# WHAT IS SILENT KNOWLEDGE ?

**Silent Knowledge is many companies` most important resource.**

**iQVet**

**It is practical, based on experience, and gained by exercise and training.**

# SILENT KNOWLEDGE

Silent knowledge is not easy to fold into computer programs, digitalization processes, digitalized training programs or even on paper, despite it is many industrial companies` most important resource.



*A mentor transferring silent knowledge*

Blind belief in digitalization processes often stifles important knowledge. Employees stil too often experience VET systems as less relevant, because the training solutions do not address the staffs "silent knowledge", for instance experiences obtained at work. Thus, VET must acknowledge and better support creation of "silent knowledge" in parallel with creating strategies for digitalization.

From the world of kitchens, it is well known that chefs perfect their cooking by smelling, tasting, adding ingredients, tasting again and seasoning. Until the dish gets its unique taste – a fruit of "silent knowledge". Such "silent knowledge" it's not easy to fold into computer programs, digitalization processes, digitalized training programs or even on paper! "Silent knowledge", however, is indeed many industrial companies' most important resource.

Various amounts of "silent knowledge" can be found by employees in almost all workplaces. In the seller who understands how to talk to their customers to convince them. By hairdressers who feel the scissors is an extension of the arm. Unfortunately, the challenge is that digitalized training programs struggle in including the "silent knowledge", since it is not possible to digitalize it.

**A VET practitioner in action**

"Silent Knowledge" experiences may only be delivered through work-based delivery of training and learning processes - if possible with in-company mentoring support - and in combination with applying Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at the individual student level, as well as the class group level.



Despite of this, company managers are increasingly pointing out that digital solutions and digitalization of manufacturing processes, are crucial to the business. "We have to adapt, whether we want to or not" is a typical phrase and statement that is too often repeated. But when companies shift all their attention to digital systems, they run the risk of employees not being able to renew their "silent knowledge". In the worst case, that it is deteriorating, whereby the company is thus not allowed to benefit from it.

"Silent knowledge", however, is usually transmitted through trial and error and only together with other personnel. That is precisely why the ancient training model "teacher trainer apprentice" is so effective and well known. This is why blended learning system solutions in VET should apply work-based learning and training solutions that demonstrates that a lot of knowledge that sits in the employees' heads and hands, can neither be captured nor stored within digitalization processes alone. This observation is valid for training and learning processes too.

Silent knowledge is often referred to as «know-how", in contrast to "know-what"  as factual knowledge. This distinction, first introduced by Gilbert Ryle in 1945, challenges the intellectual view that all knowledge consists of propositions "know-what". Ryle argued that some forms of knowledge are better understood as «know-how."

Thus, silent knowledge often refers to tacit knowledge, which is the kind of knowledge that is difficult to articulate or formalize. It encompasses skills, experiences, insights, and understandings that people acquire through practice and personal experience, rather than through formal instruction or written documentation. Silent knowledge is often deeply embedded in an individual's actions and decision making processes but may not be easily communicated through words alone.

In many fields, silent knowledge plays a critical role in problem-solving, creativity, and expertise, even though it may remain unspoken or unrecorded.

iQVET is one of the first European funded VET projects, that start addressing the importance of staffs silent knowledge. That is

- implicit or tacit knowledge, which is transmitted through trial and error together with others, leading to experiences at work,

- to understand that a lot of knowledge that sits in the employees' heads and hands, can neither be captured nor stored within digitalization processes alone. It must be supported through creation of work-based learning practices,

- to acknowledge that the silent knowledge of the employees is important to the company, and indeed one of their most important resources.

*Silent Knowledge often floats from person to person via word of mouth, without any formal documentation.*

Thus, silent knowledge refers to the skills, ideas, and experiences that individuals hold but have not been codified and may be difficult to express. People are often unaware of the knowledge they possess or its potential value to others. Successfully transferring silent knowledge typically involves close personal contact, regular interaction, and a foundation of trust. This type of knowledge is revealed primarily through practice within a specific context and is shared via social networks. It is somewhat "captured" when the knowledge holder becomes part of a network or community of practice.