

Critical Knowledge Transfer: Tools for Managing Your Company's Deep Smarts

Dorothy Leonard, Walter C. Swap, Gavin Barton

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How to transfer your organization's most important knowledge—before it walks out the door

When highly skilled subject matter experts, engineers, and managers leave their organizations, they take with them years of hard-earned, experience-based knowledge—much of it undocumented and irreplaceable. Organizations can thereby lose a good part of their competitive advantage. The tsunami of "boomer" retirements has created the most visible, urgent need to transfer such knowledge to the next generation. But there is also an ongoing torrent of acquisitions, layoffs, and successions—not to mention commonplace promotions and transfers—all of which involve the loss of essential expertise.

Dorothy Leonard and Walter Swap first addressed this acute loss of knowledge in their groundbreaking book *Deep Smarts* (2005). Since then, managers have repeatedly asked them for practical, proven techniques that will help transfer those deep smarts—the organization's critical, experience-based knowledge—before it's too late. Now, with coauthor Gavin Barton, the authors share a comprehensive approach to doing just that.

Based on original research, numerous interviews with top managers, and a wide range of corporate examples, *Critical Knowledge Transfer* provides a variety of practical options for identifying your firm's deep smarts and transferring that intelligence from experts to successors. *Critical Knowledge Transfer* will enable managers to:

- Determine the seriousness of their knowledge loss
- Identify the deep smarts essential to their business
- Utilize proven techniques for transferring knowledge when its loss is imminent
- Identify and implement long-term transfer program apprenticeships
- Set up individual learning plans for successors
- Assess the success of their knowledge transfer initiatives

This book is essential reading for anyone managing talent in today's volatile environment.



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