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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN
LOW TECHNOLOGY
MANUFACTURING
ORGANIZATIONS : A CASE IN
APPAREL MANUFACTURING

by

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This thesis was submitted to the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Engineering in Manufacturing Systems Engineering

Department of Mechanical Engineering
University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka
September 2006

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DECLARATION

This Dissertation paper contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University or equivalent institution in Sri Lanka or abroad, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is made in the text of this Dissertation.

I carried out the work described in this Dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Chandana Perera.

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge Management (KM) is the process through which organizations generate value from knowledge based assets. Most of the high technology industries apply KM principles and hence foster all kinds of innovation to improve the company's productivity and its mid and long term advantage.

Many researches have studied KM practices in high tech industries. However there are not much studies carried out to study how KM practices are used or can be used in low tech industries.

In Sri Lankan context, the apparel industry is the leading industry in manufacturing and contribute a significant share of G.D.P. Today in the free quota era, the Sri Lankan apparel industry has to face the challenges in global market. Therefore it is worthwhile to study how KM practices are used and how KM can contribute to improve the performance in apparel sector.

This research aims to study how these practices are presently used in the apparel sector to improve the performance in manufacturing. The research further identifies what kind of improvements can be done from the present KM practices so that they can enhance the organizational performance.

To analyze KM practices, two case studies have been carried out in selected reputed apparel manufacturing organizations. Data is collected through in-depth interviews with machine operators, supervisors, production executives and production managers. In addition to that, documentary analysis, observations, informal conversations are carried out to gather information on KM practices in these companies.

Based on the results of case study analysis, factors important for successful implementation of KM are analyzed and a model (named as '5 Factor Model') is proposed for KM in low tech manufacturing organizations.

ACKNOWLEDERMENT

It has been a long journey to finally complete one of my dreams. Many people have involved in this journey. Without their support and guidance, it would have much more difficult to accomplish. At this time, I would like to thank each of them for their encouragement and support.

Firstly, I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to my project supervisor, Dr. Chandana Perera (Head of the Department, Department of Management of Technology, University of Moratuwa), for his invaluable support and advice that helped me complete this dissertation.

Secondly, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Wanshapriya Gunaseela, the Group General Manager, Comfortwear (Pvt) Limited, EPZ-Nittabuwa for his kind support on factory visits and providing necessary information for case studies.

Thirdly, I wish to thank Mr. J. Kabral, the Assistant Production Manager, Slimtext (Pvt) Limited, Kuliypitiya for his extended support to make my work easy.

Fourthly, my sincere thanks should go to Dr. U. Kahangamage and Dr. Ranjan Perera for their cordial support extended to me over a long period by giving necessary guidance.

Finally, I owe appreciation to my beloved wife Chethika Perera for typing, editing and correcting this thesis several times and supporting me in numerous ways to complete this course.

Viraj Perera

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