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## ***What is your responsibility for know how?***

By Paperitalo Staff

“Know how” is a funny phrase. Most know immediately what it means. Surprisingly, at least in the English language, there is not one word that matches the definition, so we are stuck with the awkward “know how.” If your language has a one word descriptor of “the practical knowledge on how to accomplish something,” we would be delighted to hear it.

Startlingly, I have encountered mill employees who think it is not part of their job description to acquire such knowledge from outside their company. In other words, they do not see it as part of their responsibility to keep up with what is going on in the world of pulp and paper. They think this task falls solely to their boss. Obviously, they are not reading this column or any Paperitalo publication.

You might be thinking I am talking about hourly employees, or perhaps new professional employees. I am not. Probe around your mill, and I am sure you will find senior folks with this attitude. Granted, they may not be your top performers, but they are there and they only do what they are told.

It is certainly understandable that you will discourage people from spending excessive time gathering outside knowledge while at work, but I am not aware of any company that shuts this down completely. Nor should you completely discourage casual knowledge growth. Two people can read the same column or article and come to different conclusions, both of value to your company.

So far, I have been talking to those of you in management positions in this column. For those of you a bit further down in the ranks, what is the benefit for you gathering outside knowledge? Well, you just might save your employer a boatload of money. Or you might find the key that keeps them competitive. Either way, it is possible you will gain recognition (Maybe money? Maybe a promotion?) for your efforts.

Alternatively, if your current employer won't recognize your efforts, it is possible you'll find a new employer who will see your drive and abilities.

The whole idea of employees lacking the curiosity to explore ways others are doing things or seeking new ways of doing things is just so foreign to me that it leaves me flabbergasted. Curiosity has always driven me, it is the spice of professional life.

And for safety, you should always be curious about ways to do jobs more safely, of course.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##