial career. He gave me his total support and encouragement, even in my darkest hours. I respect and honor Cory for all he is and does for me. I would not be writing this acknowledgement today, if it weren't for my husband.

In closing, I want to thank everyone who has helped me achieve my final educational milestone of this doctoral degree.

## VITA

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the feedback and data extracted from employees of the supply chain organization of an aerospace company, in developing a plan or model to encourage knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. This study also determines the level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale. The company's recent survey results indicated low employee morale. While various types of recognition are in place in the supply chain organization, as well as Employee Involvement/Engagement team based business initiatives to capture process improvements, the problem is that there is no formal implementation program to encourage knowledge sharing/transfer among the employees. A survey was given to 125 current employees of the supply chain organization. The participants were invited to respond to a validated survey instrument intended to answer four research questions. A total of 114 employees (107 individual contributors and 7 managers) responded and completed the survey. The four research questions measured the effectiveness of leaders in promoting knowledge sharing, what influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees, what do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing, and how are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents. This was a quantitative study in nature, utilizing descriptive statistics to analyze the data derived from the knowledge sharing survey. Study findings revealed that participants perceived their leaders as being supportive in knowledge sharing and open to new ideas. The findings also indicated that a specific

company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing would have an overwhelming positive effect on morale and behavior. The most frequent perceived barriers were a tendency to resist change, concern about job security or loss of job and a lack of openness in sharing useful information. The data also indicated that regardless of the demographics of the participants, they interpreted the survey and answered in a consistent manner. Finally, the researcher recommends a knowledge sharing model to encourage knowledge transfer.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In the last decade, to keep a competitive edge in the global marketplace, the executive leadership at the XYZ Aerospace Company has mandated that the Employee Involvement or Employee Engagement (EI/EE) initiative will have 100% participation among employees. In addition, the leadership believes that this initiative can be a catalyst in transforming the company from a command and control to an empowering and coaching organization. The EI/EE objectives are (a) to create a team-based culture and environment that can promote clear vision, (b) clear communication, (c) collaboration among team members, and (d) problem solving as a team.

Today, with over 500 active teams participating in Team Appreciation Day on May 2009, in Long Beach, California, from cross functional teams, special projects teams or natural work teams, under the auspices of EI/EE are celebrated as part of the culture in the XYZ Aerospace Company. “An often-replicated finding from social psychology indicates that if you can get people involved in a collaborative process, their level of commitment to that process will increase. Their attitudes toward others and the organization will be more positive” (Mink, Owen, & Mink, 1993, p. 55).

Even with the omnipresence of EI/EE in the XYZ Aerospace Company, there are pockets of developing organizations with a heavy military influence, in other words, a command and control influence. Successful teams with the right leader/coach will flourish. As Mink et al. (1993) stated, “Typical superior-subordinate relationships, where power, dominance, and control are issues, disallow good coaching” (p. 20).

With the emergence of heavy military influence, a way must be found to sustain the EI/EE culture. According to Marquardt (1996), author of *Building the Learning Organization*, in mastering one competency without the other:

If groups are empowered but not enabled, they are very dangerous ‘mad pilots,’ with lots of power but no direction. If they are enabled but not empowered, they are like ‘caged eagles,’ with lots of ability that they are not allowed to use. (p. 7)

As Weiss summarizes Marquardt’s statement, “Therefore, we must understand that nurturing these competencies to maturation require our best people and their best effort” (p. 7).

In a recent employee survey within the growing organization, although 95% of employees are proud of the products and services of the XYZ Aerospace Company, 53% of employees are dissatisfied with how staffing is based on ability and skills in hiring employees and 54% of employees are inspired by their management to excel in their work every day. According to Colan (2009), these are signs of disengagement growing in the teams. Not surprisingly, some disengaged employees will choose to leave. The employees that do leave take with them their tacit knowledge, vital to the organization. What is left behind is the remainder of a team that must figure out how to backfill the employee that has departed:

Like a black hole in space, corporate turnover absorbs resources at an astonishing rate. It is far and away the most significant uncalculated expense in corporate America. Some estimates to replace a departing employee range up to a stunning 250% of that person’s annual salary. (Gostick & Elton, 2007, p. 12)

Gostick and Elton (2007) stated that the high cost of the turnover rate have to do with the type of people who are leaving: “If most of the people who left were poor performers, turnover would be a good thing. But it’s not” (p. 12).

Therefore, team building is crucial to improving the performance of an organization. In the book *Organizational Behavior* by Robbins (2003), organizations are increasingly relying on teams to accomplish work tasks. Robbins describes the activities considered in team building typically include goal setting, development of interpersonal relations among team members, role analysis to clarify each member’s role and responsibilities, and team process analysis. Team building doesn’t necessarily include or exclude certain activities, depending on the purpose of the development effort and the specific problems with which the team is confronted. Basically, team building uses high-interaction group activities to increase trust and openness among team members (Dyer as cited in Robbins, 2003). Employee Involvement/Engagement acts as a mechanism for high performing teams to develop throughout the company.

The challenge is how to ensure knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams, within the employee engagement climate, among a growing military organization.

### **Background of the Problem**

Special focus has been given to the XYZ Aerospace Company’s employee survey results. Each year in the developing military organization, the lowest score has consistently been in employee recognition at 55% for the recent survey, and 49% the previous year. With the current economy in turmoil, coupled with job scarcity, turnover has decreased, with employee morale decreasing as well. Employees may perceive they

are 'stuck' in their jobs. According to United States Department of Labor (2009), total employment is projected to increase by 15.3 million, or 10.1%, during the 2008-18 periods, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported (United States Department of Labor, 2009). This forecasted job growth is an indicator that the organization must position itself to foster knowledge sharing among employees so that when employees do leave, they leave a part of their legacy behind.

In the growing organization, while various types of recognition are in place, as well as Employee Involvement/Engagement team based business initiatives to capture process improvements; the problem is there is no formal implementation program to encourage knowledge sharing/transfer among the employees. This is not to be confused with the formal knowledge management program in the engineering organization, stemming from the rocket program. The engineering knowledge management program is in full force and a Knowledge Management group exists within the engineering systems organization.

To protect the anonymity of the company and its proprietary information, throughout the paper it will be known as the XYZ Aerospace Company. Another underlying problem may be the leadership style of some first line leaders, is not conducive to an empowering and learning organization. In a recent survey, only 51% of employees believe that in the organization, leaders are selected based on demonstrated leadership by living the leadership attributes. In the XYZ Aerospace Company, the leadership attributes are embodied in the fabric of the company. These six leadership attributes are:

1. Charts the course
2. Set High Expectations
3. Inspire Others
4. Finds a Way
5. Live the XYZ Aerospace Company Values
6. Deliver Results.

These attributes have a striking similarity to Kouzes and Posner's (2002) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to analyze the feedback and data extracted from employees in developing a plan or model to encourage knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. Another purpose was to determine the level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale.

Knowledge sharing or knowledge transfer, specifically tacit knowledge, according to Cline, Hinsch, Mertha, and Thompson (2009) within an organization is made of the collective "know how" of all its employees. Tacit knowledge is a key approach to sustaining an organization's competitiveness. Tacit knowledge also plays a key role in organizational learning and technological innovation (Cline et al., 2009). Recognizing that tacit knowledge is important, a plan or model must be developed to share or transfer knowledge among employees.

Together with the encouragement of knowledge sharing and implementing the employee involvement/engagement initiative, is imperative to create high performance work teams. An effective coach or manager plays a key role in developing the high performance environment to breed high performance work teams. Minks et al. (1993) listed suggested strategies in their 12 pillars of the high-performance environment which will be explored in chapter 2.

At the XYZ Aerospace Company, there are processes and procedures in place to define and document the detail tasks of a particular job. Specifically to the job task, these procedures are known as desk instructions. As the organization grew, many desk instructions were written to document the process so that a new employee can learn what the job entails from reading the desk instruction. In a broader perspective, the company has institutionalized knowledge management, to document best practices and provide enterprise-wide information sharing. There are numerous blog feeds, some from executive leadership, to communicate with employees. From the desk level to the enterprise level, is a multitude of documented processes and procedures; however, as Robbins put it, knowledge management won't work unless the culture supports sharing of information (Roberts, DeLong, & Fahey as cited in Robbins, 2003).

The current employee survey results alone do not provide the information needed to improve employee morale and productivity. There is a need for the organization to analyze and focus on further data extracted from the employees to fully assess the effectiveness of a plan or model to encourage knowledge sharing among employees.



**Problem Statement**

Currently there is no formal plan or model in place to ensure knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. The XYZ Aerospace Company's recent survey results indicate low employee morale.

**Research Questions**

With attention to the problem statement, the following research questions are developed:

1. How effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization?
2. What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees?
3. What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing?
4. How are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents?

**Significance of This Research**

This study will evaluate whether a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing will result in a positive influence on its employees morale and behavior. A validated research instrument will be given to employees located in the XYZ Aerospace Company's Long Beach, California organization. The intent of this study is to effectively increase the performance of high performance work teams in the organization, and have a positive influence to its leaders in cultivating a high performance environment to nurture the teams.

## **Definition of Terms**

*Employee involvement/employee engagement:* To engage employees in the decision making process in problem solving, promote collaboration and communication in a team-based environment.

*Employee morale:* The mental attitude of an employee in their relationship between the employee and the organization.

*Environment (Behavioral):* The surroundings and conditions affecting employee behavior and performance.

*High performance:* The positive output or measurable result of an organization that has incorporated employee involvement/employee engagement.

*Knowledge management:* A process of organizing and distributing an organization's collective wisdom (Robbins, 2003).

*Knowledge transfer:* The transfer of knowledge, whether through hands on experience, modeling, storytelling, educational techniques; knowledge that can be equated to the lessons that are learned.

*Leadership:* A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004, p. 3).

*Management:* The function of planning, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving in an enterprise (Northouse, 2004, p. 9).

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

This chapter brings together the literature review in the areas that are vital to this study: Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, employee engagement environment, leadership theories, and employee morale in developing high performance work teams. Additionally, other relevant areas within the topics will be explored that complement this research.

### **Knowledge Management**

Before reviewing the crux of knowledge sharing and collaboration, it must be noted that the fundamental process is knowledge management. Knowledge management (KM) is defined as the process of organizing and distributing the organization's collective wisdom so the right information gets to the right people at the right time (Roberts & Empson as cited in Robbins, 2003). When done properly, KM provides an organization with both a competitive edge and improved organizational performance because it makes its employees smarter (Robbins, 2003). Another definition for knowledge management is that it is a process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge based assets. Cline et al. (2009) stated that in today's business environment, knowledge is the source of sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations have tried to find ways to compete in the information age, and knowledge has emerged as the primary source and most valuable asset in this fast-paced, ever-changing environment. Knowledge management aims at controlling the process capabilities of acquiring, converting, applying, using, and protecting knowledge. Without these processes, knowledge has no value. Knowledge needs to be encouraged, nurtured, developed and "bundled in some way" in order to generate value (Cline et al., 2009).

Knowledge management is important today for at least three reasons (Roberts, Fryer, & Zielinski as cited in Robbins 2003). First, in many organizations, intellectual assets are now as much or more important than physical or financial assets. Robbins (2003) suggested that organizations can quickly and efficiently tap into their employees' collective experience and wisdom is more likely to "outsmart" their competition. Second, as baby boomers begin to leave the workforce, there is an awareness that they represent a wealth of knowledge that will be lost if there are no attempts to capture it. And third, a well-designed KM system will reduce redundancy and make the organization more efficient. For example, when employees take on a new project, they do not need to start from scratch. A knowledge management system can allow them to access what previous employees have learned and cut wasteful time retracing a path that has already been traveled (Robbins, 2003, p. 575).

Organizations need to develop computer databases of pertinent information that employees can readily access. In other words, the KM system should be user friendly for ease of obtaining the information. The organization needs to create a culture that supports and rewards sharing; and it has to develop mechanisms that allow employees who have developed valuable expertise and insights to share them with others (Robbins, 2003).

### **Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration**

There are many ways for organizations to retrieve, collect and transfer knowledge. The challenge is to identify and develop most effective ways to manage and transfer knowledge in an organization (New York State Department of Civil Service/Governor's Office of Employee Relations [New York State Department of Civil

Service], 2009). With an emphasis on team building, a few of the strategies will be explored.

**Storytelling.** Most wisdom in organizations is passed on through storytelling. A story is a description of what happened in a situation, to illustrate a point and effectively transfer knowledge. When one hears about a promotion, demotion, layoff, or termination, one is hearing a story (New York State Department of Civil Service, 2009).

Denning (2005) argued that the choice for leaders in business and organizations is not whether to be involved in storytelling, but rather to use storytelling intelligently and skillfully. Management fads may come and go, but storytelling is a phenomenon that is fundamental to all nations, societies, and cultures, and has been so since the beginning of time. Denning insists that it's not just leaders in business and politics who can benefit from a greater capability to use story-anyone who has a new idea and wants to change the world will do better by telling stories than by any amount of logical exhortation. Not just in business, but in short, anyone who wants to change the minds of those around them (Denning, 2005). Here are some reasons that Denning (2005) believed the world has gotten interested in storytelling:

- *Storytelling works.* Purposeful storytelling can get results in the modern organization that traditional abstract modes of communications can't.
- *An old technology with a modern use.* It draws on aspects of human nature of which we are barely aware and makes use of a delivery system that is as old as civilization itself – the spare evocative story – storytelling recovers a technique for inviting people into the process of change.

- *A powerful technology.* Purposeful storytelling can reach large numbers of people, amazingly rapidly.
  - *The technology is free.* Storytelling doesn't require expensive investments in hardware or software. It doesn't involve recruiting expensive experts.
- Storytelling is the ultimate low-cost high-return technology.

Why some leaders inspire action is in the storytelling. Callahan (2009) noted that changing minds and actions also involves empathy, listening, questioning and, in particular, stories. Leaders can tell stories to paint a vision or strategic direction, share a lesson, convey values or illustrate desired behaviors. According to Callahan, stories also have an ability to forge deeper connections between people, to inspire them to focus their attention and take action. As Garguilo (as cited in Callahan, 2009) said, "The shortest distance between two people is a story" (p. 1).

Stories work for leaders as a successful communication and engagement technique for the following reasons. Callahan (2009) reported that first, stories convey emotion effectively, and emotion united with a strong idea is persuasive. We remember what we feel, and our emotions inspire us to take action. Second, stories are concrete and have the ability to transport our imagination to a place where we can visualize the events being recounted. Third, stories are memorable. We are up to 22 times more likely to remember a story than a set of disconnected facts such as a PowerPoint presentation. Lastly, stories represent a pull strategy. Callahan explained that unlike the push strategy used when we argue in a more traditional way, stories engage the listener, pulling them into the story to participate in the conversation, rather than telling them what to think.

Storytelling is going on in every business, every department, and every team. Reamy (2002) reported that storytelling is not only natural, it is being used right now throughout the enterprise and probably more heavily than any other information or knowledge sharing channel. Stories convey not information, but meaning and knowledge. The information stories contain is seamlessly incorporated into the story through the use of context. Since stories create clusters or chunks of information, they are easier to pay attention to and to remember. Reamy argued that it may be harder to codify knowledge than information, but it is easier for humans to remember knowledge rather than strings of unrelated bits of information. Stories are good at transmitting tacit knowledge. Reamy stated that given the difficulty in capturing and making explicit the tacit knowledge in people, stories seem to be the one way that we not only can, but easily do, capture and transmit tacit knowledge.

Storytelling can be told in many settings. For example, in staff meetings, the manager can tell a story to send whatever message is intended. In anniversary celebrations, people can tell stories about the person being celebrated. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), stories are not meant to be kept private; they're meant to be *told*. Stories are tailor-made for celebrations. "In fact, stories are celebrations, and celebrations are stories" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 359). In presentations, the presenters can recount stories to give meaning to their presentation. When managers begin to tell their stories to their employees, they model the way for employees to start telling stories. Kouzes and Posner argued that exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others. According to Kouzes and Posner, "Leaders *model* the way" (p. 14).

In the Dale Carnegie program, all the courses offered include that the participants tell stories. The 12 week Dale Carnegie flagship course that teaches effective communications and human relations, engages the participants to tell their story in a concise, succinct way within time limits in preparation for the next session. The course objective is to build greater self-confidence, strengthen people skills, enhance communication skills and develop leadership skills, starting with an effective story (Dale Carnegie Training, 2006). Using what is learned from the Dale Carnegie courses can immediately be applied in the business environment, and in the teams. In his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Carnegie (1981) wrote this book as he states that people needed still more training in the fine art of getting along with people in everyday business and social contacts. He also suggested how to get the most out of his book by putting into action what is learned. What makes this one of the most read books, more than 10 million readers in 36 languages, is the way it is written, in story format. The late Carnegie said his book is an action book. The lessons are learned as they are read and applied in everyday life. Therefore, from Carnegie, Denning (2005), Kouzes and Posner (2002) and many others, knowledge sharing through storytelling is an effective way to transfer knowledge and also an effective way to build high-performance work teams.

**Mentoring.** Another knowledge transfer strategy is mentoring. In mentoring, an experienced, often a higher level authority, skilled person (mentor) is paired with a lesser skilled or experienced person (protégé), with the goal of developing or strengthening competencies of the protégé. Successful people tend to have one or more mentors in their career and mentors offer advice on what to do, how to do it, and why it is worth doing in



a situation. Such mentor/protégé programs facilitate knowledge transfer (New York State Department of Civil Service, 2009).

In Bell's (2002) book, *Managers as Mentors*, he blended storytelling with mentoring. He stated that stories can also be powerful tools for mentoring. "They can reach resistant protégés in ways that well-crafted advice may not" (Bell, 2002, p. 115). Unlike straightforward advice, stories have a way of circumventing the mind's logic to capture the imagination. Bell adds, they are great gifts when delivered with care, content and caution.

The traditional use of the word 'mentor' denotes a person outside one's usual chain of command—from the junior's point of view, someone who would help them understand the informal system and offer guidance on how to be successful in a 'crazy' organization. Not all mentors are managers, but most effective managers act as mentors. Mentoring is typically focused on one person; group mentoring is training or teaching (Bell, 2002). Employees at the XYZ Aerospace Company are encouraged to find a mentor if they so choose. What is learned from the one-to-one mentoring session can be shared with the team, especially when it adds value to team building.

**Training.** Another knowledge transfer strategy is training. Training consists of a large variety of activities designed to facilitate learning that is learning of knowledge, skills and abilities or competencies by those being trained. Different methods can include classroom instruction, simulations, role-plays, computer or web-based instruction, small and large group exercises and more. It can be instructor-led or self-directed in nature (New York State Department of Civil Service, 2009).

Training methods can be formal or informal and on-the-job or off-the-job. Formal training is planned in advance and has a structured format. However, recent evidence indicates that 70% of workplace learning is made up of informal training-unstructured, unplanned and easily adapted to situations and individuals (Dobbs as cited in Robbins, 2003). Informal training is basically employees helping each other out.

On-the-job training includes job rotation, understudy assignments, and formal mentoring programs. The drawback is that these types of on-the-job training can disrupt the workplace. So many organizations invest in off-the-job training such as live classroom lectures, public seminars, Internet courses, and satellite-beamed television classes (Robbins, 2003).

**Lessons learned.** A very effective knowledge transfer strategy is discussing lessons learned after a project or program has ended. Conducting lessons learned debriefings are a way to identify, analyze and capture experiences, what worked well and what needs improvement, so others can learn from those experiences. For the greatest impact, lessons learned debriefings should be done either immediately following an event or on a regular basis, with results shared quickly among those who would benefit from the knowledge gained (New York State Department of Civil Service, 2009).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) reported that we must learn from mistakes and that it is absolutely essential to take risks. Over and over again, people in their study tell how important mistakes and failure have been to their success. Without those experiences, they would have been unable to achieve their aspirations and many have echoed the thought that the overall quality of work improves when people have a chance to fail (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). According to Kouzes and Posner, when projects or programs

do not pan out as intended, the conclusion is always that the project or concept failed, *not* the individuals or the group involved; otherwise, there would be little support for innovation and experimentation.

**Celebrate knowledge sharing.** Valuable knowledge transfer strategies have been addressed, but how can knowledge sharing be stimulated to take place among team members? Kouzes and Posner (2003) pointed out that celebration reinforces values. They offer opportunities to reinforce organizational values, specifically, sharing the knowledge from one person to another. Whether it's in honor of individual, group or organizational achievement, celebrations communicate what's important. Celebrations broadcast for all to see and hear the principles that are important enough that time and money should be spent to recognize them (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

“People will forget what you said. People will even forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel” (Author unknown cited from Colan, 2009, p. 141). According to Colan (2009), although most leaders recognize the need for employee appreciation, this tends to be a blind spot for many. Leaders generally believe that they are much more appreciative of their employees than their employees think they are. For example, the most recent employee survey from the XYZ Aerospace Company revealed 55% of employees feel they are recognized. Colan added that the blind spot appears because we judge ourselves by our intentions, but others judge us by our actions. Demonstrating appreciation is not a matter of time and intention. It's a matter of priority and action (Colan, 2009).

Appreciation for employee effort, commitment, enthusiasm, and passion, Colan (2009) insisted, is considered to be the best and the most cost effective way of retaining

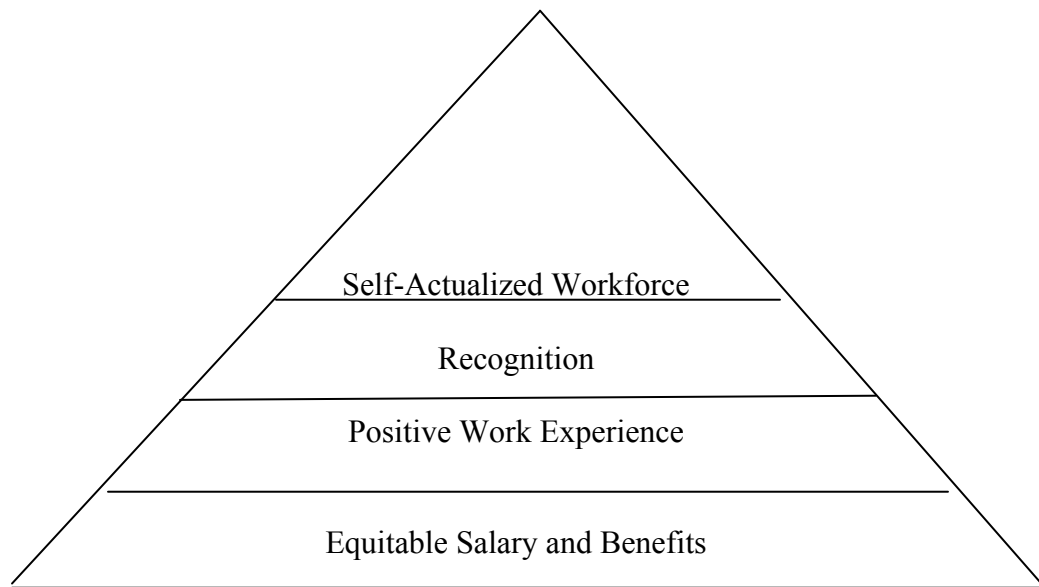
employees and boosting their discretionary effort and the company's bottom line.

Appreciation is also remembered much longer than is a bonus or a plaque. Appreciation makes the employee feel connected and valued, in other words, we do more for those who appreciate us (Colan, 2009). Why not reward and recognize the team members for sharing their knowledge and adding value to the organization? This will increase employee satisfaction and at the same time improve organizational value.

Gostick and Elton (2007) had a different perspective on recognition. From their research, they found that a lot of employee work motivation is not as externally driven as they formerly believed. A good share of an employee's attitude is internally driven by a person's desire for autonomy and achievement. Gostick and Elton stated that today effective managers are changing the way they lead, learning to motivate by tapping into a person's hopes and attitudes around work. They help employees realize their potential. Gostick and Elton compared their theory with Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (see Figure 1). If wages are competitive and people are showing up for work, then the food and shelter need is most likely being met on Maslow's safety or security hierarchy. Employees move on to fill their love or belonging needs; then they focus on their esteem needs. Finally, they are looking to feel important and valued in their jobs. In a culture of recognition, people seek the next level, self-actualization. These employees are striving to excel, to reach their highest potential.

In place of Maslow's pyramid, the bottom rung is with equitable salary and benefit. The next is positive work experience, or how people feel on the job. The next rung is recognition, which leads to the top rung, a self-actualized workforce.

Recognition, according to Gostick and Elton (2007), is the missing step that helps people reach upward toward self-actualization. Before that can be achieved, recognition is needed to provide confirmation of achievement—proof that others believe in what the employees can do. The recognition is evidence that the achievements are not just in ‘our heads’ but are acknowledged and esteemed by peers and superiors (Gostick & Elton, 2007).



*Figure 1. Gostick and Elton’s self-actualized workforce. From *The Carrot Principle: How the best managers use recognition to engage their people, retain talent, and accelerate performance* (p. 59), by A. Gostick and C. Elton, 2007, New York, NY, FREE PRESS. Copyright 2007 by O.C. Tanner Company. Reprinted with permission.*

One of the sessions in the 12-week Dale Carnegie flagship course is building others through recognition. The participants learn ‘how to’ strategies to help strengthen relationships. By better understanding the power of building others through recognition and demonstrating genuine enthusiasm, can morale increase and create a positive culture (Dale Carnegie Training, 2006). The advantage participants have with the entire Dale

Carnegie course is that participants immediately apply what is learned to their personal lives and in the workplace to build strong teams.

Nothing else so inspires and heartens people as words of appreciation. You and I may soon forget the words of encouragement and appreciation that we utter now, but the person to whom we have spoken them may treasure them and repeat them to themselves over a lifetime. (Carnegie, 1981, p. 29)

### **Creating the High-Performance Environment**

Given the right environment, when people are fully engaged in their work and have a deep connection with what they do, they deliver *passionate performance*.

“Passionate performers demonstrate a strong, sustained intellectual and emotional attachment to their work” (Colan, 2009, p. 3). Colan (2009) noted that according to an extensive survey conducted by the Gallup organization, 74% of employees are either indifferent to their work or actively disengaged. This leaves 26% of employees who are engaged. This makes a good business case to promote engaged employees. Colan stated that some people are naturally engaged in their work and some are energized and positive who consistently deliver passionate performance. Even those who are not as energized or passionate can be led to become passionate performers (Colan, 2009).

Colan (2009) referred to the business case as the customer value chain. Leaders are the first link in the customer value chain. Engaging leaders invest their time into their teams because they know that engaged employees are more likely to stay with the organization, perform at high levels, influence others to perform well, promote the organization externally, and deliver unparalleled customer service. These outcomes reflect the customer value chain. The customer value chain starts with the engaging

leader who ignites a fully engaged worker. Engaged workers create loyal customers. Colan insisted that gaining additional business from an existing customer is five times less expensive than acquiring a new customer. He adds that a loyal customer base is the grand slam of business. Additional business creates higher profit margins and better shareholder returns.

There are no shortcuts in the customer value chain according to Colan (2009). With enough time and resources, competitors may be able to replicate the product, distribution channel and technology, but they will not be able to easily replicate passionate performers (Colan, 2009). As Tom Peters reported, “If your company is going to put customers first, then you must put employees more first” (Peters as cited from Colan, 2009, p. 9). Colan concurred that the employees are a key link in the customer value chain.

To energize employees, the environment needs to be in alignment with Covey’s (1989) win-win paradigm. This is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. It means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial, mutually satisfying. With this type of solution, all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan. Win-win sees life not as competitive, but more of a cooperative arena. “Win-win is based on the paradigm that there is plenty for everybody, that one person’s success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others” (Covey, 1989, p. 207). As long as the systems support win/win, can the organization survive. Covey stated that if goals are to be achieved, and reflect the values in the mission statement, the reward system must be aligned with these goals and values. Covey pointed out that the problem is in the system, not in the people. If good people are

put in bad systems, bad results will be the outcome: “You have to water the flowers you want to grow” (Covey, 1989, p. 232). In other words, the environment must be conducive to nurture and develop employees to encompass Covey’s win-win paradigm.

Gubman (2003) encouraged the reader to pay attention to three principles to organize for employee engagement:

1. *Self-organization*. The more people are supported in creating their own organizations or teams, the more they’ll feel in charge of their futures. High-performing organizations encourage more self-control than system control.
2. *Affinity*. Left to their own choices, people will associate and communicate with people whom they like and are like them. “Engaging leaders use this to their advantage by building on natural affinities to create strong bonds” (Gubman, 2003, p. 163). However, these affinity groups must integrate with each other. In high-performing organizations, subsystems talk to each other; otherwise, they will be cliques.
3. *Loose-tight*. Whatever structure that is created, leave room for freedom inside it. Ideally, a structure should be built that will enable one to manage flexibility. In some types of businesses, an organizational structure on values will leave room for individual decision making within those values. “High-performing organizations balance structure and freedom” (p. 164).

**Twelve pillars of the high-performance environment.** The coach/manager plays a key role in creating the workscape of productivity. To create a high-performance work team, there must be a high-performance climate to allow the teams to excel. Mink et al. (1993) listed 12 pillars of the high-performance environment. When in place, these



pillars help to create an environment that encourages performance through employee involvement, self-management, commitment, and a sense of autonomy and empowerment (Mink et al., 1993).

***Pillar 1—Shared vision.*** Develop a shared vision for the team (better yet, by the team) and let others know what the vision is. *Vision* describes the ultimate purpose of a team. It provides a frame of reference within which to organize work behavior and says to everyone, this is why they are here, who they are and what they produce. It is not enough to develop a vision; the team must own the vision, share it and commit to it.

***Pillar 2—Shared values.*** Develop shared values for the team. Vision is to ends as values are to process. Living according to agreed on values will produce positive consequences and experiences. At the XYZ Aerospace Company, one of the leadership attributes is to live the company's values—to do the right thing, especially when no one is looking.

***Pillar 3—Goals.*** Together, develop goals that are important, specific and constant with the emphasized values. Goals are the ideal guides for short-term outcomes that define the achievements needed to realize the vision and attain the purposes of the team.

***Pillar 4—Focus.*** Provide focus by developing processes that help team members act in ways consistent with the team's *mission*—the products and/or services that are provided to the customer. The shared values and work goals provide opportunities for the team to focus attention on what is really important.

***Pillar 5—Desire for productivity.*** Leaders and managers must make clear that they value and require productivity. When the team knows they are in a productive situation and that they are valued, they will use their knowledge and work hard.

***Pillar 6—Support for accomplishment.*** When team members see that they are provided with the tools and resources to produce, they will work hard.

***Pillar 7—The right people.*** Make sure people can succeed. If one wants team members to act a certain way and to perform at a certain level, the coach/manager must make sure they are able to do so. Each person must be competent to perform their task. As Mink et al. (1993) reported, “hire for quality, train for excellence” (p. 59).

***Pillar 8—Teamwork.*** To achieve the synergies possible when sharing a vision, people must work together. Trust and mutual acceptance and creative use of each individual’s differences seem to be the foundation stones on which shared values emerge and effective teamwork is built; beginning with the coach/manager in setting the standards for trust and acceptance of various individual talents.

***Pillar 9—Empowerment and autonomy.*** For the team to realize its potential, each person must feel free to contribute to team goals and to negotiate openly with the leaders. An adaptive team does not function according to strict defined procedures; rather it is flexible, creative, and responsive to customer needs and desires.

***Pillar 10—Leadership.*** The successful coach must lead by providing a climate or context that enables every person on the team to fully contribute. No matter what it takes to enable people, the coach/team leader must ensure the conditions of a supportive, empowering environment exists.

***Pillar 11—Feedback, fedthrough, and problem solving.*** Provide people with accurate information about what they are doing in relation to their performance goals. Successful coaches have the ability to give people effective feedback. Since improvement

needs to be continuous-learning process-valid information about performance, customer satisfaction, and values needs to be continuous.

***Pillar 12—Rewards.*** People who have incentives they value will more often than not, provide the needed effort. People work hardest when their efforts allow them to get what they want, need, and value. The high-performance environment must provide the opportunity to achieve these outcomes (Mink et al., 1993).

Creating the right environment is necessary to lay the foundation of creating high-performance work teams; from Colan's passionate performance, Covey's win-win paradigm, to Gubman's three principles of employee engagement, and Minks et al.'s 12 pillars of the high performance environment. However, the leader plays a key role in creating this environment.

### **Views on Successful Leadership**

At the XYZ Aerospace Company, a team was selected to speak at the XYZ Aerospace Leadership Center in front of a group of executives. One team member cited to the executives the following words from Bennis and Nanus (1985),

If you think about it, people love others not for who they are, but for how they make us feel. We willingly follow others for much the same reason. It makes us feel good to do so. This business of making another person feel good in the unspectacular course of his daily comings and goings is, in my view, the very essence of leadership. (pp. 62-63)

The executive reaction was overwhelmingly positive. They were reminded on what a good leader should be from an ordinary employee. Leaders, or people in leadership roles, should be constantly receiving feedback from management and non-management

employees; whether it is in the form of 360 degree feedback, survey instruments or in candid conversations and be open minded on how to improve and become a more effective leader. The following are some views on effective leadership to create high performing work teams.

**Defining leadership.** According to Northouse (2004), the term leadership has many different meanings. It is much like trying to describe the words *democracy*, *love* and *peace* (Northouse, 2004). He suggests that some definitions view leadership as the focus of group processes. “From this perspective, the leader is at the center of group change and activity and embodies the will of the group” (Northouse, 2004, p. 2). Another definition conceptualizes leadership from a personality perspective, which suggests that leadership is a combination of special traits or characteristics a person has to enable them to induce others to accomplish tasks. Another approach to leadership is defined as an act of behavior; to bring about change in a group.

Despite the many ways that leadership has been conceptualized, Northouse (2004) stated the following components can be identified as central to the phenomenon of leadership.

1. Leadership is a process.
2. Leadership involves influence.
3. Leadership occurs within a group context.
4. Leadership involves goal attainment.

Based on these components, the following definition of leadership by Northouse (2004) is “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to

achieve a common goal” (p. 3). This definition will be instilled in this chapter with the emphasis on creating high-performing work teams.

**Transformational leadership.** As the name implies, transformational leadership is the process of transforming individuals. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long term goals, and includes assessing followers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as human beings (Northouse, 2004). Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is normally expected of them. Northouse (2004) stated that it is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership.

Transformational leadership refers to a process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the employee. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of the employees and tries to help employees reach their fullest potential. A classic example of this type of leader is Mohandas Ghandi who raised the hopes and demands of millions of his people and in the process was changed himself (Northouse, 2004).

The personal characteristics of a charismatic leader include being dominant, having a strong desire to influence others, being self-confident, and having a strong sense of one’s own moral values. In addition to the personal characteristics, charismatic leaders also demonstrate specific types of behavior. First, they are strong role models for the beliefs and values they want their employees to adopt. Second, charismatic leaders appear competent to their employees. Third, they articulate ideological goals that have moral overtones. Fourth, charismatic leaders communicate high expectations for employees,

and they inspire confidence in the employees' abilities to meet these expectations. Fifth, charismatic leaders arouse task-relevant motives in employees that may include affiliation, power or esteem. For example, when John F. Kennedy appealed to the human values of the American people when he stated, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" (as cited in Northouse, 2004, p. 172). The transformational leader, who exhibits the visionary and charismatic behavior, can strongly influence a team of employees to develop into a high-performing team.

**Team leadership.** Leadership in organizational work teams has become one of the most popular and rapidly growing areas of leadership theory and research. "Teams are organizational groups composed of members who are interdependent, who share common goals, and who must coordinate their activities to accomplish goals" (Northouse, 2004, p. 203).

The team-based structure of organizations has encouraged research into the entire process of team leadership, whether it be performed by members of the group in self-managed teams or performed by an individual formal leader of the team. It is important to understand the role of leadership within these teams to ensure team success and to avoid team failure (Northouse, 2004).

There are two critical functions of leadership: (a) to help a group accomplish its task and (b) to keep the group maintained and functioning. These two are also referred to as *team performance* and *team development*. Superior team leadership should focus on both functions. Team performance functions include getting the job done, making decision, solving problems, adapting to changes, making plans and achieving goals. Team development functions include developing a positive climate, solving interpersonal

problems, satisfying employees' needs, and developing cohesion. Functions, team performance and team development are interrelated (Northouse, 2004).

Being an effective team leader has been found to consistently relate to team effectiveness. In other words, leadership is the central driver of team effectiveness influencing the team through four sets of processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and coordination. Cognitively, the leader guides the team to understand the problems confronting the team. Motivationally the leader assists the team to become cohesive and capable by setting high performance standards and helping the group to achieve them. Affectively the leader guides the team in handling stressful circumstances by providing clear goals, assignments, and strategies. Integratively, the leader helps coordinate the team's activities by matching members' skills and abilities to roles, providing clear performance strategies, monitoring feedback, and adapting to environmental changes (Northouse, 2004). By the leader constantly focusing on team performance and team development, can create the team to increase the productivity in the organization.

**Engaging leader.** There are lots of ways to engage people Gubman (2003) argued, and to make sure one has the right talent. A quote from former Senator Bill Hadley about his friend Phil Jackson's coaching style was "He thinks group, but he always see individuals" (Gubman, 2003, p. 4). Gubman writes this is an apt description of the way to engage people today. Point the group toward the goals to be achieved, but spend a lot of time catering to the unique needs of individuals on the team, particularly the most talented ones. He continues that if one doesn't spend time caring for the most talented people, they'll leave, they won't be able to be replaced quickly, and the organization will miss out on significant opportunities as a result (Gubman, 2003).

Engaging the heart ignites passion according to Colan (2009). This side requires the art of leadership that focuses on relationships with their employees. He continues that we must engage the team members' minds and hearts. This sounds pretty soft to many. However, the softer side of leadership is more challenging. "It's the art of leadership that relates to dealing with emotions, relationships, and connections" (Colan, 2009, p.104).

According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), setting an example for encouraging the heart starts by giving oneself permission to do so. It starts with putting it in the daily planner or putting a sign by the door. It starts when one talks to everyone about it. It starts when a routine task is turned into something fun. It starts by giving to other people first. It starts when one gets personally involved. "When leaders do get personally involved in encouraging the heart, the results are always the same: the receiver and the giver both feel uplifted" (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, p. 141). Kouzes and Posner concluded that the reflection in the mirror is the one you portray.

According to Laurin and Morningstar (2009), sharing the responsibility of leadership, both with management and positional leaders as well as with workers, opens the door for anyone in the organization to lead from where they are, rather than waiting for the executive team or management to do something. Within the Boeing C-17 Program, Laurin and Morningstar stated it is widely recognized that the story begins and ends with leadership; that is, the new definition of leadership—*connecting people to their future*. Laurin and Morningstar describe that Boeing C-17 leaders are:

- "Purveyors of hope" who create the vision and inspire others to achieve it.
- Take others to places they normally would not go alone.



- Encourage an environment where highly creative-and somewhat risky-innovative thinking is welcomed.
- Create an environment supporting peak performance and employee satisfaction.
- Must be role models who *walk the talk!* (pp. 110-111)

Taking the extra step and engaging employees, by noticing their strengths by connecting, and establishing relationships with team members, in essence, is engaging the hearts and minds of people (Gubman, 2003). Colan (2009) stated this will positively impact employees to excel. By encouraging the hearts of employees, insisted Kouzes and Posner (2003), and paying attention to their needs, employees will be doing things right, and doing the right things in the organization. By leading from where they are, Laurin and Morningstar (2009) noted that it generates a greater sense of personal responsibility in workers to lead the organization to its intended vision.

**Leadership begins from the inside.** Levine and Crom (1993) reported that mental attitude is the power we hold in our heads. The way reality can be changed dramatically by a single, solitary thought. It sounds hard to believe how thoughts can influence behavior. Think happy thoughts and one will be happy. Think successful thoughts and one will succeed. Levine and Crom (1993) stated of Carnegie that he knew the power of attitude, *you are what you think*: “Contrary to what most people want to believe, outside influences do not usually determine personal happiness. What matters is how we react to those influences, good or bad” (p. 194).

Leadership from the inside begins in our thoughts and mind. Levine and Crom (1993) added that *enthusiasm* is powerful. Enthusiasm is infectious, and it makes people

respond. This is true in every situation, from the classroom, on a campaign trail, in a ball game, and in a program review meeting. If one is not enthusiastic about an idea or a project, no one else will be either. The best way to get someone excited about an idea or project is to be excited, and to show it (Levine & Crom, 1993). In the Dale Carnegie training program, on occasion, at the start of the class as a warm up, participants repeat out loud “If you act enthusiastic, you will be enthusiastic” to get excited about the session.

According to Cashman (1998), leadership comes from somewhere inside us. It is a process, an intimate expression of who we are. It is our being, our personhood, in action. As we grow, we shall lead; we lead by virtue of who we are. Cashman suggested that whether it is an early stage in one’s career, a knowledge worker, or a corporate executive, we are all CEOs of our own lives. The difference is the domain of influence. “The process is the same; we lead from who we are. The leader and the person are one” (Cashman, 1998, pp. 18-19). Cashman’s definition of *leadership* is that it is an authentic self-expression that creates value. From his perspective, leadership exists everywhere in organizations rather than in a hierarchical sense. Cashman’s view of leadership inspires leading at all levels in an organization. Keeping a positive attitude and being enthusiastic about a new idea will inspire the team to do whatever project needs to be done. Leading the team as a genuine person from within will create value among the teams in the organization.

**Leadership practices.** Leadership is not all about personality; it is about practice (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). They have forged the five common practices into a model of leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that when getting extraordinary things done in organizations, leaders engage in these Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership:

- Model the Way.
- Inspire a Shared Vision.
- Challenge the Process.
- Enable Others to Act.
- Encourage the Heart.

These practices are available to anyone who accepts the leadership challenge.

***Model the way.*** Titles are granted, but it is one's behavior that wins respect. If gaining commitment and achieving the highest standards is desired, exemplary leaders know they must be models of the behavior they expect of others. Modeling the way is about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct individual involvement and action. "People first follow the person, then the plan" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 15).

***Inspire a shared vision.*** Leaders have a desire to make something happen, to change the way things are, to create something new. Yet visions seen only by leaders are insufficient to create an organized movement in an organization. A person with no constituents is not a leader, and people will not follow until they accept and own the vision. To enlist people in a vision, the leader must know their people and speak their language. Kouzes and Posner (2002) insisted that to enlist support, leaders must have intimate knowledge of people's dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions and values.

***Challenge the process.*** Leaders are pioneers; the kind of people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow and improve in the organization. They challenge the process. Leaders aren't necessarily the creators of new products, services or processes. Product and service innovations tend to come from customers, clients, suppliers, and people on the front lines, from people doing the work. The leader's primary contribution is in the recognition of good ideas, the support of those ideas, and the willingness to challenge the system to get new products, services, processes and systems adopted (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

***Enable others to act.*** Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that leadership is a team effort and that grand schemes don't become significant realities through the actions of one person. Exemplary leaders enable others to act by fostering collaboration and building trust. They engage in all the employees that must make the project work; all who must live with the results. They know that those who are expected to get results must feel a sense of personal power and ownership. "Leaders understand that the command-and-control techniques of the Industrial Revolution no longer apply" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 18). Leaders enable others to act, not by hoarding the power that they have, but rather by giving it away. When people are trusted and have more discretion and authority, they are more likely to produce extraordinary results (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

***Encourage the heart.*** The climb to the top is arduous and long, argued Kouzes and Posner (2002). People become exhausted, disenchanted and frustrated. Some are tempted to give up. Leaders encourage the heart of their employees to carry on. Genuine acts of caring uplift the spirits and encourage people to keep going. Encouragement can come from dramatic gestures or a simple thank you. "It's part of a leader's job to show

appreciation for people's contributions and to create a culture of celebration" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 19). A little kindness goes a long way in creating a successful team.

Leadership is an identifiable set of skills and practices that are available to all and not just a few charismatic men and women. Leadership is not just at the top, it is everywhere at every level of the organization. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), leadership is a relationship, a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. Success in leadership, success in business, and success in life has been and will continue to be a function of how well people work and play together. Success in leading a team to greatness depends on the capacity to build and sustain those human relationships that enable people to get extraordinary things done on a daily basis (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

**Leadership as coaches.** Coaching for high-performance work teams is leadership in action. As stated earlier, leadership is not necessarily related to personality traits or style of leadership. Minks et al. (1993) stated that leadership effectiveness is related to how mature and well developed one is as a person: "The most effective leaders are fully developed as individuals and have the personal capacity to think ahead, visualize, and develop alternative futures" (p. 146). They also know how to communicate their visions with their employees in ways to enable others to share their dreams. A second quality of an effective leader is their self-knowledge. They know themselves and have learned how to shape the world in terms consistent with their own guiding visions. "They are self-organizing and self-managing" (Mink et al., 1993, p. 147).

Another quality typical of the best coaches as well as the best leaders is the ability to get employees on their side. One cannot demand trust, it must be earned. Great coaches

are able to earn the trust of others; by being reliable. They do what they say they are going to do, every day. Another way to earn trust is by being constant; acting the same way every day. In the XYZ Aerospace Company, one of the leadership attributes is to live the company values. Third, great coaches have the capacity for empathy, the ability to place themselves in another person's perspective; appreciate and understand what that person is going through (Mink et al., 1993). Effective coaches lead by acting. They are willing to take risks and embrace errors. They have ideas or visions of what is possible, and are willing to work hard to create these visions, even in the face of adversity (Mink et al., 1993).

Communication is key to effective coaching. The way one communicates with team members can profoundly affect the ability to facilitate learning and growth. "Words have great powers to enhance or destroy self-confidence and self-esteem" (Mink et al., 1993, p. 161). A coach's words should encourage, challenge, and lift others. Three goals, according to Mink et al. (1993), should underlie all of an effective coach's communications with employees:

1. Enhance, not destroy, the employee's self-esteem,
2. Enable the coach to deepen their connectedness with their employees, and
3. Empower their employees to be more competent and more self-directed.

Coaching is excellent communication. Mink et al. (1993) have coined an acronym from the word coach that conveys the central role of communications in the process of coaching:

C = Caring. Caring for others is hard work. It involves knowing and supporting what the other needs and wants.

O = Openness. To be in a relationship that enhances another person, one must be both open in the sense of able to listen and able to share.

A = Awareness. To facilitate growth, to nurture others, one must understand the uniqueness of each person's needs and wants.

C = Commitment. Coaching is not a one-time occasion; it is a relationship built on commitment and feeling.

H = Honesty. One cannot be helpful if one cannot be truthful. Many times one will observe an employee's behavior that may not be helpful, the coach must be willing to say so.

Mink et al. (1993) summarize that coaching is caring with openness, awareness, commitment, and honesty. By treating employees with respect, they will most likely feel valued and happy in their environment. The last section gives an understanding of employee morale and how crucial positive employee morale is to any organization.

### **Employee Morale**

Employee morale is the relationship that an employee or a group of employees have with their work and the organization they work for. High employee morale means that employees are happy, and this is reflective in the kind of work they do. Employees that are happy and have a high level of trust, tend to work well in teams. On the other hand, low employee morale results in less productivity and increased pessimism among employees (eHow Contributing Writer, 2009). Not surprisingly, low employee morale can be toxic to a team. When morale is low, fear runs high. It's the kind of fear that paralyzes a work force, and it can be spotted in an instant. For example, procrastination on projects, gossiping at the water cooler, excessive absenteeism, refusal to pitch in

unless asked, and low interest in the customer are some of the common symptoms (Marshall, 2005). It is imperative that organizations do everything they can to keep employee morale high.

Employee morale is part of the organization climate and positive employee morale is essential to the company. The morale and emotional behavior of a manager has an important effect on organizational climate. Research shows that more than 70% of employees' perceptions of organizational climate result directly from a manager's morale and behavior, which stimulates employees' morale, emotions, and behaviors (Momeni, 2009). Momeni stated that organizational climate is the outward features of an organizational culture. That is, the employees' perceptions and attitudes toward their organization at a given time is the organization's climate. Momeni continued that the behavior of a manager has a great influence on employees' perceptions and attitudes that create organizational climate. Great organizational climate improves the efficiency of the organization and decreases costs of turnover and problems with staff (Momeni, 2009). At the XYZ Aerospace Company, employees are given an annual employee satisfaction survey. As mentioned in chapter 1, the most recent employee survey revealed that 54% of employees are inspired by their management to excel in their work every day. This indicates that the management must work on inspiring their employees, which is also one of the leadership attributes.

Momeni (2009) wrote that employees' feeling about their workplace is the principal determinant of whether an organization is a great place to work, by its organizational programs, company benefits, financial situation and value of stock.



Momeni (2009) identified the following three components of employee feelings about the place where they work:

- Feelings about management: An employee should trust the people for whom he or she works.
- Feelings about the job: An employee should have pride in what he or she does.
- Feelings about other employees: An employee should enjoy the people with whom he or she works. (p. 2)

In her research, Momeni (2009) found that among the components of employee feelings about their workplace, feelings about management is the main facet that creates and improves feelings in employees about organizational climate. In order to improve employee morale, successful managers should seriously and eagerly follow these issues:

- Developing and improving face to face communications with employees and giving employees enough information, as well as proving their credibility and improving it through honesty and good morals.
- Showing care for and respect to employees by expressing appreciation and gratitude, creating chances to improve, getting employees involved with solving organizational problems (such as employee involvement initiative), being receptive to new ideas, and caring about the employees' problems.
- Showing fairness through equitable salaries and rewards, behaving towards employees as a family, being unbiased in recruitment and promotion, and handling grievances seriously and fairly.

- Making jobs worthwhile and meaningful, encouraging and facilitating teamwork, creating situations in which employees get a sense of pride about working as a member of the organization, and making the work environment friendly, by being genuine and sincere, all of which increase employees' loyalty to the organization. (Momeni, 2009, p. 4)

According to Javitch (2010), morale is defined as the end result of many factors present in the workplace environment. Some of these factors are the work setting itself, worker satisfaction and action, salary, supervisory input, working conditions, and status, to name a few. Some of the signs of decreased morale are: tardiness, absenteeism, apathy, moping, backstabbing, decreased quality, decreased productivity, increased errors, accidents or injuries. It's important to note that morale is not a cause, but rather the effect or result of many factors going awry. Javitch continues that the key to unraveling a morale slump is to determine the cause or source of the decreased morale.

Overall, understanding what engages employees is the key to motivating them and increasing morale. Showing employees how their work links to the organization's strategy and success, drives engagement and performance (Durett, 2006).

### **Summary**

This chapter presented a literature review of key areas addressing a plethora of expertise in creating high-performance work teams. Becoming familiar with knowledge management, various knowledge sharing strategies and encouraging collaboration, creating a high-performance environment, applying successful leadership and coaching skills and practices, while understanding employee morale, will enable the XYZ

Aerospace Company to increase productivity to positively influence teams within the organizations.

## **Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This study analyzed the feedback and data extracted from employees to develop a plan or model to promote knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. In addition, this study determined the level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale. This research focused on outcome measures, which are predictive indicators of the culture of the organization and effectiveness of the leaders in the organization. This research focused on the Supply Chain Operations organization, Long Beach, California of the XYZ Aerospace Company which employs approximately 416 employees.

### **Research Questions and Design**

While focusing on a summative evaluation, the following research questions were developed:

1. How effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization?
2. What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees?
3. What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing?
4. How are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents?

In order to answer the questions, an evaluative educational inquiry was implemented to determine the effectiveness of the leaders of the Supply Chain organization of the XYZ Aerospace Company.

## **Research Design**

An inferential, descriptive design was employed to describe the influences of knowledge sharing on employee morale and behavior. An inferential, descriptive study, utilizing the technique of a survey, was selected to specifically answer the research questions and believed by the researcher to be the optimum method of analyzing, describing and obtaining information to understand the dynamic thought processes of the XYZ Aerospace participants. This was a quantitative study in nature, utilizing descriptive statistics to analyze the data derived from the knowledge sharing survey. According to McCall (2002), statistics are descriptive measures associated with samples, and parameters are the corresponding descriptive measures associated with a population.

Data for this study were collected in questionnaire format. A survey instrument was designed to gather data from 110 current employees in the Supply Chain Operations organization of the XYZ Aerospace Company that are located at the Long Beach, CA facility. The decision to use this research instrument was based on the guidance of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the extensive review of the literature, and recommendations from the dissertation committee. The XYZ Aerospace Company was made aware of the study with the understanding that its anonymity would be protected.

## **Sample Population**

Population for this study included all current employees located in the Supply Chain Operations organization in the Long Beach facility of the XYZ Aerospace Company. This represents approximately 416 current employees that are classified as salary, and contract hires. The company's work force primarily consists of Caucasian males, with approximately 15% of the population classified as management. The average

age of the workforce is mid fifties. The Supply Chain Operations organization in the Long Beach facility primarily consists of support services, supply chain management, supplier management, propulsion, support equipment and program management of other military programs.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample of participants consisted of 114 employees who are currently employed at the XYZ Aerospace Company, in the Supply Chain Operations organization in Long Beach, CA. A purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study to ensure there is a large selection of participants in the Supply Chain Operations organization.

To determine how many participants to survey, the decision is based on a formula recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, p. 117). They recommend that the sample size be calculated based on the following formula:

$$\text{Sample Size} = 104 + m$$

where  $m$  equals the number of independent variables. Given the formula, the anticipated sample size for this study is 110 where  $m$  equals six independent variables; which are the demographics such as gender, age, position, years of service, highest level of education and ethnic background. As a result, for a population ( $N$ ) of 416, a recommended sample size of ( $n$ ) 110 was selected.

### **Instrumentation and Materials**

A survey questionnaire was designed with the intent to provide data about the influence knowledge sharing will have on the behavior and morale of employees on a specific aerospace company. The goal of the survey is to be a valuable method of

collecting information from a large number of respondents through structured and standardized questions. The choice of a survey for data collection is the advantages of efficient collection of information from a large number of respondents, statistical techniques that can be used to determine validity, reliability, and statistical significance and because surveys are user friendly.

Data were gathered through a survey form and administered to a sample of 114 employees. The survey was divided into four sections and consisted of 33 questions. The first two sections contain questions to answer on a 5-point Likert scale. One of these Likert scale sections has responses ranging from *not at all* to *extremely* with the middle response as *quite a bit*. The other section has responses ranging from *almost never influence* to *nearly all the time influence* with the middle response as *half the time influence*. The third section is a checklist that requests the respondent to check all that apply. The last question in the third section is open ended for the respondents to comment on 2 or 3 items from the checklist the respondent felt were most impactful to identify other possible suggestions or solutions in creating a plan or model to facilitate knowledge sharing among teams. The last section requests demographic information.

The survey instrument is a four section questionnaire that was administered in a group setting. The first section of the instrument was designed to measure the influence leaders (immediate managers) have in promoting knowledge sharing. This section is comprised of seven questions that are answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). These variables include:

1. My leader encourages employees to share their working experiences, such as their experiences in interacting with the customer.

2. My leader supports the activities related to knowledge sharing.
3. My leader encourages employees to work together and share knowledge with employees in other departments.
4. Meetings are regularly conducted for the purpose of communication and knowledge developing and sharing.
5. My leader cares for me as a person and about my ideas.
6. Employees in my department are provided incentives for sharing knowledge.
7. Employees in my department are encouraged to speak freely, even when critical of the norm.

Section 2 of the instrument was designed to measure morale influences on the participant when knowledge is shared. This section consists of eight questions that are answered on a five-part Likert scale, with a ranging from 1 (almost never influence) to 5 (nearly all the time influence). These variables include:

1. Satisfaction with career growth potential.
2. Trust and respect of leadership.
3. Working relationship with my manager.
4. Balance of work and family life.
5. Enjoyment of the work I do.
6. Motivation to do the best I can.
7. Pride in working for my company.
8. Good working relationship with my peers.

Section 3 of the instrument was designed to measure the potential barriers among teams of creating a culture of knowledge sharing in the organization. This section is



comprised of ten items on a checklist and requests that the respondent check all that apply. The eleventh question asks the respondent to provide any comments or suggestions on two or three of the barriers that are most impactful to them. These variables include:

1. Lack of trust in the work team.
2. Lack of positive regard and respect for each employee.
3. Lack of openness in sharing useful information.
4. Lack of ability and readiness to identify and solve problems.
5. Lack of opportunity for individual and team achievement.
6. The extent to which resources, including appropriate tools such as computers/laptops, are available.
7. The degree to which incentives for individual and team achievement are available.
8. The inability to communicate clearly.
9. A tendency to resist change.
10. The inability to handle conflict with others.
11. Concern about job security or job loss.
12. Please provide comments or suggestions on the two or three barriers that are most impactful to you.

Lastly, the fourth section is demographic information which contains the following six variables:

1. Gender—Female/Male.
2. Age—Respondent's current age.

3. Position—Respondent indicates whether Non-Management or Management.
4. Service Length—Respondent's years of employment with the company.
5. Highest level of education—high school, certificate, bachelor degree, master degree, doctorate.
6. Ethnic background—African American/Asian/Caucasian/Hispanic/Other.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Content validity is established when the items measure what they are intended to measure and whether one can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instruments (Creswell, 2003, p. 157). In the survey questionnaire, Questions 1 through 4 were derived from Chen (2004), Questions 5 through 7 are from Bogdan (2008), Questions 8 through 15 were derived from Graham (2008), and the list from 16 through 22 were extracted from the book, *Developing High Performance People*, authors Minks et al. (1993). Permission from the various sources to utilize the questions in the survey was granted. Validity for the aforementioned dissertations was established by obtaining feedback from a panel of experts, within their level of expertise based on the dissertation topic.

According to Creswell (2003), when one modifies or combines instruments in a study, it becomes important to re-establish validity and reliability during data analysis in a survey study. DeVellis (2003) suggested in developing a scale, have items reviewed by experts for relevance to the domain of interest, to help maximize item appropriateness. Therefore, a panel of experts was formed to review and comment on the survey instrument to measure its ability to draw meaningful and useful inferences. The panel of experts was selected based on their relevant experience, education and overall

qualifications in relation to the dissertation topic as well as their knowledge of the culture of the XYZ Aerospace Company, since the survey instrument was administered exclusively to the XYZ Aerospace Company, Supply Chain Operations organization. The panel included (a) the XYZ Aerospace Company's Ethics Advisor, (b) a XYZ Aerospace Company employee with over 30 years experience, a doctorate and administrators' training on a wide range of subjects on a regular basis across the XYZ Aerospace Company, and (c) a XYZ Aerospace Company employee with over 25 years experience, a doctorate in Organizational Leadership, LEAN champion, focal for employee involvement, and part-time professor in doctoral studies.

Creswell (2003) suggests pilot testing or field testing the survey instrument. This is important to establish the content validity of an instrument and to improve the questions, format, and the scales (Creswell, 2003). The panel of experts was sent a request for feedback on the survey instrument. The request described the purpose of the study and included the survey instrument. This also included directions to the panel of experts to review and comment on the content validity of the instrument and whether or not the survey was easy to understand and follow.

The feedback from the panel of experts was requested within 2 weeks from the time the request was sent. The panel was asked whether the questions are clear in sentence structure and grammar and whether the questions are appropriate to the intended research questions of the study. Additionally, the timeliness and whether the survey is user friendly were asked of the panel experts. Devellis (2003) concurs that the researcher might ask colleagues familiar with the context of the research to review an initial list of items and suggest content areas that have been omitted but should be included (Devellis,

2003). Items then were added or omitted that are relevant to this content (see Appendix A for feedback and recommendations from the panel of experts).

Reliability is defined by Creswell (2003) as the consistency of item responses in the measurements over time. Reliability can also be defined by the success of different participants interpreting and answering the same questions in a consistent manner (Graham, 2008). A standard survey form will ensure that each participant will receive the same questions in the same order to all responding participants. Since the survey is standardized, errors in scoring with the survey instrument will be minimal and thus ensure reliability.

After obtaining feedback from the panel of experts on the survey instrument, to further validate the survey instrument, a pilot study was performed. Creswell (2003) states to indicate the number of people who will test the instrument and the plans to incorporate their comments into final instrument revisions. A group of 10 participants from the established population was selected to further validate and establish reliability of the survey instrument. The participants were selected randomly, two or three employees from each department that is listed on the Supply Chain organization chart. This pilot study utilized internal consistency for reliability by measuring that the item responses are consistent throughout the instrument. Internal consistency is the extent to which tests assess the same characteristics, skills or quality (Graham, 2008).

There are various methods to measure internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the survey instrument. Cronbach's Alpha assessed the reliability of the ratings summarizing the answers which measures the underlying factors of the participants (Graham, 2008).

## **Data Collection**

Data collection comprised of administering the survey to a purposive sample of 110 participants to analyze quantitative measures. The participants consisted of employees of the XYZ Aerospace Company, within the Supply Chain Operations (SCO) organization. The criteria for the purposive sample are inviting all available people that work in the SCO organization. There are currently 416 employees in the SCO organization. The goal was to obtain a response from 110 participants. This response was obtained by inviting as many people of the 416 employees that were willing to participate. With permission from the Director of Supply Chain Operations, Human Resources and the Ethics Department, survey instructions were read aloud during staff meetings from different departments within SCO. Each department contain from 15 to 20 employees. There were approximately six different staff meetings the researcher attended to read the survey instructions and answer any questions regarding the study. The survey was conducted during the lunch hour in a large conference room that seats 40 to 50 employees.

The survey (see Appendix C) was administered in group settings and given by the survey administrator who was present to answer any of the participant's questions. The participants were gathered in a conference room in which the survey forms were distributed to each willing participant. The survey administrator read aloud the survey instructions and consent agreement (see Appendix B) prior to the survey. The survey instructions detailed the objective of the study, population of the research, and how the results will be used.

To attract employees to participate in the survey, the researcher committed to provide food after the survey is administered. To solicit the participants, an e-mail notification was sent out to employees by department, requesting a response of accept or reject. Based upon the number of responses, an additional group of employees were sent email notification requesting a response of accept or reject. This was conducted as many times necessary to elicit the desired number of 110 responses from a pool of 416 employees. Once the participants committed to take the survey, the researcher organized weekly luncheons every Tuesday, on three separate occasions. A pizza lunch was provided during the lunch hour in a large conference room that holds 40 to 50 people. If the desired number of responses was still not obtained, the researcher was going to advertise a drawing with a chance to win \$100.00 gift certificate; however, it was not necessary.

The survey was anonymous and all participants were asked to submit their completed surveys, face down in a designated box. The box was monitored by the research assistant to make sure the instructions were followed and to ensure anonymity.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

Consideration for the protection of human subjects was addressed in accordance with Pepperdine University guidelines. The survey was approved by Pepperdine University under an exemption with the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In line with the IRB, participants of the survey were informed that their responses will in no way be retaliated against, or affect their performance or future opportunity with the company. To communicate and ensure anonymity of the participant responses, a preface was read and

detailed the goal of the survey, the participants' anonymity guarantee, and an opportunity to request copies of the survey results if desired.

### **Data Analysis**

The main question guiding the research is: What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on morale and behavior of its employees? In order to answer the main question, an evaluation educational inquiry was employed to determine the effectiveness of the leaders on the elements of knowledge sharing to promote high performance work teams.

The data were processed and downloaded into Microsoft Excel and SPSS® Statistics (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software for analysis. Graphical presentation of the results were reported through tables generated using Microsoft Excel.

For Research Question 1, how effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization, the corresponding Survey Questions 1 through 7 were summarized in a table sorted high to low using means and standard deviation. For Research Question 2, what influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees, the corresponding Survey Questions 8 through 15 were summarized in a table sorted high to low using means and standard deviation. For Research Question 3, what do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing within the Supply Chain organization; the corresponding Items 16 through 26, the information utilized frequencies and percentages, and sorted by the most frequent perceived barriers. Question 27 is an open-ended question that asked to list two or three barriers that are most impactful to the participant. A thematic analysis was performed that categorizes the items

into various themes and describes the themes by presenting a sample of verbatim quotes. The themes were similar to those barriers listed in Survey Questions 16 through 26.

For Research Question 4, how are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents, the 26 survey questions were correlated with the six demographic variables using Pearson correlation. An aggregated scale was created based on Survey Questions 1 through 7 and called leadership influence. A second scale was developed based on Survey Questions 8 through 15 to measure how the knowledge sharing plan will influence morale. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated. In addition, two multiple regression models were created using each of the aggregated scale scores (knowledge sharing plan will influence morale and leadership influence) as the dependent variables. In these two regression models, the six demographic variables served as the independent variables. The corresponding analysis approach to research questions and Survey Questions are summarized in Table 1.

### **Summary**

This chapter included the research design for this study, describing the research methodologies used in terms of research design, population, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, validity and reliability, data collection and analysis, and protection of human subjects. This research design is consistent with the purpose of the study as stated in chapter 1, and is supported by the body of literature in chapter 2. Results of this study will be discussed in chapter 4. Conclusions from the study will be presented in chapter 5.



Table 1

*Analysis Approach to Research Questions and Survey Questions*

Research questions	Survey questions	Analysis method
1. How effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization?	Questions 1-7	Means and standard deviation
2. What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees?	Questions 8-15	Means and standard deviation
3. What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing?	Questions 16-26 Question 27	Frequencies and percentages Thematic analysis
4. How are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents?	Questions 1-26 (Perceptions with Questions 28-33, demographics)	Pearson correlation and multiple regression

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

This chapter includes the results of the validated survey used to collect data for the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to analyze the feedback and data extracted from employees to develop a plan or model to promote knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. In addition, this study seeks to determine the level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale. A total of 107 individual contributors participated in this study.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Table 2 displays the frequency counts for selected variables. Demographic characteristics (gender, age, position in the company, years of employment, education, ethnic background) were collected from those who participated in the Knowledge Sharing Survey. All of the survey participants were employees who are currently employed in the Supply Chain Management organization at the XYZ Aerospace Company in Long Beach, California (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Frequency Counts for Selected Variables (N = 107)*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Gender			
	Female	59	55.1
	Male	48	44.9
Age <sup>a</sup>			
	23-29	10	9.3
	30-39	8	7.5
	40-49	37	34.6
	50-59	40	37.4
	60-71	12	11.2
Position in the organization			
	Nonmanagement	107	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Age:  $M = 47.76$ ,  $SD = 10.52$ .

(table continues)

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Total years of work <sup>b</sup>	1-4	21	19.6
	5-9	19	17.8
	10-19	20	18.7
	20-29	40	37.4
	30-41	7	6.5
Education <sup>c</sup>	High school/GED	14	13.1
	Certificate	7	6.5
	Associate's degree	14	13.1
	Bachelor's degree	56	52.3
	Master's degree	16	15.0

<sup>b</sup> Years:  $M = 14.98$ ,  $SD = 9.98$ . <sup>c</sup> Education level:  $Mdn =$  "bachelor's degree"

(table continues)

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Ethnic background			
	African American	7	6.5
	Asian	15	14.0
	Caucasian	63	58.9
	Hispanic	14	13.1
	Other	8	7.5

### **Research Questions**

Research Question 1 asked, “How effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization?” Table 3 displays the ratings for the knowledge sharing promotion statements sorted by highest mean score. The ratings were based on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely*).

Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for Knowledge Sharing Promotion Statements Sorted by Highest Mean Score (N = 107)*

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2. My leader supports the activities related to knowledge sharing.	3.79	1.01
5. My leader cares for me as a person and about my ideas.	3.75	1.09
3. My leader encourages employees to work together and share knowledge with employees in other departments.	3.69	1.12
4. Meetings are regularly conducted for the purpose of communication and knowledge developing and sharing	3.66	1.10
1. My leader encourages inclusiveness, such as employees sharing their working experiences, including experiences in interacting with the customer	3.61	1.07
7. Employees in my department are encouraged to speak candidly/openly, even when critical of the norm.	3.36	1.34
6. Employees in my department are provided incentives for sharing knowledge	2.68	1.22

*Note.* Ratings based on 5-point scale: 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Extremely*.

Research Question 2 asked, “What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees?” Table 4 displays the ratings for the morale influences statements sorted by

highest mean score. The ratings were based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Almost never*) to 5 (*All the time*).

Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations for Morale Influences Statements Sorted by Highest Mean (N = 107)*

Statement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
14. Pride in working for my company	4.32	0.82
13. Motivation to do the best I can	4.31	0.82
15. Good working relationships with my peers	4.29	0.70
12. Enjoyment of the work I do	4.20	0.85
10. Working relationship with my manager	4.17	0.71
9. Trust and respect of leadership	4.15	0.88
8. Satisfaction with career growth potential	4.00	0.93
11. Balance of work and family life	3.79	1.06

*Note.* Ratings based on a 5-point scale: 1 = *Almost never* to 5 = *All the time*.

Research Question 3 asked, “What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing?” Table 5 displays the frequencies and percentages for the perceived barriers sorted by highest endorsed frequency.

Table 5

*Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Barriers Sorted by Highest Frequency**(N = 107)*

Statement	<i>n</i>	%
24. A tendency to resist change	57	53.3
26. Concern about job security or loss of job	52	48.6
18. Lack of openness in sharing useful information	41	38.3
23. The degree to which incentives for individual and team achievement are available	40	37.4
25. The inability to handle conflict with others	40	37.4
16. Lack of trust in the work team	37	34.6
22. The degree to which incentives for individual and team achievement are available	36	33.6
19. Lack of ability and readiness to identify and solve problems	34	31.8
17. Lack of positive regard and respect for each employee	33	30.8
20. Lack of opportunity for individual and team achievement	31	29.0
21. The extent to which resources, including appropriate tools such as computers/laptops, are available	30	28.0

*Note.* Respondents were allowed to give multiple answers.



## **Participant Comments**

Section 3, Question 27 in the survey asked participants to provide any comments or suggestions on the two or three barriers that are most impactful to them. Ninety-four participants answered the question in general themes of responses that included (a) resistance to change, (b) inability to resolve conflict or problems, (c) fear of job loss/job security, (d) lack of openness in sharing, (e) lack of incentives for sharing, (f) need for appropriate tools, (g) inability to communicate clearly, and (h) lack of trust and positive regard and respect for each employee.

With regard to resistance to change, 18% of the respondents felt that there is a reluctance to change the way things have “always been done” especially among the more senior employees. As far as the inability to resolve conflict or problems, 28% of the respondents noted that management lacks the skill to resolve conflicts effectively, or that management does not take the time to address employee concerns. Twenty-one percent of the respondents indicated there is a fear of job loss or lack of job security. Due to this fear, respondents tied in lack of openness and willingness to share information as well as lack of trust, as a result of employee insecurity of potential job loss. With regard to lack of openness in sharing, 31% of the respondents stated that this was mainly because employees were keeping information to themselves for “job security” or that leadership did not share the company strategic plan with their employees.

To incentivize employees to share information, 17% of the respondents indicated this would aid in creating an environment of sharing information that is currently not being done. As far as increasing resources to provide appropriate tools such as company computer/laptops, 13% of the respondents indicated this would add value to the

employee's learning experience. A substantial 22% of the respondents indicated that effective communication is lacking. Whether it is with management or among the employees, there is a need for effective communication in flow down of the company vision and goals from leadership, to strategic direction from management, to basic communication with employees when interacting with employees from other teams. As far as lack of trust, 18% of the respondents answered that there is a basic lack of trust among senior management that is causing a lack of trust among employees with their management. Also, a few respondents wrote that integrity and honesty should be instilled in the organization. Lastly, 11% of the respondents answered that there is a lack of positive regard and respect for each employee as there is a strong perception of favoritism with management and that opportunities are given to a "chosen few." The participants' comments provide additional topics of discussion in the next chapter for future recommendations.

### **Research Questions Continued**

Table 6 displays the Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability coefficients for the three summated scale scores of knowledge sharing promotion ( $\alpha = .93$ ), morale influences ( $\alpha = .88$ ), and perceived barriers ( $\alpha = .62$ ). Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability (Santos, 1999). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient measures the degree with which the items in the scale are answered by the participants in a consistent manner. The higher the alpha score, the more reliable the test is. Nunnally (1978) has indicated  $\alpha = .7$  to be an acceptable reliability coefficient but lower thresholds are sometimes used in the literature. Note that the perceived barriers measure several attributes as opposed to one,

which will deflate the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Therefore, because this alpha is lower than the ideal, these findings and conclusions related to the scale should be interpreted and implemented in a cautious manner. The balance of the alphas in the current study suggest that the scales had adequate levels of internal reliability (Creswell, 2003).

Table 6

*Reliability for Summated Scale Scores (N = 107)*

Score	Number					
	of items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Low	High	$\alpha$
Knowledge sharing Promotion	7	3.51	0.96	1.29	5.00	.93
Morale influences	8	4.15	0.63	2.38	5.00	.88
Perceived barriers	11	4.03	2.40	0.00	11.00	.62

Research Question 4 asked, How are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents? Table 7 displays the Pearson product-moment correlations for five demographic variables with the three summated scale scores. For the resulting 15 correlations, none was significant at the  $p < .05$  level (see Table 7).

### **Additional Findings**

As an additional set of analyses, three multiple regression models were developed using the five demographic variables as predictors and the three summated scale scores as dependent variables. These three dependent variables were knowledge sharing promotion (see Table 8), morale influences (see Table 9), and perceived barriers (Table

10). Inspection of the three models found none to be significant nor were any of the five predictors statistically significant (see Tables 8 to 10).

Table 7

*Pearson Correlations for Selected Demographic Variables With Primary Scale Scores*

*(N = 107)*

Variable	Knowledge sharing promotion	Morale influences	Perceived barriers
Gender <sup>a</sup>	.08	-.09	.02
Age	-.05	.04	-.01
Total years of work	.03	-.07	-.08
Education	-.09	.06	.15
Caucasian <sup>b</sup>	.03	-.14	-.15

<sup>a</sup> Gender: 1 = *Female* 2 = *Male*. <sup>b</sup> Coding: 0 = *No* 1 = *Yes*.

\*  $p < .05$ .

Initially, 107 individual contributors and 7 managers completed the survey to equal 114 total survey participants. Since the ratio of management versus non-management was asymmetrical, an analysis was performed utilizing a nonparametric Spearman correlation comparing management versus individual contributors for each of the 26 individual ratings on the survey. Nonparametric Spearman correlation was chosen over the more popular Pearson product-moment correlation because the Spearman coefficient takes into account non-normal distribution (McCall, 2002). Analysis compared the perceptions of management and individual contributors for the 26 ratings. Only one of the 26 correlations was statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

Specifically, Item 21, “The extent to which resources, including appropriate tools such as computers/laptops, are available” was more likely to be endorsed as a barrier by management than by individual contributors ( $r = -.23, p = .02$ ).

Table 8

*Predictions of Knowledge Sharing and Promotion Based on Selected Variables (N = 107)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.82	0.57		.001
Gender <sup>a</sup>	0.20	0.19	.10	.31
Age	-0.01	0.01	-.10	.40
Total years of work	0.01	0.01	.07	.53
Education	-0.08	0.08	-.10	.32
Ethnic background <sup>b</sup>	0.02	0.20	.01	.93

*Note.* *B* = binomial distribution; *SE* = standard error;  $\beta$  = beta; *p* = probability. Full model:  $F(5, 101) = 0.52, p = .76, R^2 = .025$ .

<sup>a</sup> Gender: 1 = *Female* 2 = *Male*. <sup>b</sup> Ethnic background: 1 = *Others* 2 = *Caucasian*.

Table 9

*Predictions of Morale Influence Based on Selected Variables (N = 107)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Intercept	4.08	0.37		.001
Gender <sup>a</sup>	-0.12	0.13	-.10	.34
Age	0.01	0.01	.12	.29
Total years of work	-0.01	0.01	-.10	.37
Education	0.03	0.05	.05	.62
Ethnic background <sup>b</sup>	-0.16	0.13	-.13	.22

*Note.* *B* = binomial distribution; *SE* = standard error;  $\beta$  = beta; *p* = probability. Full model:  $F(5, 101) = 0.87, p = .50, R^2 = .041$ .

<sup>a</sup> Gender: 1 = *Female* 2 = *Male*. <sup>b</sup> Ethnic background: 1 = *Others* 2 = *Caucasian*.

Table 10

*Predictions of Number of Barriers Based on Selected Variables (N = 107)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Intercept	3.13	1.40		.03
Gender <sup>a</sup>	0.06	0.48	.01	.90
Age	0.01	0.03	.06	.63
Total years of work	-0.02	0.03	-.08	.51
Education	0.24	0.20	.12	.23
Ethnic background <sup>b</sup>	-0.61	0.49	-.13	.22

*Note.* *B* = binomial distribution; *SE* = standard error;  $\beta$  = beta; *p* = probability. Full model:  $F(5, 101) = 0.91$ ,  $p = .48$ .  $R^2 = .043$ .

<sup>a</sup> Gender: 1 = *Female* 2 = *Male*. <sup>b</sup> Ethnic background: 1 = *Others* 2 = *Caucasian*.

## Summary

Chapter 4 presented the results of the four research questions in a study to analyze the feedback and data extracted from employees to develop a plan or model to promote knowledge sharing among employees to create high-performance work teams. In addition, this study was used to determine the level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale. Chapter 5 concludes the paper with the overview of the paper, summary of the research results, practical implications, recommendation for future research, and final discussion of the conclusions.

## **Chapter 5. Discussions and Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

This last chapter provides a brief summary of key findings of the research results and the interpretation of findings with the literature. Practical implications of the study are discussed to depict the relevance of the results of this study. Recommendations for future research are explored in the form of future research questions and methodological enhancements to this study. This chapter includes recommendations for action from a policy as well as practitioner perspective, and conclude with final thoughts and lessons learned.

### **Summary of Research Results**

To reiterate, the purpose of this study was to analyze the feedback and data extracted from employees to develop a plan or model to promote knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. In addition, this study seeks to determine the level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale. While focusing on the summative evaluation, four research questions were developed:

1. How effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization?
2. What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees?
3. What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing?
4. How are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents?

This study evaluated whether a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing will result in a positive influence on its employees morale and behavior. A validated survey instrument was given to 107 employees located in the XYZ Aerospace Company's Long Beach, California organization. The intent of this study is to effectively increase the performance of high performance work teams in the organization, and have a positive influence to its leaders in cultivating a high performance environment to nurture the teams.

Research Question 1 asked, How effective are the leaders in promoting knowledge sharing in a Supply Chain organization? The two statements with the highest mean score "my leader supports the activities related to knowledge sharing" mean score of 3.79 and "my leader cares for me as a person and about my ideas" mean score of 3.75 the data revealed that participants perceived their leaders as being supportive in knowledge sharing and open to new ideas the participants may have.

Research Question 2 asked, What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees? The following top three statements had the highest mean scores "pride in working for my company" "motivation to do the best I can" and "good working relationships with my peers" with mean scores of 4.32, 4.31 and 4.29, respectively. The intent of this research question was to determine if participants were in the right environment to promote knowledge sharing, which statements would be most influential to the participants on their behavior and morale. The right environment to promote knowledge sharing would have a positive effect on morale as the participants felt they would have pride in working for the company and a positive effect on behavior as the



participants would be motivated to do their best. Also there would be a positive effect on both morale and behavior with participants as they would create good working relationships with their peers. The right environment would enable open and honest communication for this to transpire.

Research Question 3 asked, What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing? The top three statements of the most frequent perceived barriers were 53.3% of participants felt that there is a tendency to resist change, while 48.6% felt concern about job security or loss of job and 38.3% felt there is a lack of openness in sharing useful information. Similarly, in Section 3, Question 27 in the survey asked participants to provide any comments or suggestions on the two or three barriers that are most impactful to them. Eighty-eight percent of the participants filled out this section and commented on the top three statements: a tendency to resist change, concern about job security of loss of job, and a lack of openness in sharing useful information. In addition, participants felt there was a lack of incentives for sharing knowledge. It is no surprise that the endorsed frequencies of the top perceived barriers were in alignment with the comments the participants felt were most impactful to them.

Research Question 4 asked, How are those perceptions related to the demographics of the respondents? Statistical data was generated utilizing Pearson product-moment correlations for five demographic variables with the three summated scale scores. For the resulting 15 correlations, none was significant at the  $p < .05$  level. As an additional set of analyses, three multiple regression models were developed using the five demographic variables as predictors and the three summated scale scores as dependent variables. These three dependent variables were knowledge sharing promotion

(see Table 8), morale influences (see Table 9), and perceived barriers (Table 10).

Inspection of the three models found none to be significant nor were any of the five predictors statistically significant (see Tables 8 to 10). The data indicated that regardless of the demographics of the participants, they interpreted the survey and answered in a consistent manner.

### **Literature Interpretation of the Findings**

Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that when getting extraordinary things done in organizations, leaders engage in these Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart. Specifically, enabling others to act, the participants agreed that the leaders are effective in promoting knowledge sharing by their support in the activities related to knowledge sharing. Kouzes and Posner explained that the exemplary leaders enable others to act by fostering collaboration and building trust. They engage all the employees who must make the project work, all who must live with the results. Leaders enable others to act, not by hoarding the power that they have, but rather by giving it away. The participants believe that the leaders care about them and their ideas. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), when people are trusted and have more discretion and authority, they are more likely to produce extraordinary results. Another view that participants feel their leaders care about them and their ideas is the following words from Bennis and Nanus (1985):

If you think about it, people love others not for who they are, but for how they make us feel. We willingly follow others for much the same reason. It makes us feel good to do so. This business of making another person feel good in the

unspectacular course of his daily comings and goings is, in my view, the very essence of leadership. (pp. 62-63)

Momeni (2009) wrote that employees' feelings about their workplace is the principal determinant of whether an organization is a great place to work, by its organizational programs, company benefits, financial situation and value of stock.

Momeni (2009) identified the following three components of employee feelings about the place where they work:

- Feelings about management: An employee should trust the people for whom he or she works.
- Feelings about the job: An employee should have pride in what he or she does.
- Feelings about other employees: An employee should enjoy the people with whom he or she works. (p. 2)

Given the right environment, what influence would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees. The following top three statements "pride in working for my company," "motivation to do the best I can," and "good working relationships with my peers" in two out three components mirrors Momeni's (2009) research interpretation on employee morale, which is part of the organization's climate, and positive employee morale is essential to the company.

What do respondents perceive are the barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing? Participants answered there was a lack of incentives for sharing knowledge. Kouzes and Posner's (2002) fifth practice of exemplary leadership is to encourage the heart. Encouragement can come from dramatic gestures or a simple thank you. "It's part

of a leader's job to show appreciation for people's contributions and to create a culture of celebration" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 19). According to Colan (2009), although most leaders recognize the need for employee appreciation, this tends to be a blind spot for many. Leaders generally believe that they are much more appreciative of their employees than their employers think they are (Colan, 2009). Colan added that the blind spot appears because we judge ourselves by our intentions, but others judge us by our actions. If participants were recognized for sharing knowledge, they would be ignited to do so. Demonstrating appreciation is not a matter of time and intention. It's a matter of priority and action (Colan, 2009).

Although the United States Department of Labor (2009) claimed that total employment is projected to increase by 15.3 million, or 10.1%, during the 2008-18 periods, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported (as cited in United States Department of Labor, 2009), the participants' second highest barrier is concern about job security or loss of job. The employment projection may be positive; however, the reality for the participants is the possibility that they may lose their job. As stated earlier, 21% of the respondents commented that a fear exists of job loss or lack of job security. Due to this fear, respondents are less open and willing to share information. There is also a lack of trust, as a result of employee insecurity of potential job loss.

Whether discussing Kouzes and Posner's (2002) five practices of exemplary leadership, Bennis and Nanus' (1985) essence of leadership, Momeni's (2009) research on employee morale, or Colan's (2009) viewpoint on employee appreciation, the literature supports the findings. The results that participants felt the leaders are effective in promoting knowledge sharing; with a plan or model in place to promote knowledge

sharing would improve employee morale and behavior, and the participants' top perceived barriers to creating a culture of knowledge sharing were in alignment with the literature, with the exception of the fear of job loss or job security barrier. As stated earlier, even with the United States Department of Labor (2009) projected increase of employment, the fear of job loss continues to exist with the participants.

### **Practical Implications**

The main objective of this study was to evaluate whether a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing will result in a positive influence on its employee morale and behavior. Based on the findings of this study, a company plan or model in place would have a positive influence on employee morale and behavior. To what extent the level of influence would have on employees would depend on the content of the plan or model and buy-in from leadership. Based on the feedback from the participants, the plan or model should include providing incentives to share knowledge, promoting good working relationships with their peers, and an emphasis on eliminating the top perceived barriers.

At the XYZ Aerospace Company, the EI/EE objectives are (a) to create a team-based culture and environment that can promote clear vision, (b) clear communication, (c) collaboration among team members, and (d) problem solving as a team. The supply chain organization must embrace employee involvement as part of the culture in the XYZ Aerospace Company. According to Durett (2006), understanding what engages employees is the key to motivating them and increasing morale. Showing employees how their work links to the organization's strategy and success, drives engagement and performance (Durett, 2006). To make a significant improvement in morale and to create a

healthy, synergistic work environment, on a regular basis communicate the mission, vision, and goals and the role employees play in achieving them. Marshall (2005) insists on communicating better to increase morale and allow employees to take part in setting goals. The implication is that the employees, along with management, put a plan in place for knowledge sharing, with their feedback from this study. The employees would feel heard and will own this process. “An often-replicated finding from social psychology indicates that if you can get people involved in a collaborative process, their level of commitment to that process will increase. Their attitudes toward others and the organization will be more positive” (Mink et al., 1993, p. 55).

Gubman (2003) encourages self-organization for employee engagement. The more people are supported in creating their own organizations/teams, the more they’ll feel in charge of their futures. High-performing organizations encourage more self-control than system control. The practical implication is that the Supply Chain Organization must create the right environment to promote knowledge sharing. To energize employees, the environment needs to be in alignment with Covey’s (1989) win-win paradigm. Covey states that if goals are to be achieved, and reflect the values in the mission statement, the reward system must be aligned with these goals and values. Covey points out that the problem is in the system, not in the people. If good people are put in bad systems, bad results will be the outcome. “You have to water the flowers you want to grow” (Covey, 1989, p. 232). In other words, the environment must be conducive to nurture and develop employees to encompass Covey’s win-win paradigm.

Another implication of this study is to engage the leaders’ buy-in for the knowledge sharing model. Colan (2009) refers to the business case as the customer value

chain. Leaders are the first link in the customer value chain. Engaging leaders invest their time into their teams because they know that engaged employees are more likely to: stay with the organization, perform at high levels, influence others to perform well, promote the organization externally, and deliver unparalleled customer service.

Another practical implication is to take a look at companies' best practices for knowledge transfer. The United States Strategic Command's Knowledge Transfer office implements knowledge sharing strategies within the department of defense (DOD). They developed six guiding principles based upon the understanding that knowledge resides within people. The six guiding principles are (a) Exploit tacit knowledge, (b) Promote knowledge transfer as a social and interpersonal activity, (c) Focus on sharing knowledge, (d) Connect people with expertise, (e) Foster a learning organization based upon knowledge transfer, and (f) Promote trust and mutual understanding (U.S. Strategic Command Knowledge Transfer Office, 2009). To increase awareness and understanding of the knowledge transfer principles, multiple mediums are utilized to reach out to knowledge workers at different levels. The following primary methods are used to encourage people to embrace culture change: newsletters, videos, workshops, web pages, organizational announcements, and leadership awareness. To implement the knowledge transfer principles within the organization are a few initiatives such as brown bag lunches, after action reviews, or lessons learned, communities of practice, narratives and storytelling. Although it is important to codify knowledge in databases, the Knowledge Transfer Office maintains a focus on initiatives which promote knowledge transfer through social interaction (U.S. Strategic Command Knowledge Transfer Office, 2009).

National Aeronautics Space Administration ([NASA], 2005) created a collaboration handbook with principles and best practices. They have developed five main principles for developing and executing effective collaborations identified as (a) create a collaborative environment, (b) align needs, (c) develop personal relationships, (d) frame the collaboration, and (e) secure management support. Along with each principle, they have developed best practices. Encourage open communication and support the sharing of information to create a collaborative environment. Evaluate and document overall goals and objectives of the program or project to align the need. To aid in developing personal relationships, provide face-to-face interactions and promote team building activities. Clearly define and agree upon goals of the collaboration and the roles and responsibilities of those involved. A best practice for this would be to provide an agreed upon dispute resolution process. Lastly, to secure management support, a few best practices are to ensure and provide visible senior management support, as well as use a team approach to working the collaborative effort (NASA, 2005).

Buckman Laboratories, a leading manufacturer of specialty chemicals for aqueous industrial systems, reinvented themselves in the late 1980's. When his father died in 1978, Robert (Bob) Buckman became the new chairman and CEO. He wanted to change the way the company operated. For many years the company had been sending out its PhDs to gather best business practices worldwide and then share the information with all associates in the company. This became too exhaustive and costly. In 1986, company leadership began to address a more systematic approach to best practices. A database was created to which all general managers were connected to IBM's network for email. After realizing this wasn't getting through to all the people that needed the information, access



was granted to all the field salespeople, who are the people in front of the customer. Within a year, the first formal system to share and capture knowledge within the company worldwide was started, using an electronic file to record how sales associates created new knowledge from within the organization. New knowledge was resolving a problem at a customer's business either by applying "existing Buckman knowledge" if it was a well-documented problem, or by developing a new, more effective or efficient solution if it was a new problem (Fulmer, 2003).

The final implication of this study is taking everything into account: employee engagement, the right environment, engaging leaders, and companies with best practices on knowledge transfer, which will lead to a more successful organization, allowing the business to grow and increase shareholder value. Colan (2009) states that the customer value chain starts with the engaging leader who ignites a fully engaged worker. Engaged workers create loyal customers. Colan insists that gaining additional business from an existing customer is five times less expensive than acquiring a new customer. He adds that a loyal customer base is the grand slam of business. Additional business creates higher profit margins and better shareholder returns. There are no shortcuts in the customer value chain according to Colan. With enough time and resources, competitors may be able to replicate the product, distribution channel and technology, but they will not be able to easily replicate passionate performers (Colan, 2009).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the literature review, the findings of this research, and my work and personal experience, promoting knowledge sharing in an organization is a lot more than merely asking employees to teach each other what they know. There are some areas that

may need to be explored not covered in this research. Therefore, future research should address the following questions or study recommendations:

1. What changes should the organization make to promote a culture of knowledge sharing?
2. What specific incentives or tangible rewards would promote knowledge sharing?
3. How can leaders be inspired to embrace knowledge sharing among their employees?
4. How can trust be regained to instill confidence in the organization?
5. Companies should consider using the Kotter model (1996) change strategy for instituting change in their organizations.
6. A study should be conducted in the future to see if there are any changes after implementation of the knowledge sharing model in this study.
7. A study should be conducted to expand the scope of the Supply Chain organization within the XYZ Aerospace Company to include other business units throughout the company to compare responses.
8. An employee survey should be conducted to gauge the employee satisfaction index as compared to the previous year to see if there are any improvements in employee morale.
9. A qualitative study should be conducted to gain a different perspective on the topic to compare with the quantitative outcome of this study.
10. A study should be conducted to examine the differences in knowledge sharing plan or model of other companies in the United States and other nations.

## **Methodological Enhancements**

The notion of knowledge sharing within an organization to exchange tacit knowledge among employees is key to the success of any business. Expanding this research to other organizations, even other companies to compare and contrast the data would be a substantial study. The limitation would be resources, however, if there were unlimited amount of resources, analyzing the model or plan of knowledge sharing among different companies, even industries would garner eye-opening comparison results. Would knowledge transfer be that different from an aerospace company and a software company or between an ad agency and a toy company?

My research was limited to the specific Supply Chain organization where I work. Had I the resources to conduct my study to include other organizations within the XYZ Aerospace Company, I would have hired a third party contractor experienced in conducting research on knowledge transfer. In this manner, the findings would include a broader group of participants that may have achieved different results. The survey instrument given to participants in a group setting would not change. Having participants all together, as hostage so to speak, was very effective and the surveys were completed in a timely manner.

## **Recommendations for Action**

**Policy recommendation.** From a policy perspective, I would recommend the XYZ Aerospace Company incorporate a knowledge sharing plan or model as part of their policy throughout the entire company. This would be flowed down from the top executives to the policy writers and go through the appropriate organizations for review. The knowledge sharing policy would have to be approved by corporate ethics, human

resources and executive leadership. Mandating this policy throughout the various business units would ensure the employees are transferring knowledge and creating value in their own business units.

Creating a model or plan to promote knowledge transfer is creating a framework for change strategy. From the book, *Reframing Organizations*, Kotter (1996), an influential student on leadership and change, describes eight stages in successful change initiatives:

1. Creating a sense of urgency.
2. Pulling together a guiding team with the needed skills, credibility, connections, and authority to move things along.
3. Creating an uplifting vision and strategy.
4. Communicating the vision and strategy through a combination of words, deeds, and symbols.
5. Removing obstacles, or empowering people to move ahead.
6. Producing visible signs of progress through short-term victories.
7. Sticking with the process and refusing to quit when things get tough.
8. Nurturing and shaping a new culture to support the emerging innovative ways.

Kotter's (1996) stages are a model of change process moving through time, not necessarily in a linear sequence (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Integrating Kotter's stages with the operating principles of the XYZ Aerospace Company generates the knowledge sharing model presented in Table 11.

Table 11

*Knowledge Sharing Model—Reframing Kotter's Change Stages*

Kotter's stage of change	XYZ aerospace company frame
1. Sense of urgency	<p>Must have cross-trained employees within 6 months to be prepared for upcoming multiple business platforms</p> <p>Leaders immediately spread the word that knowledge sharing is imperative through written and spoken communiqué. Rally employees and solicit their input for buy-in</p> <p>Apply realistic deadlines to incorporate knowledge sharing methods</p> <p>Tell a compelling story</p>
2. Guiding team	<p>Put a director on team to reinforce and champion knowledge sharing</p> <p>Assemble a cross functional team to include all departments within the organization</p> <p>Select team members that are influential with their peers</p>
3. Uplifting vision and strategy	<p>VISION: To provide innovative world class supply chain management solutions through shared knowledge</p> <p>Publicly display vision to keep message in forefront</p> <p>Team to develop an implementation plan for knowledge sharing</p>
4. Communicate vision and strategy through words, deeds, and symbols	<p>Active endorsement by visible leadership; kickoff ceremonies to promote knowledge sharing</p> <p>Conduct meetings to communicate direction, get feedback from employees-meetings such as staff meetings, town hall meetings, round table meetings, or all-hand meetings - reinforce that knowledge sharing is vital to future business</p> <p>Cleverly crafted knowledge sharing campaign (for example, contest on the most popular VISION illustration wins a director's parking spot for 6 months)</p>
5. Remove obstacles and empower	<p>Provide training, resources, support and incentives to share knowledge</p> <p>Remove processes/procedures that support the old way and replace with new knowledge sharing initiative</p>
6. Early wins	<p>Develop a plan for acknowledgement of short-term milestones</p> <p>Celebrate and communicate early signs of progress to enhance morale</p>
7. Keep going when going gets tough	<p>Gather and re-energize people by revival meetings</p> <p>Stay the course and guide with inspirational leadership</p>
8. New culture to support new ways	<p>Instill knowledge sharing edict</p> <p>Share success stories of effective knowledge transfer</p> <p>Track and collect data to measure results by utilizing metrics and/or documentation</p>

**Practitioner recommendation.** From a practitioner perspective, once a policy of the knowledge sharing model is in place, I recommend customizing the knowledge sharing model (see Table 11) to the specific business unit based on employee and

manager collaboration and feedback. For example, in my specific Supply Chain organization, I would utilize the data results from the employees in this research and work with a high performance work team to implement the model. This model would become part of the Supply Chain organization process. My findings would be shared with other business units upon request to assist other organizations in getting started. The knowledge sharing plan thus becomes a *living document* much like a living trust; to modify as it becomes necessary. As stated in recommendations for future research, I strongly suggest an employee survey should be conducted to gauge the employee satisfaction index as compared to the previous year to see if there are any improvements in employee morale. I also recommend expanding the study to include other business units to compare responses. Periodic pulsing of employees' feedback will ensure the knowledge sharing living model is effective.

### **Conclusion**

A few years ago, I began my career as a new manager in the Supply Chain organization. I observed employees grasping for knowledge one way or another. There were desk top procedures on how to complete specific tasks, but noticed there was no plan in place to ensure the transfer of knowledge, either tacit or technical. This prompted my research in knowledge sharing and collaboration to develop high performance work teams. In my own way, I rewarded employees for sharing knowledge, but knew that this research was necessary and much bigger than one manager's department.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the feedback and data extracted from employees in developing a plan or model to encourage knowledge sharing among employees to create high performance work teams. Another purpose was to determine the

level of influence the plan or model will have on employee behavior and morale.

Research results from the literature review stated that the challenge is to identify and develop most effective ways to manage and transfer knowledge in an organization (New York State Department of Civil Service, 2009). Whether sharing knowledge through storytelling, mentoring, training or lessons learned, each organization must find a way. As the findings revealed, especially in this turbulent economy, employees must be given incentives or recognition to promote knowledge transfer.

To create a high-performance work team, there must be a high-performance climate to allow the teams to excel. Mink et al. (1993) lists 12 pillars of the high-performance environment. When in place, these pillars help to create an environment that encourages performance through employee involvement, self-management, commitment, and a sense of autonomy and empowerment (Mink et al., 1993).

The findings in this study revealed that effective leaders are essential in supporting and promoting knowledge transfer. The engaging leader will prevail in leading the employees and increasing value in the organization tenfold.

Lastly, encompassing the transfer of knowledge, with the optimum environment, and engaging leader, the focus must be on employees; on positive employee morale and consequently their behavior. Momeni (2009) stated that employee morale is part of the organizational climate and positive employee morale is essential to the company.

It has been a journey of self-discovery as a manager and as a researcher. I have learned to become a better listener, communicator and storyteller; and this research study has taught me to humbly remain objective. In conclusion, here are two quotes that aptly summarize this journey “Today, the new knowledge equation is knowledge equals

power—so share it and it will multiply” (author unknown), which leads to the second quote “Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.”—Goethe



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## APPENDIX A

### Panel Expert Feedback to Survey Instrument

#### Directions:

- Remove the words: “on the elements of knowledge sharing and about yourself by selecting the appropriate choice or answering the following survey items.”
- Revise to read: Please answer and respond to the following questions:

#### Section 1: Measuring the influence leaders have in promoting knowledge sharing

- Add the words: There are no right or wrong answers.
- Replace the word “selecting” with “circling.”
- Revise the first question to read: My leader encourages inclusiveness, such as employees to sharing their working experiences, ~~such as their~~ including experiences in interacting with the customer.
- Revise question seven to read: Employees in my department are encouraged to speak ~~freely~~ candidly/openly, even when critical of the norm.

#### Section 2: Measuring Morale Influences when knowledge is shared

- Replace the word “selecting” with “circling.”
- Remove the words: There are no right or wrong answers.

#### Section 3: Measuring the potential barriers among teams for creating a culture of knowledge sharing

- Revise question 27 to read: In two to three brief bullet statements, please provide your comments or suggestions on the two or three barriers that are most impactful to you.

#### Section 4: Personal Information

- In number 32. What is the highest level of education you have earned? Add GED next to High School Diploma.

Overall:

- To avoid confusion, reverse the numbering; instead of 5 to 1, change and begin from left to right, 1 to 5. See below.

From: All the Time					Almost Never
	5	4	3	2	1
To: Almost Never					All the Time
	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX B

### Survey Instructions/Consent Agreement

Dear Survey Participant:

My name is Susan Van Gelder, I am a Doctoral student in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, and am currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled, "The Effectiveness of Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration in Creating High Performance Work Teams." The professor supervising my work is Dr. Mark Allen.

The objective of the study is to determine:

What influence if any, would a specific company plan or model to promote knowledge sharing have on the morale and behavior of its employees?

I am inviting individuals from the organization comprised of non-management and management personnel to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please listen to this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

If you should decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to respond to a survey with answers that are "to the best of your knowledge." Your responses should reflect your opinion, not answers you may think others would want stated. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey. Please complete the survey in a single setting.

No personally identifying information will be requested on the survey itself and no identifiers will be used that link a participant's identity to his/her data. Upon return of the surveys, each questionnaire will be assigned a randomly generated identification number in preparation for data entry and analysis. The completed survey questionnaires will be kept in a locked storage bin in the researcher's home office and the electronic data will be kept in the researcher's personal computer that will not be accessible to the public. Only the author will have access to this data.

The only foreseeable risk associated with participation in this study is the imposition on the participant's time. The participant will not directly benefit from their study participation. Participation in this survey is voluntary and job status will not be affected by refusal to participate or to withdraw from the study.

If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the survey in its entirety, you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. You also do not have to answer any of the questions on the survey that you prefer not to answer--just leave such items blank.

If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information that identifies you personally will be released.

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact:

Dr. Doug Leigh  
Chairperson, Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education & Psychology



Thank you for taking the time to listen to this information, and I hope you decide to complete the survey. You are welcome to a brief summary of the study findings in about 1 year. If you decide you are interested in receiving the summary, please contact me. If you would like documentation linking your participation in this research study by signing an informed consent form, please contact the researcher.

Sincerely,

Susan Van Gelder  
Doctoral Candidate  
Pepperdine University

Dr. Mark Allen  
Faculty Supervisor  
Pepperdine University  
[mark.allen@pepperdine.edu](mailto:mark.allen@pepperdine.edu)

## APPENDIX C

## Survey Instrument

Directions: Please answer and respond to the following questions:

Section 1: Measuring the influence leaders have in promoting knowledge sharing

Indicate the extent to which you believe the leader (immediate manager) has influenced each of the following measures of knowledge sharing at work. There are no right or wrong answers.

*Circling the number "1" indicates not at all,  
 Circling a "2" indicates a little,  
 Circling a "3" means quite a bit,  
 Circling a "4" indicates a great deal,  
 Circling a "5" indicates extremely.*

Not at All					Extremely
1	2	3	4	5	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

---

1. My leader encourages inclusiveness, such as employees sharing their working experiences, including experiences in interacting with the customer.

2. My leader supports the activities related to knowledge sharing.
3. My leader encourages employees to work together and share knowledge with employees in other departments.
4. Meetings are regularly conducted for the purpose of communication and knowledge developing and sharing.
5. My leader cares for me as a person and about my ideas.
6. Employees in my department are provided incentives for sharing knowledge.
7. Employees in my department are encouraged to speak candidly/openly, even when critical of the norm.

Section 2: Measuring morale influences when knowledge is shared

Indicate the extent to which you believe knowledge shared with your peers and management will influence each of the following measures of your morale at work.

Circling the number "1" indicates almost never influence,  
 Circling a "2" indicates once in a while influence,  
 Circling a "3" means about half the time influence,  
 Circling a "4" indicates most of the time influence,  
 Circling a "5" indicates nearly all the time influence.

Almost Never	All the Time			
1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

*Shared knowledge in my organization will influence my morale at work*

*regarding:*

- |  |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 8. Satisfaction with career growth potential | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Trust and respect of leadership           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Working relationship with my manager     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Balance of work and family life          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Enjoyment of the work I do               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Motivation to do the best I can          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Pride in working for my company          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

15. Good working relationship with my peers

Section 3: Measuring the potential barriers among teams for creating a culture of knowledge sharing

According to the professional literature, different organizations struggle in different ways to implement a positive culture of knowledge sharing. Below is a list of possible barriers for creating a culture of knowledge sharing that could be occurring in the supply chain organization.

*Please check all those barriers that apply in your organization:*

- 16. Lack of trust in the work team
- 17. Lack of positive regard and respect for each employee
- 18. Lack of openness in sharing useful information
- 19. Lack of ability and readiness to identify and solve problems
- 20. Lack of opportunity for individual and team achievement
- 21. The extent to which resources, including appropriate tools such as computers/laptops, are available
- 22. The degree to which incentives for individual and team achievement are available
- 23. The inability to communicate clearly
- 24. A tendency to resist change
- 25. The inability to handle conflict with others
- 26. Concern about job security or loss of job



Section 4: Personal Information

28. Gender     Female    Male

29. Age        \_\_\_\_\_ (in years)

30. What is your position in the organization?

MANAGEMENT

NON-MANAGEMENT

31. How long have you been employed with the company?    \_\_\_\_\_ (in years)

32. What is the highest level of education you have earned?

High School diploma/GED     Certificate     Associate degree

Bachelor Degree                       Master Degree     Doctoral degree

33. What is your ethnic background?

African American    Asian     Caucasian

Hispanic               Other

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanks for your input!**