



Together with NEXTEL

# Knowledge Management and Communities of Practice

*Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council*

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KM presentation to KRCC – May 2006

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# PAL

- **Purpose**
  - Discuss Knowledge Management concepts and practices
  
- **Agenda**
  - Define KM and answer.... “Why KM?” (10m)
  - Discuss what a KM program might look like (10m)
  - Discuss key elements and common issues (15m)
  - Discuss next steps (10m)
  
- **Limit/Logistics**
  - 45 minutes

# Knowledge Management

- **Knowledge Management – Definition**
  - Knowledge Management is a strategy for sharing knowledge and increasing collaboration to achieve organizational objectives.

**“Drowning in Information,  
Starving for Knowledge!”**

## KM – Why?

- **Benefits of managing knowledge**
  - Support organizational objectives
  - Reduce SME time, costs, rework, errors, cycle time, training
  - Increase customer satisfaction
  - Increase creativity and collaboration
  - Leverage best practices; share 'lessons learned'
  - Speed to competency
  
- **Problems and risks from not managing knowledge**
  - Loss of intellectual capital due to employee churn, attrition, layoffs
  - “Poof” channels
  - Reinventing the wheel
  - Cost of incorrect information being shared
  - Some with knowledge disconnected from those who need it

***Tip: Look at your organization's goals – what are you trying to achieve?  
How does knowledge flow impact those goals?***

# Community of Practice (CoP)

- **Communities of Practice (CoPs) defined**
  - Groups of people who come together to share and to learn from one another face-to-face and virtually. *Source: APOC with Richard McDermott, "Building and Sustaining CoPs", 2000.*
  
- **Types of communities:**
  - Live vs Virtual
  - Structured/chartered vs ad hoc, self-led, organic
  - Long-term program vs short-term problem-solving focus
  - Helping, Best Practice, Knowledge Stewarding, Innovation
  
- **Types of knowledge to share:** Tacit (tribal) and explicit
  
- **Virtual Communities of Practice Offer:**
  - A place to collaborate with peers and SMEs
  - A simple and searchable source of shared knowledge
  - Links to the locations where key information is housed
  - Discussion groups where community members can:
    - Have recorded dialogue which can be leveraged (searched)
    - Reach out to peers for assistance and/or collaboration
    - Post and share best practices and lessons learned

## Connect and Collect!

## What other companies are saying about KM and CoPs

- Delphi group estimates 42% of the knowledge needed by professionals to do their job resides in the heads of other professionals.
- Gartner estimates a 30% bottom line differential for enterprises who have an effective KM program.
- IDS estimates that companies without KM systems and processes will lose \$5000 per year per employee.
- IDS also estimates that the value of lost knowledge when an employee leaves is equivalent to 1.5 to 3 times their annual salary

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# MAKE – Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises

- Publicly traded 2003 North American MAKE winners showed a Total Return to Investors (TRS) for the period 1992-2002 of 17.9%, compared to 9.1% for the US Fortune 500 company median.
- A total of 23 North American MAKE finalists and winners (51% of for-profit organizations in that year's list) rank in the top 100 companies by market capitalization within their national economies.
- Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises, 2003

Accenture  
Amazon.com  
APQC  
Buckman Laboratories  
Dell Computer  
General Electric

Hewlett-Packard  
IBM  
Microsoft  
3M  
US Navy  
Xerox

**What does a KM program look like?  
Is it hard to set up?  
How does it work?**

## What Might a KM Program Look Like?

- **KM Program Management Office (KM PMO) at Sprint**
  - Formal start in August 2004.
  - Has ranged between four and eleven headcount to support up to 80,000 employees and develop/support around 300 CoPs.
  - Started with a few CoPs and a highly consultative approach to ensure quality results
  - Moving toward 'self-serve' approach as adoption goes up
  - Triage requests based on strategic value
  
  - Collaborate with peer departments
    - KM PMO (in HR) – owns people/process to improve performance
    - IT – owns software and technology strategy
    - Corporate Communications – owns taxonomy and enterprise communication

## Process for Establishing a Live CoP

- **Identify a need** for sharing of common interests/needs
- **Create opportunities** to gather people for 'live' sharing
  - Meetings
  - Conference calls
  - Collaborative electronic workspaces
  - Open house or 'summit' events (in person or 'virtual')
  - Offsite events
- **Create agenda** – or – ask that members set agenda
- **Create a method of capturing and sharing** the knowledge that is exchanged
  - Traditional: minutes, notes
  - New media: Links to saved copies of recorded sessions, calls, collaborative events

# KM PMO Process for Establishing a Virtual CoP

- **Identify need, prioritize opportunity, and create a core team in customer group to review following steps.**
- **Knowledge Assessment (create knowledge map)**
  - Identify objectives
  - Identify measures of success
- **Design**
  - Outline virtual CoP structure
  - Identify content & security needs
  - Select Knowledge Manager, CoP Administrator, SMEs and content owners
  - Create communication strategy
- **Develop**
  - Build virtual CoP and load content
  - Create permissions structure
  - Plan how to modify business processes to leverage CoP
- **Deliver**
  - Implement communications plan
  - Conduct kickoff sessions for members; train CoP leaders
  - Launch the CoP
- **Monitor and measure (evaluate)**
  - Collect and analyze metrics
  - Conduct After Action Review (AAR)

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# Knowledge Assessment

- **Conduct an assessment** to determine:
  - What do you measure today? How is it impacted by knowledge flow?
  - Who needs to have what knowledge to accomplish tasks?
  - Where is this knowledge today?
  - What are the current delivery channels/mechanisms for knowledge?
  - Is the knowledge flow achieving its prime objective?
  - Does knowledge – or a lack of knowledge – impact your success?
  - What is the format of the knowledge today
    - Tacit (in people's heads)
    - Explicit (in a system somewhere)
    - New knowledge that needs to be created

## How to support a large audience with a small team

- Create a **strategy**
- **Plan communication** to audience re strategy
- Create **processes** to support strategic plan:
  - Start small – a few select, strategic areas
    - Get practice, establish processes, leverage success
  - Prioritize and triage requests
    - High-impact environments with motivated partners
- Enable small, simple CoPs to have **self-serve** experience
- Create a centralized **location to support** KM/CoPs
  - CoP for CoPs
  - Helpdesk location with files, resources, discussions
  - Live community to modify culture and share ideas

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## Critical elements to CoP success

- **Leadership, vision**
  - Executives as champions
- **Change management strategy**
  - Prepare audience for changes; support them during transition
- **Assessment and consultative skills**
  - Know what the problem is that you're trying to address
  - Engage end users and all levels at all points in process
- **Partnership with an engaged owner**
- **Reward and recognition**
  - Let audience know that participation is valued
- **Process retooling to support knowledge-sharing**
  - Integrate knowledge-sharing into daily processes
    - Promote search of knowledge bases to reuse knowledge objects
- **Measurement of success**
  - Create metrics based on needs identified in assessment
- **Advertise your success!**
  - Replicate successes in other CoP opportunities

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## Biggest challenges to KM strategies

- **Cultural barriers** (“We’ve always done it that other way”)
  - Train audience to use new tools and processes
  - Raise awareness & use change-management strategies to reduce resistance
- **Competition from other channels** (email, chats)
  - Reminders and reinforcement to go to CoP
- **Knowledge hoarding**
  - Reward/recognize knowledge-sharing
- **Busy SMEs and audience**
  - Knowledge-sharing in CoPs reduces the wasting of SME time
  - Answer Once; Reference Often!
- **“If We Build It, They Will Come”**
  - Must continually reinforce knowledge-sharing & CoPs
  - Populate CoP with great content and build processes/practices to create knowledge-sharing priorities

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## Concerns from leadership about KM and CoPs

- **“It’s expensive to start a KM program”**
  - Many KM strategies are low-cost or no-cost
  - Costs associated with KM program are more than offset by benefits to organization in cost reduction, cost avoidance
- **“Wrong information can get shared!”**
  - Wrong information is already being shared; CoPs provide a platform for erroneous information to be exposed & corrected.
- **“Is it secure? We work with highly confidential information!”**
  - Security is critical, and can be created using IT tools
- **“We already have... (shared servers, email...)”**
  - By having multiple channels in various platforms, knowledge is not searchable in a single location. Users are slowed as they seek what they need in all the possible locations.
  - Integrate approaches into common searchable interface

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## Tech-talk soup

- What's the connection between a virtual CoP and a ...
  - shared server?
  - web portal?
  - blog?
  - chat room?
  - discussion forum?
  
- What about KM/CoP software?
  - Supports Connect and Collect
  - Some is oriented to process-gathering
  - Keys: easy to use, searchable/reusable.
  - *Tip: Go back to your Knowledge Assessment and business goals; what do you want to accomplish?*

# Next Steps

## HOW DO WE GET STARTED WITH A KM STRATEGY?

*Let's start talking!*

# Appendix

## Customer Roles in Supporting CoPs

- **Knowledge Manager**
  - Takes macro view of CoP activity, seeking ways to maximize effectiveness of CoP
- **CoP Administrator**
  - Works in software, uploading content, setting up security
- **Customer executive/leader**
  - Sponsors effort, sets example, promotes and rewards practices
- **SME and/or Content Owner**
  - Answers questions and provides expertise
  - Requests, creates or updates content to address knowledge needs
- **Audience**
  - Searches CoP for answers

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# Examples of Metrics

## Examples of measurements

### Reduce:

- cycle time
- cost
- learning curve
- startup time
- SME time
- rework

### Increase:

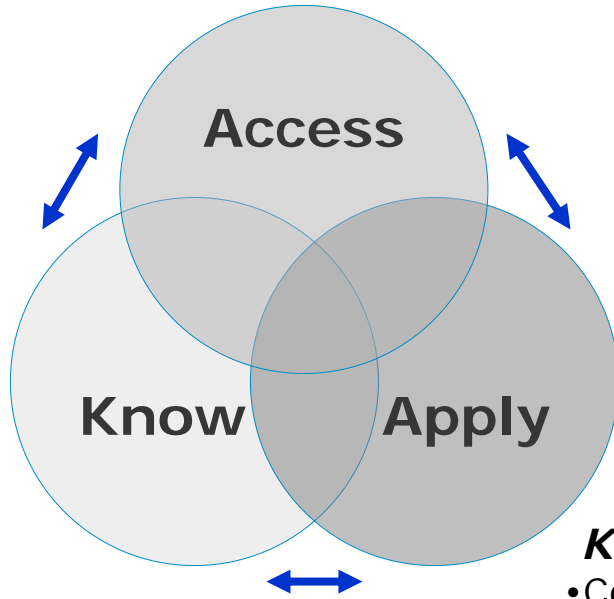
- speed to market
- speed to competence
- 'one-and-done' calls
- work group cooperation
- quality
- accuracy

## What is **ALREADY** being measured?

# Integrated Performance Improvement Model (IPIM)

## *Knowledge Bases /Tools*

- Searchable Knowledge Bases
- Portal and intranet sites
- Decision Support



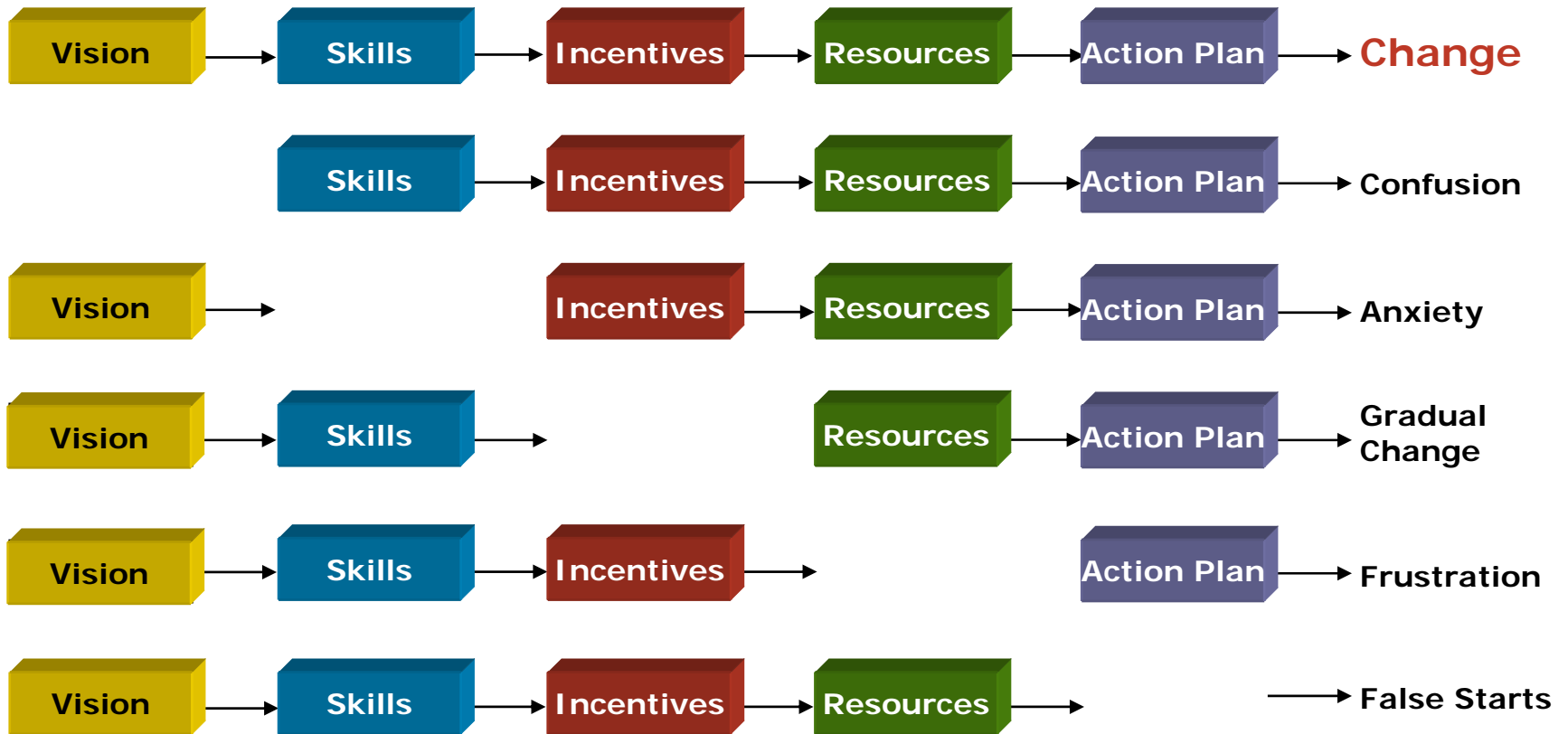
## *Content Training*

- Training events

## *Knowledge/Skill Sharing*

- Communities of Practice
- Threaded Forum Discussions
- OJT

# Managing Knowledge Requires Change...



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# Customer Feedback

- **From an engineering department**
  - “Reduced the number of e-mails [while making] information available to more people”
  - 80% agreed - “The CoP has helped me on my job.”
  - The unexpected result is the actual increase in the number of questions and the amount of information exchanged.
- **From a retail support team**
  - “I’m already saving 30 minutes a day from not having to answer redundant questions. As the CoP grows in usage, I fully expect this time savings to increase.”
  - “This is a great tool to work with. It has given me the ability to go to a centralized location to find what I need to support my retail area team.”
- **From a corporate center CoP**
  - “I see CoPs allowing us to quickly share lessons learned and knowledge gained through the various BPR initiatives across teams in a near real-time manner. This will shorten the timeline and smooth the journey to discovery.”

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## Resources

- **APQC**
  - American Productivity and Quality Council
  - <http://apqc.org>
- **The KNOW Network**
  - MAKE – Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises – annual award
  - Sponsored by Teleos.
  - <http://www.knowledgebusiness.com>
- **KM Institute**
  - <http://kminstitute.org>
- **KMPro**
  - <http://kmpro.org>