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**KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN A GLOBAL LOGISTICS PROVIDER:  
AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT**

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[isrobert@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:isrobert@cityu.edu.hk)**ABSTRACT**

*We report on an Action Research investigation into knowledge-sharing practices in Velox, a global logistics organisation and in particular its operations in Guangzhou, China. Our study is premised on Work Systems Theory and Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. Following a description of background and context, we describe two linked Action Research cycles, following the principles and criteria for Canonical Action Research. Our interventions were successful, with both managers and employees at Velox expressing satisfaction with the outcomes, which included radical changes to operational procedures. We discuss the implications and contributions for theory, practice and method.*

**Keywords:** *Action Research, Knowledge Sharing, China; Work Systems Theory; Punctuated Equilibrium Theory*

**INTRODUCTION**

In the hypercompetitive business world, where customer satisfaction is central to long-term success, it is critical that organisational employees are able to access the right knowledge at the right time so that they can create services and solutions to meet customer needs (Ou et al., 2016). Given the potential for knowledge to act as a driver of competitive advantage (Kogut & Zander, 1992), it is not surprising that organisations have demonstrated considerable interest in how IT can facilitate ‘collaboration among different units and individuals unconstrained by the boundaries of geography and time’ (Lu et al., 2005). Knowledge may be located in an explicit form in formally structured repositories, sometimes known as knowledge management systems (KMS), which can be searched efficiently and effectively (von Krogh, 2012). Alternatively, knowledge may be understood to reside in a tacit form in the heads of individuals and so may only be accessible through interpersonal communication. In this paper, we examine how knowledge is shared by the employees of Velox as they create knowledge-centric services and solutions for their customers. Velox is a global logistics provider in the business of global courier, express and parcel delivery (CEP). We focus in particular on Velox’s customs clearance operations in Guangzhou, China. Velox operates in a highly uncertain environment due to a dynamic legal environment as well as intense competition with both local and global organisations. In such an environment, work-related knowledge about effective procedures and best practices must be both updated frequently and made available to all who need to know.

We made initial contact with Velox through the Human Resources (HR) Managing Director (China) at an executive education workshop in Hong Kong where the second author was a speaker on Knowledge Management (KM). This initial contact led to a series of meetings with senior Velox executives in Hong Kong and Guangzhou where we identified a shared

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