**Knowledge Management (KM)mstheme**

The KM related technologies that are available look like useful - even exciting - tools but they can only work if a favourable organisational culture prevails. Technology alone cannot overcome the sharing stumbling-blocks which may exist, like "not invented here", "envy", "jealousy" and "those who always 'take' but never 'give'".

Communities of Practice (CoP's) tools available include QuickPlace and Domino.

As in most aspects of life, the human dimension is more important than the technological dimension. March 2001 edition of FINANCIAL WORLD carried a special report about KM in the financial industry. Here are some excerpts from the lead article:

QUOTE

"**The key to innovation lies in creative thinking and the generation of value creating opportunities.** It is leveraging these opportunities that leads to improved shareholder value (the mantra of many companies in the 1990’s). Most importantly, however, it requires **recognising and rewarding those people who come up with the ideas** in the first place. It is these people who have the know-how and foresight to interpret, analyse and share information - to turn it into knowledge - who really make the difference."

"The concept of knowledge management (KM) was borne not only out of this desire to manage knowledge, but out of the need to recognise **the importance of intellectual capital**. If organisations choose to ignore this valuable asset they run the risk of letting a great deal of talent walk out the door, especially as labour is becoming more mobile and demand for talented individuals intensifies."

"KM is not about technology, which is only an enabler, but about **the imperative to value and nurture people and their ideas**."

"Underpinning a successful knowledge sharing culture is **the need for a strong buy-in from senior management** and a wish to create **an environment where collaboration is positively reinforced**. Building a knowledge organisation is not a matter of digitising what exists, it's a question of values and how organisations and the communities within them collaborate and learn. It's neither a front-line or board-level activity. Everyone is a knowledge worker now."

"**Each individual carries valuable pieces of information, which their experience, knowledge and associations make even more valuable**. For this reason there needs to be more emphasis on building communities of interest (or **communities of practice**), both within and outside organisations - **groups of like-minded individuals who share ideas**. It is often when people have the opportunity to "think beyond the box" in less formal surroundings that some real breakthroughs occur."

"**Creating the right environment for sharing knowledge underpins successful knowledge management** and is at the heart of the knowledge economy. That's what this report is about: the knowledge economy and how to succeed in it, recognising that people matter, that it is people who have knowledge and we can all benefit if that knowledge is shared."

END QUOTE

In the Executive Summary the author of the above article (Lucia Dore) notes that one key finding of the survey is:

**"The basis of a successful KM programme is cultural rather than technological change.** A different organisational mindset is required. Dabbling in KM does not mean that organisations will be equipped for the future. Organisations hoping to excel in the knowledge economy must mirror the internet in its egalitarian and non-hierarchical nature."

In the final chapter Dore remarks:

" At the heart of a successful knowledge organisation is a willingness to share knowledge .... understanding that **there is power in sharing knowledge, not in retaining it."**

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The technology is available but can we create the necessary culture to make Knowledge Management a success?

Ron Wells