

The Great Resignation: the great knowledge exodus or the onset of the Great Knowledge Revolution?

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Abstract

Purpose – *The purpose of this Real Impact Viewpoint Article is to analyze the phenomenon of the Great Resignation from the knowledge management perspective.*

Design/methodology/approach – *It applies the knowledge-based view of the firm to the notion of the Great Resignation, reviews the extant literature and relies on secondary data.*

Findings – *The Great Resignation has created numerous knowledge-related impacts on the individual, organizational and national levels. On the individual level, because of an accelerating adoption of freelancing, the future may witness an expansion of the category of the knowledge worker and a growing need for personal knowledge management methods and information technologies. Organizational effects include knowledge loss, reduced business process efficiency, damaged intra-organizational knowledge flows, lower relational capital, lost informal friendship networks, difficulty attracting the best human capital, undermined knowledge transfer processes and knowledge leakage to competition. Countries may also witness the depletion of national human capital.*

Practical implications – *Managers should learn how to use the available human capital more efficiently; realize the importance of universal succession planning programs; automate knowledge-centric business processes; facilitate knowledge-based IT initiatives by implementing self-functioning virtual communities, including enterprise social networks; restructure organizations to optimize intra-organizational knowledge flows; adjust strategies, products and target markets based on the available human capital; and create telecommuting conditions for people with disabilities who cannot be physically present. Knowledge management scholars are presented with a unique opportunity to convert the numerous theoretical insights accumulated within the boundaries of their discipline into practical application to facilitate the Great Knowledge Revolution.*

Originality/value – *This viewpoint offers managerial recommendations and inspires future Great Resignation investigations.*

Keywords *Human capital, Employee turnover, Knowledge loss, The Great Resignation, Knowledge-based view of the firm*

Paper type *Real impact viewpoint article*

1. Introduction – what is the Great Resignation?

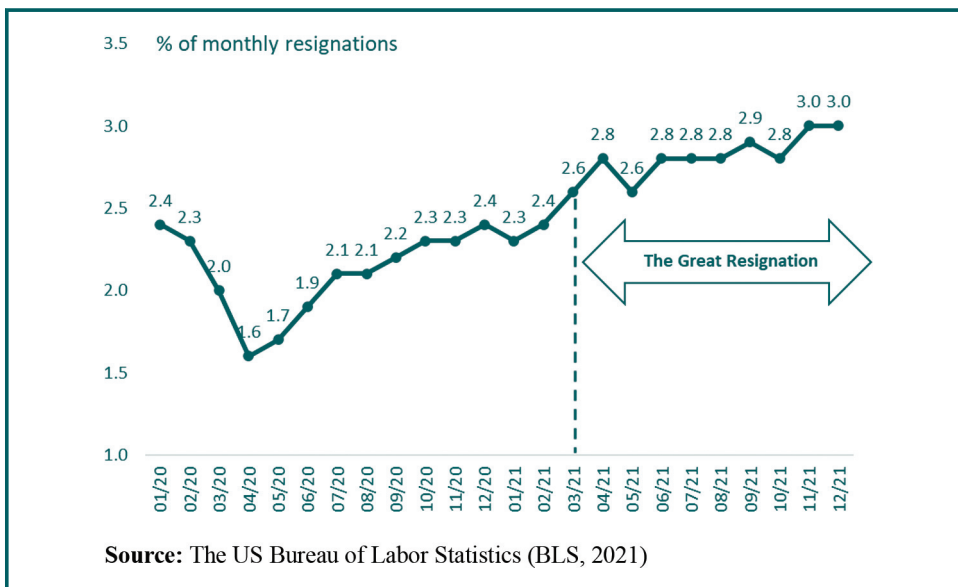
My son's career seemed to be exponentially accelerating. By the age of 22, he had already earned his MBA, landed a promising job at a fast-growing company, secured a promotion to the senior level and envisioned his further progression up the corporate management ladder. But, suddenly, the COVID-19 pandemic put his dreams on pause. No, he was not laid off. His company was doing well: it quickly reorganized, reengineered the essential business processes and repositioned its products. However, as with most knowledge workers, he had to deal with the unanticipated challenges of the new work-from-home paradigm which he handled very well. Even though the company stayed afloat and avoided massive layoffs, my son started noticing a seemingly inexplicable departure of his fellow

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colleagues which peaked in the spring-summer of 2021. By the fall of 2021, almost half his coworkers in the nearby cubicles had already left. He also observed two intriguing and even counterintuitive phenomena. First, there was no pattern among those who resigned: they ranged from recent hires to highly senior, top earners who were the subject of both envy and inspiration. Second, many moved to entirely unrelated industries and jobs that required different knowledge. Being still new to the corporate world, these observations deeply puzzled him.

My son's experience is not unique: it perfectly fits the paradigm of the Great Resignation – a recent term dubbed by Anthony Klotz, an associate professor of management at Texas A&M University (Cohen, 2021). The Great Resignation describes the phenomenon of a great number of employees voluntarily quitting their jobs since March 2021. While a certain level of voluntary turnover is always expected and the departure of a few workers is unlikely to irreparably damage organizational performance in the long-term, the Great Resignation has been marked by the departure of a remarkably large number of employees within a short period of time. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (Figure 1), during the first wave of COVID-19 lockdowns and layoffs in early 2020, most workers were holding onto their jobs. However, paradoxically, as the recovery started and new jobs appeared, employees were quitting their jobs in massive numbers. In 2019, before the pandemic, the average voluntary turnover rate in the US was stable at 2.3% of the entire workforce per month, but in March 2021, it surged to 2.6%, eventually reaching 3.0% by the end of the year. Some industries were hit particularly hard – for instance, from March to September 2021, the accommodation and food services sectors lost more than 40% of their entire workforce, with the monthly turnover rate reaching 6.0% (BLS, 2021). The knowledge-intensive professional and business services sector also lost a quarter of its workforce during the same period. Resignation rates were particularly high in other knowledge-intensive industries such as engineering, technology and healthcare that have very high hiring costs given a limited supply of suitable candidates (Cook, 2021; Rozgus, 2021). Unfortunately, the US is not alone: a similar trend has been observed in Western Europe, particularly in the UK (YPulse, 2021). The resignation rates are not expected to plummet in the near future: a recent survey by Microsoft reveals that 41% of the global workforce is

Figure 1 Percentage of monthly resignations in the US (i.e. total quits, seasonally adjusted)



likely to consider leaving their present organization within the next year (The Work Trend Index, 2021). Another recent survey by Workhuman of 3,500 employees in the US, the UK, Ireland and Canada presents a similar figure which is twice as high as that of 2019 when only 20% of workers considered leaving (Workhuman, 2021).

The reasons for quitting during the Great Resignation were remarkably different from those during the pre-COVID era because working during COVID has dramatically altered peoples' affective, cognitive and behavioral processes (Malmendier, 2021). Many enjoyed working from home without long exhausting commutes so much that they refused to revert to the mandatory office presence after reopening. For instance, a recent survey of 1,000 US workers revealed that 39% of them would consider leaving if their organizations do not allow them to work remotely after the pandemic (Melin and Egkolfopoulou, 2021). During the lockdown, people also had an opportunity to reexamine their relationship to work, redefine life priorities and long-term career goals and realize that the work experience should extend beyond a mere paycheck. As a result, they decided to move closer to family and friends, enjoy the tranquility outside a busy city, achieve a desirable work-life balance, reduce burnout or accelerate retirement plans (Dean and Hoff, 2021; Dill, 2021; Hsu, 2021; Hymes, 2021; Kaplan, 2021; Thompson, 2021). Some quitters stayed loyal to their profession and pursued other work opportunities in the same industry. Others, however, decided to stay off the job market, which has created a gap between the demand and supply of labor – having a gap in work experience is quite understandable during and even after the pandemic (e.g. because of a fear of COVID exposure). Moreover, 46% are considering making a major career transition into a new field (The Work Trend Index, 2021) and some even decided to pursue a vocation or turn their hobby into a source of income.

Despite the preliminary evidence that the resignation trend is likely to continue (Joblist, 2021), it is yet to be determined whether the observed resignation numbers represent a statistical blip or a fundamental economic and social shift that will permanently alter the landscape of the future workforce. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Great Resignation has disrupted the functioning of the contemporary job market (Jiskrova, 2022) and, as a result, this novel phenomenon has already attracted the attention of the scientific community. For instance, Sull *et al.* (2022a) blame toxic corporate culture as a driver of attrition during the early phase of the Great Resignation and Sull *et al.* (2022b) present corresponding worker retention strategies. Perry (2021) further demonstrates that IT companies raised salaries to attract new workers and to retain their existing workforce. Sheather and Slattery (2021) recommend that organizations focus on their remaining workers and create optimal conditions to support them, and Hirsch (2021) proposes that businesses listen to and proactively address their employees' concerns about work environment.

In this, researchers have already developed some understanding of the novel Great Resignation phenomenon and have offered valuable recommendations for practice. The problem, however, is that the previous studies approached the notion of the Great Resignation from a narrow labor-shortage perspective. While the scientific and practical contribution of such studies is indisputable, shifting a lens of analysis from the labor-shortage perspective to the knowledge-based view of the firm (Grant, 1996) may uncover further impacts of the Great Resignation on individuals, organizations, and nations and generate additional practical recommendations. A recent Deloitte Insights Report predicts a growing importance of knowledge creating, sharing and preserving in the post-COVID world (Weiss *et al.*, 2021) and argues that managers should move beyond the narrow techno-centric knowledge paradigm because the "traditional views of how to handle knowledge no longer apply" (p. 2). Thus, the purpose of this Real Impact Viewpoint Article is to analyze the Great Resignation phenomenon from the perspective of the knowledge-based view of the firm. Overall, this viewpoint shows that applying the knowledge-based view of the firm to address human capital issues arising from the Great Resignation presents a unique opportunity for knowledge management scholars to convert the

numerous theoretical insights accumulated within the boundaries of the knowledge management discipline into practical application at the very moment when it is needed the most.

The rest of this Real Impact Viewpoint Article is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the knowledge-based view of the firm perspective on the Great Resignation. Section 3 presents the knowledge-related impacts of the Great Resignation on the individual, organizational and national levels. Section 4 outlines several recommendations that may be of interest to knowledge managers and policymakers, and Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. The knowledge-based view of the firm perspective on the Great Resignation

The knowledge-based view of the firm posits that knowledge is created by and resides within individuals, and an organization is viewed as an entity that integrates knowledge of its individual members and applies this knowledge in the production of its products and services (Grant, 1996). Because knowledge-based resources are mostly unique and are difficult to imitate, knowledge is considered more valuable than the traditional sources of economic power, and an organizational knowledge base and its knowledge capabilities become an ultimate source of competitive advantage (Santoro *et al.*, 2021). The knowledge-based view of the firm is founded on several assumptions (Grant, 2002). First, organizational knowledge has a tremendous potential for value creation – as long as it is properly identified, captured and integrated in the production processes (Hislop, 2003; Sharp, 2003; Haesli and Boxall, 2005; Curado and Bontis, 2006). Second, while explicit knowledge (documents, manuals, procedures, videos) may be easily transferred among employees, tacit knowledge (know-how, skills, contextual knowledge) is extremely difficult and costly to transfer, if, at all, possible. Third, knowledge is subject to economies of scale and scope: while the initial creation of knowledge (especially, tacit) is expensive, the marginal cost of its future application is very low, and it may be often duplicated and applied in new areas. Fourth, individual workers are considered the primary agents for knowledge creation and accumulation. However, an efficient application of their knowledge requires a great degree of specialization. Last, effective and efficient production processes require the integration of multiple types of knowledge.

The Great Resignation has accelerated the transition toward the knowledge economy where knowledge has become a key differentiator driving the performance of individuals, organizations and entire nations. As a result, it is important to look beyond the narrow techno-centric and labor-shortage perspectives to understand the impacts of the Great Resignation on the individual, organizational and national levels. As this viewpoint demonstrates, by using the knowledge-based view of the firm perspective as a lens of analysis, it is possible to better understand the Great Resignation phenomenon and develop recommendations for managers and policymakers. These are discussed below in further detail.

3. The knowledge-related impacts of the Great Resignation

3.1 The individual level

The totally unanticipated, massive, COVID-associated lockdowns and subsequent changes in organizational operational practices have impacted the contemporary labor market and employees' professional lives in many ways. Among them, the most salient pertain to an accelerating trend toward remote freelancing and employees' reevaluation of their professional self-identity. Initially, a move to work-from-home required employees to communicate and collaborate with other organizational members remotely. Quickly, this practice spilled over to external collaborations: managers realized that they may effectively and efficiently engage in remote work with major customers, suppliers and partners. A resignation-triggered understaffing experienced by many organizations has also forced managers to look for skilled workers outside the traditional boundaries of their organizations

and turn to independent contractors or freelancers. In fact, according to a recent report by Upwork, a leading freelancing platform, 71% of managers responsible for hiring indicated that they intend to maintain or increase their reliance on freelancers in the next six months, and 53% believe that this trend has been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ozimek, 2021).

The COVID-associated lockdowns have given people a unique opportunity to pause and reevaluate their life's purpose, relationship to work and, most importantly, professional self-identity – the degree to which workers identify themselves as members of their professional group (i.e. how they see themselves as a part of their professional environment) (Crossley and Vivekananda-Schmidt, 2009). An interesting fact is that, at the dawn the dot.com era, the freelancing pioneers – eLance.com (the predecessor of Upwork), guru.com (currently in-business) and JobSwarm.com (presently defunct) – often marketed e-lancing (i.e. online freelancing) as a lifestyle and even referred to freelancers as “sellers,” that is, the ones who sell their talent, expertise and knowledge (Schneberger and Mark, 2002). Such a mentality still persists in today's freelancing environment. Many remote workers, including freelancers who intentionally or intuitively reevaluate their professional identity from the “seller” perspective, are likely to discover that they may identify themselves not only with the other members of their occupation but also with the unique professional knowledge that they possess because it is their specialized knowledge that allows them to successfully navigate from one organization to another or enjoy a freelancing lifestyle. This revelation, in turn, may alter their affective, cognitive and behavioral knowledge-related processes leading to various changes in a knowledge paradigm.

One such potential change is related to the accelerating expansion of the category of knowledge workers – i.e. individuals who consider knowledge as their main capital, consistently engage in life-long and on-the-job training, use abstract knowledge, create new knowledge, frequently make ad-hoc decisions; work with IT artifacts, people and symbols; and promote innovation (Davenport, 2005; Pyöriä, 2005). Most people who work remotely and freelance online may be classified as knowledge workers. As a result, as their participation in the labor market grows, so will the number of knowledge workers. In addition, individuals who consistently engage in remote work or consider themselves virtual freelancers may eventually develop a deeper attachment to and a feeling of strong ownership over their professional knowledge and focus predominately on knowledge retention, updating and replenishment because, again, they regard knowledge as their main form of capital. This, however, is unlikely to change their attitude and behavior toward organizational knowledge management practices. Instead, these people are expected to emphasize personal knowledge management to develop new and improve existing approaches to accumulating, retaining and applying their individual knowledge at work. This should spark a growing interest in personal knowledge management, which is different from traditional organizational knowledge management because it emphasizes the individual over the organization. Personal knowledge management is best conceptualized as a “form of sophisticated career and life management” (Gorman and Pauleen, 2016, p. 1) or personal inquiry to help individuals develop, acquire and apply skills to support their life-long learning and prosperity in the contemporary, turbulent and complex personal, organizational and social environments (Pauleen, 2009; Jones *et al.*, 2016). This, in turn, will create a demand for the development of personal knowledge management methods and information technologies.

3.2 The organizational level

Because turnover has been traditionally considered an Achilles' heel of a knowledge-based organization (Daghfous *et al.*, 2013), the Great Resignation has negatively affected and will continue to affect, organizations in multiple ways. The first, most intuitive impact of the Great Resignation on organizations pertains to knowledge loss because workers with valuable

knowledge leave their employers (Massingham, 2018; Massingham, 2020). The organizational knowledge stock gets depleted because of the loss of tacit knowledge which resides with those who leave (Stovel and Bontis, 2002; Gul *et al.*, 2012). In addition, those employees who intend to leave in the future avoid sharing knowledge with their coworkers (Jacobs and Roodt, 2007). As a result, organizations may lose their advantages of economies of scale and scope because the pool of available knowledge has shrunk, and their future organizational productivity may dramatically decline (Shaw *et al.*, 2005; Pisano *et al.*, 2017). Second, the employee exodus undermines an organizational capability to effectively integrate the knowledge possessed by the remaining workers in its business processes. Knowledge creates value in multiple ways – for example, through improved creativity (Gurteen, 1998), problem-solving (Giampaoli *et al.*, 2017) and innovation (Papa *et al.*, 2020; Pereira *et al.*, 2022) – which require specialized knowledge which, again, resides with individuals. Once employees depart, it is impossible to use their specialized (and mostly tacit) knowledge to develop, integrate and reconfigure internal business processes. Third, massive, unexpected resignations impede intra-organizational knowledge flows. Organizations tend to develop formal communications flows which may be disrupted if quitters often handled other workers' inquiries (i.e. possessed know-how and know-what) or acted as nodes connecting other employees (i.e. possessed know-who). Moreover, inter-organizational knowledge flows may also suffer because of the loss of relational capital. Relational capital represents “the ability of an organization to interact with a wide range of external stakeholders (such as customers, suppliers, competitors, trade and industry associations) as well as the knowledge embedded in these relationships” (Mention and Bontis, 2013, p. 291). The loss of relational capital occurs because departed workers had developed personal connections with the major stakeholders in other organizations (DeLong, 2004) – connections which may take years to re-build.

Fourth, the sudden departure of numerous fellow coworkers within a very short time may have a negative psychological effect on the remaining employees, causing anxiety, stress and disappointment. Employees exhibiting such poor mental states are less likely to share their knowledge with others (Issac *et al.*, 2021; Kmieciak, 2022), which may further impede intra-organizational knowledge flows. Fifth, when people work together, they often start socializing; develop workplace friendships which are based on common interests, trust, reciprocal liking and shared values; and eventually create networks of friendship ties connecting multiple coworkers (Sias and Cahill, 1998; Berman *et al.*, 2002; Serenko *et al.*, 2022). Such friendship networks are utilized for both personal and non-work-related matters and serve as an informal knowledge dissemination channel (Droege and Hoobler, 2003). Unexpected resignations happening during a very narrow timeframe disrupt these friendship networks and destroy such informal knowledge distribution channels because organizations lack time and resources to rebuild them.

Sixth, a high rate of resignations undermines an organization's image as a desirable employer – i.e. prospective job applicants who come across a business that recruits continuously may wonder why so many of their employees have recently departed and refrain from applying because a high rate of employee turnover often serves as a red flag. This, in turn, may prevent an organization from securing the best human capital. Organizational human capital “comprises the knowledge, skills, experiences and abilities of the members of the organization” (Mention and Bontis, 2013, p. 288) and an inability to attract it may lead to further deterioration of the organizational stock of knowledge. Seventh, because of the sudden nature of these resignations, organizations may lack senior, experienced employees who can onboard, mentor and supervise the newly hired workers: this may further undermine organizational knowledge transfer processes. Eighth, some of the departed employees may eventually join competing organizations and deliberately, mistakenly or unconsciously infuse their previously accumulated knowledge into the competitors' business processes. In addition to their professional knowledge, they may also reveal trade secrets, know-how and other confidential information that must be prevented

from reaching unauthorized parties (Manhart and Thalmann, 2015). Most importantly, while some impacts of lost knowledge may be observed almost immediately and eventually fixed, others may take years to discover, but, by then, it may be too late to identify and refill the knowledge gap (DeLong, 2004).

3.3 The national level

While the Great Resignation has already affected our society in many ways, the application of the knowledge-based view shows that it may lead to the depletion of national human capital. National human capital is more broad than organizational human capital: it includes people's expertise, skills, knowledge, wisdom, education, motivation, entrepreneurship, competence and the ability to realize national tasks and objectives. It is considered a key driver for national value creation (Bontis, 2004; Lin and Edvinsson, 2011). Because of four major factors – early and natural retirements, the temporary and permanent exodus of pre-retirement-age employees from the workforce, career changes sought by many of those remaining in the workforce and the fast pace of employee departures – the initial phase of the Great Resignation has created a noticeable ebb of national human capital.

A November 2021 study conducted by Goldman Sachs (Briggs, 2021) reveals that 68% of those who exited the labor force at the onset of COVID-19 were over 55 years old – the age when employees have accumulated a wealth of professional, specialized knowledge which may be put to use and shared with the new generation of workers. Moreover, 30% and 20% of all resignations were early and natural retirements, respectively, which means that half the knowledge of those who left no longer contributes to the production of national wealth. In fact, it has been well established in the knowledge management literature that retirements represent a major threat to the preservation of organizational knowledge (DeLong, 2004). In a similar vein, the knowledge of those who permanently or temporarily opted out of the workforce has ceased to exist in the pool of national human capital. In addition, those who have chosen to temporarily leave the job market may quickly find their knowledge to be outdated, given a constantly growing rate of knowledge obsolescence in the contemporary knowledge-intensive industries. Almost half of those remaining in the workforce are now considering a major career change (The Work Trend Index, 2021) and one-third are looking at opportunities in other industries (CNBC, 2021). On the one hand, by remaining in the active workforce, these employees will continue being part of the national human capital. On the other hand, not all their previous knowledge may be relevant in the context of a new career or industry: thus, their overall contribution to the national human capital may diminish. Taken together, it is expected that the knowledge exodus caused by the Great Resignation will undermine the national human capital which will, in turn, lead to a reduction in the national wealth and may even contribute to a potential economic crisis.

4. Recommendations

To respond to the challenges triggered by the Great Resignation, managers should proactively explore several avenues. First, they need to *learn how to use the available human capital more efficiently*. The most obvious organizational response is to replenish the lost human capital through hiring. This, however, does not immediately fill the existing knowledge gap because each organization functions within its own idiosyncratic environment which requires context-specific tacit knowledge. Evidence suggests that new hires rarely possess the same knowledge even if they held a similar job elsewhere (Massingham, 2018). It takes time for a newcomer to become an effective part of an internal knowledge communication network because knowledge sharing is based on trust, which cannot be quickly acquired. In addition, all organizations compete equally for a limited pool of prospective job applicants, resulting in higher starting salaries and sign-up bonuses with no guarantee that the new hires will stay in the long-term. Thus, many organizations will have to learn how to achieve their strategic objectives with a smaller pool of human capital.

For instance, instead of trying to infuse the missing, and frequently unavailable, knowledge into their organization, managers may fill the existing knowledge gaps through crowdsourcing and transforming their business entity into a virtual organization that retains minimal permanent staff while outsourcing most non-essential business functions (Durcan, 2016). Managers should also consider developing employee-empowering policies because doing so may increase the success of knowledge management initiatives and boost organizational performance (Cillo *et al.*, 2022).

Second, organizations should *realize the importance of universal succession planning programs*. Note that the keyword is *universal*. Before the COVID pandemic, succession planning had not become a universally accepted business practice. For example, less than 30% of small business owners had a written succession plan (CNBC, 2015), and, in most cases, succession planning solely focused on the top executives (Harrell, 2016) or those who exhibited great career advancement potential (Collins *et al.*, 2016). However, employees on all levels possess vital organizational knowledge and, as the Great Resignation shows, a massive knowledge exodus may be totally unanticipated. As a starting point, managers may consult succession planning best practices documented in the extant literature (Groves, 2007; Durst and Wilhelm, 2012; Barton, 2019).

Third organizations need to learn how to *automate knowledge-based business processes* not only to improve operational efficiency but also to reduce their dependence on human knowledge. For this, robotic process automation (RPA) offers an excellent opportunity. It refers to an information system that is programmed based on the input of human task experts to mimic the manual paths that they take during routine operations (Syed *et al.*, 2020). This represents an excellent opportunity to capture expert knowledge, embed it into business processes and preserve it in the future. While well-established best practices and guidelines for the universal deployment of RPA have not yet been established (Syed *et al.*, 2020), managers may consult previously documented case studies discussing or proposing successful RPA implementations. For example, they may learn from the experience of existing RPA centers of excellence (as described in Anagnoste, 2018) and independent large-scale RPA projects (as discussed in Kedziora and Penttinen, 2021). At the same time, embracing RPA will require not only a dramatic upgrade of IT expertise but also a fundamental attitudinal change as workers must accept the fact that some of their routine knowledge-based tasks may be partially or even fully automated.

Fourth, managers need to use the Great Resignation as an opportunity to *facilitate various knowledge-based IT initiatives*. For this, the introduction of enterprise social media technologies, such as intra-organizational social networks, may create self-functioning virtual communities that promote trust, facilitate knowledge sharing, infuse customer knowledge, preserve organizational knowledge and support innovation, planning and product development (Scuotto *et al.*, 2017a; Scuotto *et al.*, 2017b). Enterprise social networks may be open to all former employees, such as retirees, who may continue contributing knowledge and virtually mentor their replacements at no cost to their previous employers. However, as both academic research and anecdotal evidence suggest, a rushed, top-down implementation of knowledge sharing IT solutions generally brings no desirable outcome and, most importantly, undermines all future attempts to promote knowledge sharing intra-organizational practices. In fact, approaching knowledge management from the single-minded IT perspective was the primary reason for the failure of the earlier knowledge management initiatives in North America in the mid of 2000s, which automatically triggered a decline in interest in knowledge management among North American academics.

Fifth, the Great Resignation gives managers a chance to *restructure their organization to optimize intra-organizational knowledge flows*. For instance, reducing the size of organizational units may remove unnecessary levels of bureaucracy, reduce office politics and increase intra-unit knowledge exchange (Serenko *et al.*, 2007). Organizations should

also improve their existing onboarding programs and introduce new ones to help recent hires socialize with their fellow coworkers. As many organizations continue the use of telecommuting in the post-pandemic world, new hires may find it difficult to create formal and informal relationships with other workers and build trust which is necessary for knowledge exchange. Further guidance and best practices are available in the knowledge management literature (Van Wijk *et al.*, 2008). Sixth organizations may have to eventually *adjust their strategies, modify products and change markets to make the best use of the available human capital* rather trying to secure the exact human capital needed to maintain the status quo. In other words, managers need to fit their organizations into the pool of available knowledge resources rather than trying to secure an “ideal” set of knowledge resources because the latter may be simply unavailable. In addition, an effective use of employees’ knowledge may boost their perceptions of self-worth and make them stay with their organization in the long term (Zhuo and Yuan, 2022). Last, a COVID-19-initiated work-from-home trend presents a unique opportunity for organizations *to create telecommuting conditions for people with disabilities* who cannot be physically present on the premises. For this, managers may consult various sources on how to remove environmental, attitudinal and social barriers preventing these individuals from joining the workforce and how to match the expertise of these potential employees with the required job skills (Martel *et al.*, 2021). Doing so may help to enrich the organizational culture, promote diversity and infuse new knowledge.

5. Conclusion – towards the Great Knowledge Revolution

The fact that the Great Resignation has already altered the cultural fabric of the contemporary labor market and created an ebb of knowledge is undeniable. The future, however, is not as bleak as it seems as long as organizations find ways to proactively anticipate and adapt to the ongoing changes. The best way to combat the massive, unanticipated knowledge exodus is to pursue the paradigm of a knowledge-intensive organization and consider knowledge as a key driver of organizational strategies and business processes. The knowledge management discipline may truly help individuals, organizations, and nations convert the great knowledge exodus to the Great Knowledge Revolution.

Knowledge management is considered a formal scientific discipline that exhibits signs of academic maturity and has its core set of publication forums, unique specialist knowledge, objects of research, concepts, theories, technical language and institutional manifestations (Serenko, 2021; Kör *et al.*, 2022; Serenko and Bontis, 2022). The recommendations documented in academic knowledge management publications have much value for business practitioners (Moshonsky *et al.*, 2014; Edvardsson and Durst, 2017), but most knowledge management researchers have not been able to proactively deliver this knowledge to their professional stakeholders. As a result, there is a gap between knowledge management theory and practice (Booker *et al.*, 2008; Heisig, 2015) and, regrettably, knowledge management is often regarded as being a purely academic field (Hislop *et al.*, 2018). The Great Resignation has created a need for the Great Knowledge Revolution which may become the only way to ensure economic sustainability, and it behooves knowledge management scholars to guide their non-academic stakeholders through this terra incognita.

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