Silent Knowledge improves problem solving skills through hands on experiences.

SILENT KNOWLEDGE

SOP

It is many companies most important resource.

iQVet

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TURN SILENT KNOWLEDGE
INTO STANDARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES (SOP)

What it is:

Silent knowledge highlights that essential operational insights often pass informally from person to person through word of mouth, without being formally documented.

- It includes undocumented information at work
- It is shared through word-by-mouth

Silent knowledge and operational procedures are closely interconnected in industrial and operational settings.
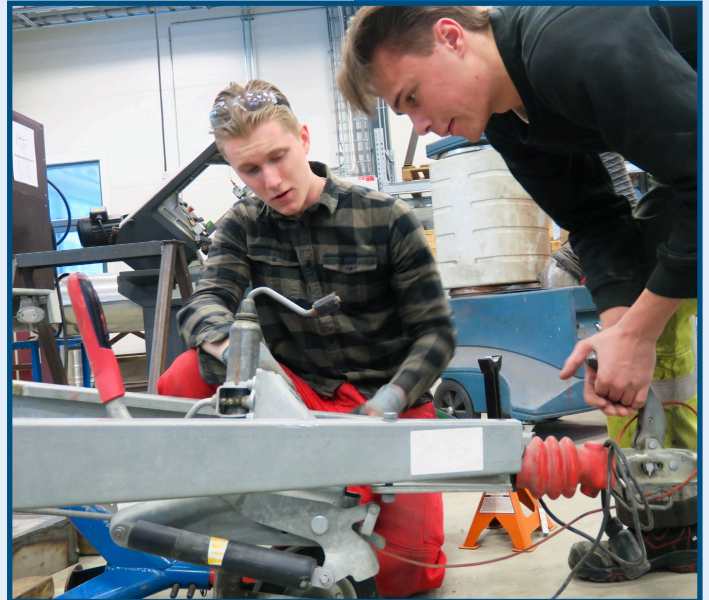
How to capture it:

Capturing and making silent knowledge explicit is a significant challenge for many companies. With the impending retirement of many skilled, experienced workers and high employee turnover, it has become crucial to start documenting this knowledge and making it accessible to those who need it.

Why should a company care about silent knowledge?

- Employees turnover is high in manufacturing industries
- Skilled workers are retiring

Thus, how to capture that silent knowledge floating around in your organization and make it accessible for the staff who need it, while they are still here?

Here are 5 actionable tips to consider:

Step 1: Apply bottom-up approaches

Most efforts to capture the silent knowledge are typically driven from the top down, with management often taking full ownership of the process. However, true ownership should reside on the shop floor, as capturing knowledge and turning it into standards is an ongoing process, and not a one-time task. Silent knowledge is constantly evolving. Ownership of the content and the process needs to be close to the action, with the staff who experience the challenges and opportunities for improvement on a daily basis.

Step 2: Apply tools that are easy to use

When employees on the shop floor are responsible for creating and updating work instructions, it's essential to provide simple, user-friendly tools designed specifically for the frontline workers. Digital tools should indeed be tailored towards the frontline workers needs.

To encourage them to document silent knowledge, the process must be as effortless as possible, allowing for easy capturing, editing, and access on the go.

Step 3: Foster a community and provide recognition

When you engage the shop floor and provide user-friendly tools, you can ignite the process of capturing silent knowledge and driving continuous improvement.

Motivation of the staff begins with ownership and removing any obstacles.

By building a community, the task of capturing «the tribal knowledge» becomes a collective effort, fostering a sense of unity. Your staff and workers truly become connected contributors.

Establishing a community that promotes continuous improvement allows for recognizing and rewarding outstanding initiatives. Highlighting achievements in silent knowledge capture not only celebrates success, but also motivates workers to engage more deeply into the capturing and documentation processes.

Step 4: Presence on the shop floor

Why invest time in capturing silent knowledge in digital work instructions, if they're not used?

While having them available for audits is useful, they merely serve as a basic requirement.

Ensure that the knowledge is easily accessible.

Otherwise, these instructions will just sit in a database, only reviewed during audit periods, which often leads to a rushed update. The goal is to place standard operational procedures and instructions directly into the hands of the shop floor workers.

Mobile and wearable tools help reducing the barriers, and when combined with QR codes at workstations, they enable frontline teams to access, use, provide feedback on, and refine the work processes and operations.

Step 5: It's not just a single effort

Capturing the silent knowledge is an ongoing endeavor.

As products, machines, and procedures evolve in the pursuit of continuous improvement, the silent knowledge you have recorded will quickly become outdated. By the time you have documented the latest procedure, the first ones will likely need revisions. Therefore, treating the silent knowledge capture activities as an ongoing process, is essential

Keep maintaining an up-to-date silent knowledge repository, is an essential process.

Thus, try to implement workflows for regularly updating and verifying in company staffs` silent knowledge. Without a structured process and active engagement on the shop floor, your efforts are unlikely to succeed.