“Stickiness” factors in knowledge transfer and methods to overcome them
Stickiness

“why best practice does not transfer”
Replication
“getting it right the second time”
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Transferring best practice internally: leveraging knowledge assets
It is not so easy!

- Companies invariably have more trouble than they anticipate transferring know how.

- Not many senior executives (12%) are happy with how their organizations share knowledge.

- Only 31 out of the 143 companies recently surveyed by the APQC claimed tangible results from their knowledge sharing efforts. Strikingly only 8 of those could back their claims with solid data!
Barriers
The trick is to predict the barriers to transfer know-how that come from the

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
\text{Source} \\
R \text{Recipient} \\
C \text{ontext} \\
K \text{nowledge transferred}
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Source

Lacks motivation - not willing to invest effort in the transfer.

Lacks perceived reliability - perceived as unreliable source. Their results are not credible or inconsistent. They cannot teach how to do it.

Recipient

Lacks motivation - not willing to invest effort in absorbing the practice.

Lacks absorptive capacity - can’t recognize, understand or implement.

Lacks unlearning capacity - can’t forget their old habits. Hard to teach “new tricks to an old dog”.

Context

Barren context - no pressure to transfer, not easy to get support.

Arduous relationship - donor and recipient relationship is not straightforward.

Knowledge

Causal ambiguity - practice is not well understood. Components and interaction not well identified. Limited ability to predict results. Limited ability to explain results.

Unproven - no evidence out there that proves that this is a good thing. No track record of transfers.
Sources of « Stickiness » in Knowledge Transfer

• *Causal Ambiguity* make difficult to have a precise modelling of the causes and effects relationships. Causal ambiguity exists when tacit knowledge is at the core of the functioning of the practice.

• *Lack of Absorptive Capacity* by the recipient unit who is not capable of interpreting the knowledge transfer and to apply it. Here again, tacitness may constitute a barrier to knowledge transfer when the recipient unit has not the inside resources to “crack” the implicit, non-verbal elements of the practices.

• *Arduous Relationships* that exists when tacit knowledge requires multiple interactions between individuals, particularly when geographical and cultural distance are present.

*Source : G. Szulanski*
Who are the most motivated recipients?

Compared to similar units, the recipient unit sees itself as . . .
CEO approach and difficulty

Which Transfer is more difficult?

MA N D A TED
STRO SU G G
FA V O RED
O PTIO N A L
SPO N TA N E

**Overall Difficulties**
- **Before Thumb's Up**
- **Before flick switch**
- **During Ramp Up**
- **During Integration**
Stages of a transfer

initiation

- Identify best practice and need
- Decide to proceed with transfer

implementation

- Logistics
- Ramp-up
- Integration

- Commence operations at recipient
- Achieve satisfactory performance

Source – Intra-Firm Transfer of Best Practice Project, APQC www.apqc.org
Replication at INTEL: “Copy Selectively” Strategy

Replication at INTEL: “Copy EXACTLY!” Strategy

discussion
thank you !