5 Structural Elements of Knowledge Management

Learning objectives

- ☐ Discuss key human resource management strategies in relation to knowledge management.
- ☐ Understand hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures for knowledge management.
- ☐ Explore the value of inter-disciplinary teams for effective knowledge management.
- ☐ Define different knowledge management roles and responsibilities within teams and organisations.

Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapters, knowledge can be practised in many different ways and technology can only to some extent support these activities. There are other structural elements that organisations can put in place though, to support and enhance knowledge practices and knowledge management. This chapter starts with a brief overview of the relationship between human resource management and knowledge management. It has been argued that the two go hand-in-hand and that effective human resource management can positively contribute to creating both a structure and a culture for knowledge management. It will therefore be covered here in relation to organisational structure and
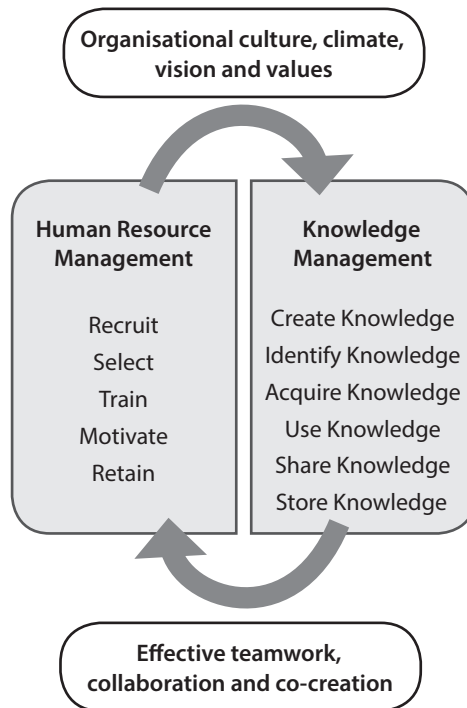
then referred back to in Chapter 6, where organisational culture will be further explored. The literature on human resource management is vast and it should be noted that only HR practices that are particularly relevant to the events industry will be covered in depth in this chapter.

Based on this introduction to HR and knowledge practices, the second part of the chapter will then explore different hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures that can enhance or inhibit knowledge management, such as top-down, bottom-up and middle-up-down knowledge management, as well as the creation of interdisciplinary teams and pods. While it is necessary to have these organisational structures in place, the structure of an organisation, however, is never fixed, but rather a dynamic constellation of relationships (Küpers, 2005). In terms of the relational and practice-based approach to knowledge management this is important to acknowledge, as it helps to understand the fluid and dynamic environment in which knowledge is practised. The chapter finishes with a discussion of specific knowledge management roles and responsibilities at different levels and for both internal and external stakeholders. These again are important to recognise in any organisation as they shape the way employees think about their roles in relation to knowledge management and therefore how they come to understand certain knowledge practices.

Human resource management and knowledge management

Research into knowledge management and human resource management suggests that the two are closely related in terms of the effectiveness of team collaboration and culture (Yahya & Goh, 2002; Currie & Kerrin, 2003; Gorelick et al., 2004). Gloet and Berrell (2003: 83) maintained that, "[t]he relationship between KM and HRM is a complex one; the more aligned the strategies underlying both of these arenas, the more contribution both can make to quality practices and overall organizational performance." By learning 'how to' work together in order to achieve the organisation's aims and objectives, staff development processes and organisational structures facilitate working together in both formal and informal ways and can thus enhance knowledge practices within the team.

Figure 5.1 represents the interrelatedness of human resource manage-ment and knowledge management. Both are highly influenced by the culture, climate, vision and values of the organisation (as will be fur-ther discussed in Chapter 6) and constantly reinforce each other. For example, selecting the right people for the job in the first place, will later have a positive impact on how they create new knowledge and use and share existing knowledge. Similarly, if staff members are motivated to do their jobs in general, they will also be more motivated to acquire new knowledge, share their knowledge and expertise with others, and effec-tively store it for the organisation as a whole. Together, these processes and practices can enhance teamwork, collaboration and co-creation.

Organisational culture, climate, vision and values

Human Resource Management

Recruit
Select
Train
Motivate
Retain

Knowledge Management

Create Knowledge
Identify Knowledge
Acquire Knowledge
Use Knowledge
Share Knowledge
Store Knowledge

Effective teamwork, collaboration and co-creation

Figure 5.1: Human resource management and knowledge management

The overall aim of an organisation's human resource management strategy is to have the right mix of employees in terms of number, types and skills at any given point in time to meet the organisation's present and future requirements (Nankervis et al., 2011; Lockstone-Binney et al., 2020). Not having the necessary experience and skills could easily lead