

Research on the Competitiveness of Knowledge-Based Workers in Knowledge-Based Organization

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Abstract This paper analyses the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers in knowledge-based organization, And the authors find out four ways about the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers how to convert into the competitiveness of knowledge-based organization; At the same time, the authors propose that some problems should be paid more attention at this time of improving the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers. So as to fully play the role of knowledge-based workers and enhance the competitiveness of organization.

Key Words Knowledge-based organization; Knowledge-based workers; Competitiveness; Conversion

1 Introduction

With the arrival of the era of global competition and intellectual economy times in 21st century, the traditional mode of enterprise development and enterprise theory has been challenged increasingly. Therefore, the appearing of new type enterprises is inevitable. The paper "Appearance of New Type Organization" of Peter F. Drucker in 1998 points out that after experiencing the separation of management and ownership, order-Dominating Organization, due to the development of information technology, enterprise will enter a new form: knowledge-based organization by the group of experts

The entrepreneur^[1] and financial analyst Doctor Karl Erik Seviby is the first person who proposed the word "Knowledge-based Organization" in 1986 Knowledge-based organization to grow and survive in the keen competition is due to the existence^[2] of knowledge-based workers. According to Peter Drucker's definition, knowledge-based workers are the kind of people who master and apply symbols and concepts, take advantage of knowledge and information to work. The famous Canada scholar Frances Horibe considers: "knowledge-based workers are those who create wealth by brain more than by hands. They bring added value for the products through their own originality, analysis, judgement, comprehensive, and design." Some scholars define knowledge-based workers as those who have the strong ability of learning and knowledge innovation, and can make full use of modern scientific and technological knowledge to improve work efficiency.

In economic era, the role of knowledge-based workers in the enterprise competition has become not to be neglected and knowledge-based workers have got more and more attention by enterprise. Although scholars both at home and abroad have deep studies on knowledge-based workers, most of them pay more attention on the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers themselves, but less on how to convert into the competitiveness of knowledge-based organization. Based on the basis of theoretical analysis, this paper builds four ways on the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers how to convert into the competitiveness of knowledge-based organization and proposes that some problems should be paid more attention while are improving the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers to make enterprise to make better use of the resource of knowledge-based workers. Then improve the competitiveness of enterprises.

2 Competitiveness of Knowledge-based Workers

In the knowledge society, social resource has not only confined to capital, labor, management and natural resources, etc. Knowledge has become a more powerful resource into the sight of enterprise management scholars and business leaders. Traditional workers cannot satisfy present enterprises' urgent need of improving their own competitiveness; therefore, knowledge-based workers' advantages of promoting the enterprise competitiveness can be highlighted. In comparison with traditional workers' characters, this paper found that knowledge-based workers have great advantages in five aspects including learning ability, innovation ability, the degree of professional knowledge, individual needs and the intensity of personalization(as shown in table1). Besides that, the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers still are reflected in other aspects, including personal qualities, profession loyalty and the spirit of challenge. Because of knowledge-based workers having these advantages, they can make it in an invincible position in the ever-changing market environment and the intense

competition.

Table 1 Differences between Traditional Workers and Knowledge-based Workers

	Traditional workers	Knowledge-based workers
Learning ability	No consciousness of autonomous learning, little application of knowledge	Autonomous learning, strong ability of acquiring and applying knowledge
Innovation ability	Stress on the loyalty to their duties	In the changeable and uncertain systems, showing personal wisdom, and having great flexibility and creativity
The degree of professional knowledge	Having all trades and mastering of none	Professional experts with certain knowledge authority
Personal needs	As the "economic man", having strong low level needs, such as: physiological needs and safety needs	Having realized low level needs, making self-esteem and self-actualization as goals
The intensity of personalization	Clinging to old ideas, depending on organization	Independent and self-management

2.1 Autonomous learning ability

Knowledge-based workers engage in not simple and repetitive work, but bring full play to individual performance and inspiration, promote technological progress in the changeable and not entirely sure system to keep products and services updated. With their own specialization knowledge to make creative thinking, form new knowledge constantly. However, along with the changes of times, knowledge has changed. The original advanced knowledge^[3] becomes behind and abandoned by man. This requires knowledge-based workers having constantly learning ability.

2.2 Professional knowledge

Knowledge is the first resource in the knowledge-based organization, so only owning professional knowledge can create value for the organization. What's more, owing to the specialization and standardization of production and operation, knowledge-based workers' labor depends more on their own knowledge rather than external conditions or tools. It is inevitable to have professional knowledge for knowledge-based workers. During business management, the coordination between various functions has become more and more professional and complicated. Knowledge-based workers who hold the core knowledge and information which is required by enterprise survival, have gradually occupied the dominant status with a higher level of culture and technique.

2.3 Strong achievement motivation

Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs is also applicable to knowledge-based workers. He divides the needs of people into 5 levels: physiological, safety, belonging-love, self-esteem, self-actualization. Knowledge-based workers have the above 5 needs like traditional workers. Comparison to traditional workers, knowledge-based workers display on more intense pursuit and need to self-actualization. That's to say, they have more intense sense of achievement to self-actualization.

2.4 Profession loyalty

Knowledge-based workers are paying more attention on personal career planning, and have higher loyalty to profession than to enterprises. If an enterprise is unable to provide career development space for knowledge-based workers, they will use the professional knowledge to serve other enterprise with the same industry, so as to realize their own value. Profession loyalty is helpful to improve the knowledge specialization, which promotes the competitiveness in a certain extent.

2.5 Strong personalization

The working process of traditional workers is visible and can be measured and monitored, but knowledge-based workers' work is mainly complex brain thinking process and can be done whenever and wherever, without place and time limit, power and environmental constraints. Therefore, they have certain preferences for self management and playing personality. No cling to old ideas is the most significant performance of personalization.

2.6 High personal qualities

Knowledge-based workers are generally high talented persons, who accept the specialized system education; have a more specific outlook on life and values; have authority and higher vocational morality in the professional field; and also have broad vision, the strong desire for knowledge, strong ability to learn, broad knowledge level, etc.

2.7 Spirit of challenge

Facing with the emergence of new things, because of their own strong innovation ability and

personalized characteristic, knowledge-based workers have showed strong spirit of inquiry. They hope to undertake these difficult new things, because the appropriate adventure and challenge is the inspection and affirmation to their abilities. They are fond of challenging work and creative task, to regard conquering difficulties as a kind of fun, and crave to show their individual talents through this process. And also explains the importance of their existence to the organization, which reflects their value and non-substitutability, satisfies the need of self-actualization.

2.8 Innovation ability

Today there being various kinds of market products, expand the space of consumer choice, which reduces the consumer’s loyalty to product brand. So if the enterprises want to gain a foothold in the fiercely competitive market, they must make product innovation every now and then. Knowledge-based workers germinate the consciousness and desire for innovation naturally in this kind of environment. What’s more, knowledge-based workers having the ability of autonomous learning and the intention of continuous learning new knowledge, they can acquire new knowledge timely, and then analyze, apply and finally convert into the new achievement.

3 The Competitiveness of Knowledge-based Workers Transforming into the One of Organizations

On the basis of the study on the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers, from four aspects including perfect training mechanism; personal goals being integrated with enterprise’s goals; moderate decentralization, emphasizing self management and internal knowledge sharing, proposes the way on the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers transforming into the one of organization(as shown in figure 1).

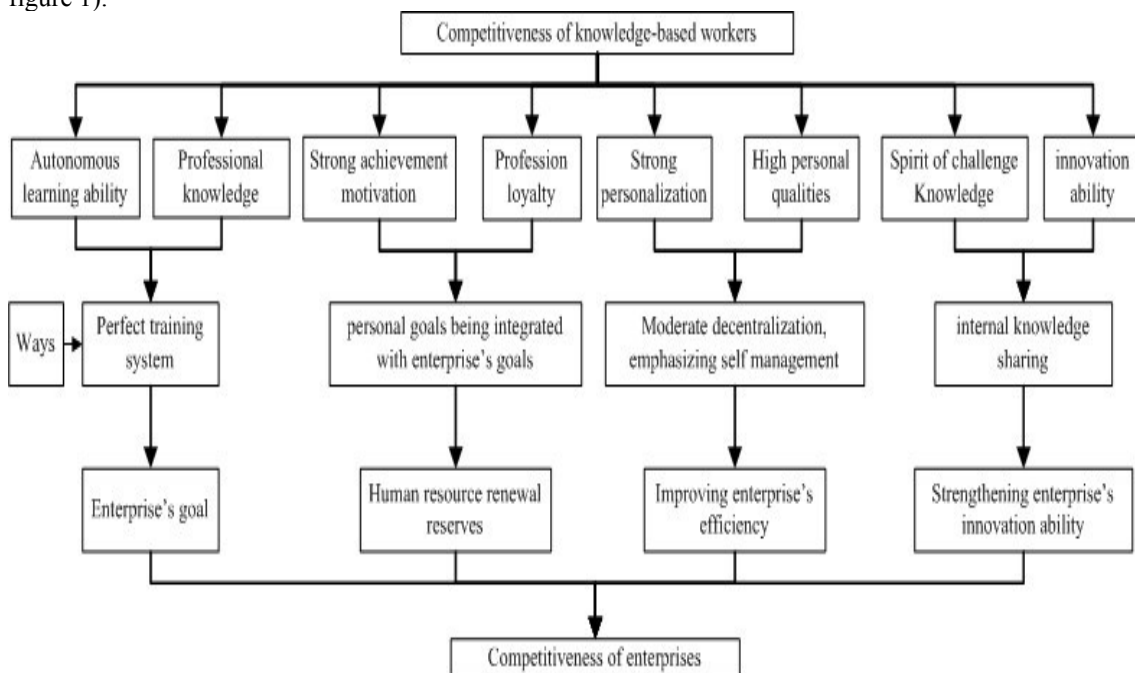


Figure 1 The Mode of the Ways of the Competitiveness of Knowledge-based Workers Transforming into the One of Organization

3.1 Improving the training mechanism of enterprise

American management master Drucker points out that modern enterprise is not only “learning organization”, but also “teaching organization”. Retraining knowledge-based workers is not only the personal needs of employees, but also is the inevitable^[4] requirement of the development of enterprises. Because of the rapid development of science and technology; the trend of knowledge diversity; and the acceleration of knowledge updating, enterprises grasping the advanced science and technology is the key to keeping advantage in market competition. As highly educated talents, knowledge-based workers have high capacity in the field of professional knowledge, and self learning. Establishing employees’ training system to increase the human capital accumulation of knowledge-based workers provides motivation for the long-term development of the enterprise in the wake of personal growth.

3.2 The personal goals being integrated with enterprise's goals

The loyalty to profession and strong achievement motivation of knowledge-based workers decides that, Compared with traditional workers, they pay more attention to whether realizing personal development targets or not. The behavior of intensely pursuing their personal targets is going to be changed into realizing targets of organization, so knowledge-based workers' ability and creativity not only can meet the present goals of enterprise, and also the future ones. What's more, the personal development goals can be fully mixed with enterprise's development goals. Therefore, the management should pass on the vision and strategy of enterprise actively to employees and be aware of their personal goals. On such basis, knowledge-based workers fully participate in the process of decomposition of the long-term goals of the enterprise, so as to be integrated with personal goals. Considering knowledge-based workers, the formulation of goals is no longer one-way decision-making process, but they must consider the enterprise's goals. Knowledge-based workers taking part in the process of formulation of enterprise's goals mobilizes the enthusiasm of workers participating in enterprise to improve the enterprise's cohesive force, and then strengthen the competitiveness of the enterprises in the market.

3.3 Moderate decentralization, emphasizing self control

Compared to traditional workers, the higher personal comprehensive quality and intensity of personalization of knowledge-based workers determines that the biggest characteristic of their work is to show their own wisdom and creativity. Therefore, they should gain more authorization. Enterprise's leadership should know knowledge-based workers; change "managing" them into "leading" them; and give them certain space to display their talents. This can not only promote the production of the intrinsic motivation of knowledge-based workers, but also can make their efforts to successfully complete the work arranged by upper leaders. Sequentially improve enterprise's efficiency at most.

3.4 Reinforcing the internal knowledge sharing, improving innovation ability of enterprise

Autonomous learning ability of the knowledge-based workers determines their desire to acquiring new knowledge. On the condition of mastering new knowledge and technology through getting trained, knowledge-based workers' characteristics on challenging new things determines them not to cling to old things in every aspect. Based on the strong needs of knowledge-based workers to the innovation of knowledge and technology, enterprise should establish a perfect mechanism on internal knowledge sharing and information communicating, to construct a platform for exchanging knowledge for employees, and choose the promising innovative solutions to make it become the source of innovation.

4 Some Problems

The advantages of knowledge-based workers determine the level of their competitiveness. However, at the time of the rapid development of knowledge and technology, maintaining their competitiveness should pay more attention to the problems existing in their work.

1) Give them education on the loyalty to enterprise and meet their reasonable requirements in a certain extent in order to reduce the loss of qualified employees. The advantages of knowledge-based workers can help enterprise gain advantage in the ever-changing market competition, but most of them have lower loyalty to enterprise than traditional workers, which is caused by the character of knowledge-based workers. In the traditional organization, the status of employees is mainly from their position. Once they leave, their power will be lost and economic income will be also affected, not to mention the status and realization of self value. However, knowledge-based workers with their professional knowledge can easily find the lost status and self value. Therefore, leaders should formulate rational incentive mechanism to reduce the loss of knowledge-based workers to the minimum.

2) Their expert position makes them easy to be complacency, and not accept the opinions of others, thus become fatuous. This requires leaders when give them autonomous right, should also regularly carry out education activity and the inspection work .in order to make them do self-examination and self-adjusting in time.

5 Conclusion

The competitiveness of knowledge-based workers determines they can't be substituted in the organization. As long as leaders give them properly lead and utilize, the competitiveness of knowledge-based workers can be transformed into the one of organization. Therefore, when they play the competitiveness, knowledge-based workers should try to avoid the appearance of problems which affect their authority. This is beneficial to the lasting survival and development of enterprises. At the

same time, their competitiveness could rise to a new height.

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