

## Meyer's Management Models

# 23. Knowledge Sharing Bridges

How can you share best practices across the organization?

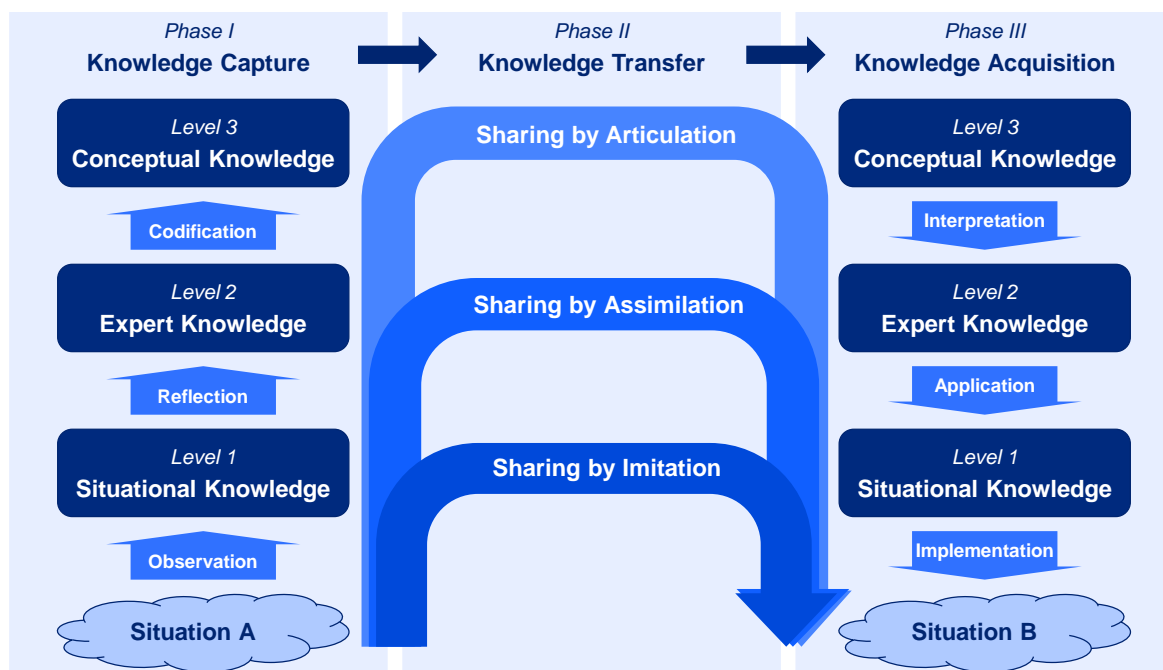
### Key Definitions

All organizations need to continuously *improve*, getting more efficient and effective at what they currently do, while also needing to constantly *adapt*, aligning with, or even shaping, the circumstances around them. Both improvement and adaptation require organizations to learn.

Organizations can *learn by doing*, figuring out things on their own, but this can be a slow process of reinventing the wheel. They can also *learn by sharing*, taking insights gained in one place inside or outside the organization and then conveying this knowledge to the units or individuals that need it. Capturing knowledge about how to do things in the best possible way and then transferring this knowhow is called *best practice sharing*.

### Conceptual Model

The *Knowledge Sharing Bridges* model explains how knowledge can be shared using three different 'bridges' between the person or unit having the knowhow (the knowledge provider, on the left) and the person or unit that wants to acquire it (the knowledge recipient, on the right). The underlying premise is that each bridge consists of three parts/phases. In phase I, the knowledge provider needs to zoom out from the current situation A and *capture* the knowledge that will be shared. In phase II, the provider *transfers* the knowledge to the recipient. Then, in phase III, the recipient *acquires* the knowledge and zooms in to situation B to implement the best practice. Each sharing bridge transfers a different level of knowledge (situational, expert & conceptual) in a different way (imitation, assimilation & articulation).



### Key Elements

The three knowledge sharing bridges are the following:

1. **Sharing by Imitation.** The first bridge focuses on *learning by copying* – the recipient acknowledges what seems to be working for the provider and replicates this best practice:
  - a. *Phase I: Capturing situational knowledge.* It starts with the provider observing what seems to be the successful practice and becoming aware of what has been done.
  - b. *Phase II: Transferring by exposing.* The provider then shows what has been done, while the recipient takes notice and builds a picture of the best practice.
  - c. *Phase III: Implementing in new situation.* After ‘copy’ comes ‘paste’, with the recipient putting the acquired practice into operation in situation B.
2. **Sharing by Assimilation.** The second bridge is all about *learning by absorbing* – the knowledge recipient is inspired by a provider with a higher level of best practice expertise:
  - a. *Phase I: Building expert knowledge.* It starts with the provider becoming highly skilled in certain practice areas by reflecting on multiple experiences over the years.
  - b. *Phase II: Transferring by interacting.* Recognizing this expertise, the recipient connects with the provider, receiving tutoring, advice, feedback, guidance, and a role model.
  - c. *Phase III: Internalizing and applying.* During the interaction, the knowledge rubs off on the recipient, who then practices the new knowhow by applying it to situation B.
3. **Sharing by Articulation.** The third bridge is all about *learning by studying* – the recipient reads up on best practices that have been explicitly captured in words and models:
  - a. *Phase I: Codifying conceptual knowledge.* Based on the situation and previously built-up expertise, the provider inductively structures and writes down the knowledge.
  - b. *Phase II: Transferring by presenting.* Once articulated on paper or in a computer database, the conceptual knowledge can be made accessible for the recipient to read.
  - c. *Phase III: Interpreting and applying.* The recipient must then translate the abstract knowledge into more practical knowhow that can be applied to situation B.

## Key Insights

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- **Best practice sharing speeds up organizational learning.** Learning by doing is slow. Whether it involves a person or a unit, needing to find out how to improve and/or adapt takes time, so it can be beneficial to speed up the process by learning from each other.
- **Best practice sharing requires three steps.** Learning by sharing is done in three steps. First, the people with the best practice need to capture their knowledge by *induction* (zooming out from a practical situation to a more general understanding). These knowledge providers then need to transfer this knowledge to recipients, who acquire and use the knowledge in their own situation (*deductively* moving from general to practical).
- **Best practice sharing can be done in three ways.** There are three knowledge sharing bridges. The first is to simply *imitate* best practices, which requires people to capture and copy situational knowledge from one place to the other. The second is to *assimilate* best practice recipients, getting expert knowledge to rub off on them by letting them interact with highly skilled people. The third is to *articulate* best practices, codifying them into models and procedures that can be transferred to recipients who need to interpret and apply them.
- **Sharing by articulation is the long route.** Making knowledge explicit by codifying it is popular, especially among the academically trained. Yet the process is long and slow, with the danger of knowledge remaining too abstract (e.g. learning a language via its grammar).
- **Sharing by imitation and assimilation is more direct.** Knowledge can be shared even when it is *tacit* (not explicit) by simply copying what others are doing (e.g. imitating foreign language phrases) or interacting with experts (e.g. assimilating with native speakers).

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## **Meyer's Management Models**

### ***Insightful Tools to Kickstart Your Thinking***

#### **Publication Schedule**

<b><i>July 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Mind the Gap Model</i></b>	<b><i>Change Management</i></b>
<b><i>August 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Platform Map</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>September 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i></b>	<b><i>Interpersonal Interaction</i></b>
<b><i>October 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Revenue Model Framework</i></b>	<b><i>Revenue Model Typology</i></b>
<b><i>November 2019</i></b>	<b><i>House of Engagement</i></b>	<b><i>Organizational Engagement</i></b>
<b><i>December 2019</i></b>	<b><i>Confidence Quotient</i></b>	<b><i>Trust Building</i></b>
<b><i>January 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Competition Tornado</i></b>	<b><i>Competitive Strategy</i></b>
<b><i>February 2020</i></b>	<b><i>11C Synergy Model</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Synergy Management</i></b>
<b><i>March 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Leadership Fairness Model</i></b>	<b><i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i></b>
<b><i>April 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Strategic Agility Model</i></b>	<b><i>Strategy Process Approach</i></b>
<b><i>May 2020</i></b>	<b><i>Control Panel</i></b>	<b><i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i></b>
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<b><i>January 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Product Model Dial</i></b>	<b><i>Digital Strategy</i></b>
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<b><i>May 2021</i></b>	<b><i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i></b>	<b><i>Best Practice Sharing</i></b>
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<b><i>May 2022</i></b>	<b><i>Partnership Distance Model</i></b>	<b><i>Interorganizational Relations</i></b>