

6.SPF – PTD

Knowledge Management - A Police Technology Experience

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The Background and Purpose of the KM Effort in the Case

The department, comprising 250 staff, provides technological support for the Singapore Police Force. Our purpose for embarking on KM was:

- To cushion knowledge leakage when experienced officers leave for other job postings;
- To build a culture of knowledge sharing, knowledge retention and lifelong learning, and reduce undesirable habits such as knowledge hoarding and turf guarding, and;
- To maximise learning from mistakes and experience.

KM provided a platform for staff to collaborate, allow sharing, learning and contributing back to the knowledge base. Sustaining this KM cycle would help to build trust, enrich the knowledge base and deliver value to the department in the long term.

What We Did

A KM team was formed to identify, plan and implement departmental KM activities. Knowledge gaps were identified. Activities were planned to align the KM strategy with the strategic objectives of the department. Communication plans were put in place to increase awareness among staff. Reviews were conducted after each event to determine the effectiveness of KM activities.

Some initiatives include: newcomer's portal, Bourne Ultimatum competition, intelligent lift algorithm design competition, retreats to align KM strategy with departmental strategic drivers, project management blog, personal 'SPOT' homepage for every staff, e-learning packages for project management, annual KM day, K-Race (similar to The Amazing Race), and ground rules for knowledge sharing.

Lessons Learned

Hurdles: 1) Buy-in from the middle management was not 100%; 2) Perception that KM was a fad; 3) Perception of KM as additional work over their existing heavy workload.

Strategy to overcome hurdles: Aim for the tipping point. Use the approach of "Hall of Fame" and "Hall of Shame". Further engage the middle management to gather their feedback on the existing KM initiatives, identify their needs and see how KM can assist them in their work. Senior management leading by example.

Lessons learnt: KM initiatives must align to the organisation's strategic objectives so that KM will not be perceived as trivial and unnecessary additional work.

Advice for others attempting a similar project: Start small, aim high, look for low-hanging fruits. Secure top management support. Culture is more important than technology. Quality of the KM team is important – select those with the keenest interest in KM. KM is a long journey – be patient and to persevere.

Impact and Benefits

More open & spontaneous knowledge sharing, employee bonding through fostering better working relationships, greater openness during AARs, better products & services through sharing of best practices, customer satisfaction through quality improvements, employee satisfaction with greater emphasis on professional development & lifelong learning, improved learning curves, greater adaptability to change, and reduced project risks.

Insights and lessons learned from the case study discussions

1. Planning a knowledge strategy at a strategic level is equally important as building culture at the ground level
2. Using 'fun' approach to start KM is a creative way but may not linked to business result
3. People are more comfortable sharing in an informal setting which is more vibrant compared to formal sharing
4. Top level support is critical
5. Fun activities to promote KM is great
6. Need more viable roadmap to ensure KM success