

TRADEBEAT

Newsletter of the International & Industry Liaison Branch



Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting a Culture of Knowledge- sharing and Professional Pride in Customs

By the International Trade Section

As is customary, the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA), along with Customs administrations worldwide, celebrate International Customs Day (ICD) on January 26 under the theme “Nurturing the Next Generation: Promoting a culture of knowledge-sharing and professional pride in Customs”. This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the World Customs Organization (WCO). This year’s theme is very forward looking, as it seeks to address the engagement of young Customs professionals, management of human capital and employment of best practices in knowledge-sharing. This is in acknowledgement that the future of any successful Customs administration lies with the next generation. Key areas that must be addressed in ensuring that the next generation is ready for the challenge include knowledge management, organizational culture and professional pride in Customs, all of which can help to propel the JCA as a leading Customs administration in the 21st century and beyond.

IN THIS ISSUE:

**KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT**

**ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
AND KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT**

**PROFESSIONAL PRIDE IN
CUSTOMS**

WCO CONTRIBUTION

JCA'S OBJECTIVE



Knowledge Management

Customs must be agile if it is to keep up with today's fast-paced world. Critical to emerging successful from this necessary transformative process is an organisation's human capital, which has been acknowledged as being able to offer competitive advantage. According to the World Bank 2022, "human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society." In order to maximize on its resources, Customs must invest in and optimize its human capital. This begins with recruitment and selection and continues with onboarding training, development and retention. It also involves fostering the right organizational culture and ensuring that there are systemic processes in place to manage knowledge transfer. "Knowledge transfer in an organization occurs when members of an organization pass tacit and explicit knowledge to each other", (Jennex, 2005). For example, when people retire or leave an organization, a huge amount of knowledge and experience leaves with them, every company needs to be prepared for this reality. This is why succession planning is so important for organizations and must be taken into consideration as part of a broader knowledge management policy. Succession planning ensures that a company always has the right leaders in place should a change happen quickly, it also encourages building a pool of persons who have been capacitated to manage the various areas of operations. While it is impossible to retain all persons, as some will retire or change jobs, organizations can utilize knowledge management to retain the knowledge within the organization and avoid knowledge loss.

Jennex (2005), defined knowledge management as the practice of selectively applying knowledge from previous experiences of decision making to current and future decision-making activities with the express purpose of improving the organization's effectiveness. This is achieved by continuous learning and cultural exchange. With the right culture and technology in place, knowledge can be effectively applied to improve the overall organization.

There are two types of knowledge; tacit and explicit knowledge, both of which are important in knowledge transfer. Tacit knowledge includes knowledge not easily transferred but understood by working alongside someone who is experienced in a field. The JCA is privileged to have an expanding pool of experts from which the younger generation can build their capacities through the practical and theoretical transfer of knowledge.

Explicit knowledge can be easily expressed, written and transferred from one person to another. It is logical, objective and technical. Relatable examples of explicit knowledge include the JCA's easily accessible Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the Agency's internal and external charter standards, training opportunities supported by the Training Unit, the TradeBeat and other newsletters, World Trade Organization (WTO) and WCO e-learning courses.

Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management

In nurturing the next generation of Customs officers, Customs administrations must strive towards an organizational culture that aligns with their vision and mission, as it defines the proper way to behave within the organization. In other words, “this is how we do things here”. Organizational culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated through various methods, ultimately shaping employee perceptions, behaviours and understanding, (SHRM, 2023). It sets the context for everything an organization does and must be shaped to suit the kind of Customs administration that is desired. It must also be supported by strategy and structure. This will allow employees to know how they are expected to respond in any situation and to assure them that they will be rewarded for demonstrating the organization’s values.

In alignment with the recommendations of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the JCA seeks to recruit, select, train, develop and retain persons who share the Agency’s beliefs, and that will thrive in the desired culture. To this end, orientation, training and development and performance management programs, including the appraisal system, are designed to outline and reinforce the Agency’s core values: **Customer Focused, Accountability, Professionalism, Integrity and Transparency (CAPIT)**. The Agency also has implemented a revamped rewards and recognition program, which will culminate in the 2023 Employee Awards Ceremony on February 3, 2023, to reward employees who have outstandingly represented the Agency’s values.



Other initiatives aimed at building a well-rounded Customs professional, and encouraging pride in self and work include those spearheaded by the Agency’s Human Resource Management & Development Division, such as information blasts in the form of “HRMD’s Did You Know?”, “HR on Di Move” – Unit consultation and feedback sessions, Comprehensive (mind, body and spiritual) wellness programs, HRMPowerment – informing and capacitating team leaders and managers, HR Buzz – the Division’s newsletter, and an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Professional Pride in Customs

The JCA is the second largest contributor to the national budget, playing a crucial role in driving the nation’s development. The Agency takes pride in its motto, “Country Above Self”, making commendable strides towards achieving its mandates of protecting our borders, collecting the revenue that is due and facilitating legitimate trade, while delivering excellent customer service. The Agency depends on its employees to accomplish these objectives. It is therefore important that Customs employees understand their role towards achieving the goals of not only the JCA but also that of Jamaica, and in so doing view themselves with pride and as the true professionals that they are.

A key determinant in Customs employees, especially younger officers, being able to view themselves and their work with pride, and as professionals is the matter of integrity of the organization and the individual.

The JCA recognizes the importance of integrity and how it can either positively or negatively affect the organization and its outcomes. In addition to programs geared towards developing each employee professionally, the JCA also has targeted interventions in building integrity and fighting corruption. These include security vetting of all employees, a dedicated investigations unit, development of the Agency's Integrity Manual, automated work assignment, establishment of an Anti-corruption & Ethics Committee with an external chairperson confidential telephone lines for anonymous reporting on corruption and other illicit activities, and a dedicated section for reporting bribery and corruption on the Customer Relationship and Feedback Form.

Other activities include regular anti-corruption and integrity bulletins, active participation in anti-corruption initiatives locally and internationally such as hosting annual anti-corruption panel discussions and actively participating in the WCO's Anti-Corruption & Perception Programme (A-CIP).



WCO Contribution

The WCO celebrates its 70th anniversary on January 26, 2023. It was established in 1952 as the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) and is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs Administration, including the sharing of knowledge and translating it into best practices. Jamaica, through the JCA, is an active member of the WCO and has served and continues to serve in various capacities. Notably, Commissioner Ricketts Walker served as the first female Chair to the WCO's Capacity Building Committee from 2018 to 2021. The JCA also currently serves as a member of the WCO's Policy Commission for the Latin America & Caribbean Region.

As a part of its mandates to strengthen Customs and build capacity, the WCO has made organisational development a focus area. This is demonstrated through the development, maintenance and hosting of many capacity building initiatives, which the Agency may access. These initiatives designed to build a well-rounded Customs professional include:

1. Customs Learning and Knowledge Community (CLiKC!), an e-learning platform for Customs and their stakeholders.
2. Knowledge Academy for Customs and Trade (KACT)
3. WCO Trade Tools, the official platform of the WCO created to facilitate the work of Customs in international trade (classification, valuation, origin)
4. Professional Associate Programme
5. Japan-WCO Human Resource Development Programme (Scholarship programme)
6. Virtual Customs Orientation Academy (VCOA)
7. WCO Fellowship Programme
8. WCO Career Development Programme

Employees of the JCA may contact the Human Resource Management & Development Division for more information on these programmes.



JCA's Objective

The JCA aims to create a safe and stimulating work environment that promotes knowledge transfer; one that offers learning and growth opportunities for its employees and that engenders a feeling of pride, while fostering professionalism. It is our desire that each employee is the embodiment of our core values of CAPIT, as we strive to provide the enabling environment to make it so, especially for the new generation. The new generation which will continue the legacy of Customs pride, as they generate new ideas, solve emerging problems and put systems in place to give Customs the competitive edge that it needs.

To all employees of the JCA and Customs employees worldwide, have a **Happy International Customs Day 2023!**

References

Bubenik, S. (2019). Can HR Strategies Create a Competitive Advantage for your Company? Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/scholleybubenik/2019/02/18/can-hr-strategies-create-a-competitive-advantage-for-your-company/?sh=11b0daba5856>

Jennex, M.E. (2005). What is KM? International Journal of Knowledge Management, 1(4), i-iv
SHRM (2023). Understanding and Developing Organizational Culture. Retrieved from: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/understanding-developing-organizational-culture.aspx>

World Bank (2022). What is Human Capital and Why does it Matter? Retrieved from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital/brief/the-human-capital-project-frequently-asked-questions#HCP2>



The International & Industry Liaison Branch (IILB) is committed to raising awareness on topics relating to the International Trade, as well as issues concerning the Caribbean Community which may affect our internal and external stakeholders.

Our quarterly Newsletter seeks to highlight global trade topics and their importance to Customs Administration worldwide, specifically as it relates to the Jamaica Customs Agency.

As we realize our vision to becoming a modern customs administration delivering excellent service, we recognize the importance of knowledge transfer in delivering our objectives and use this forum as one way of contributing the vision of Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA). The IILB is located at JCA's Head Office and our officers are available to respond to your trade-related queries. Contact us at: iilu@jca.gov.jm