Knowledge Management Communications

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Communicating KM Within the Enterprise

Effective communications is essential to a viable knowledge management program. It is so crucial that some organizations have a dedicated budget item to assure it is given proper attention. How do you communicate concepts like knowledge management that are approached differently by each generation?

How can KM communications effectively “steer” an organization toward better long-term performance while assuring near-term efficiency is not compromised? Is it OK to take a chance at “bold” communications with edgy metaphors? What level of abstraction literacy can be assumed by the multi-generational audience inside the company?
Selected Readings...

1. Prusak, L. (2001). "Where did knowledge management come from?"
Where did KM Come From?

Prusak, L. (2001)

- **Skeptic view:** knowledge management is just a “re-badging” of earlier information and data management methods.

- **Practical view:** knowledge management, like any system of thought that has value, is both old and new, and its combination of new ideas with ideas that “everyone has known all along” reassure practitioners rather than unnerve them.
Storytelling


- Two modes of knowing: abstract and narrative.
- A good story: and a well-formed argument are different natural methods used as means for convincing another.
- Storytelling works: good results, it is “free”, everybody can do it, but... we have typically been “untaught” in school...
Communicating with Diagrams


- **Effective graphics are schematic:** They cannot, include all the information, so they select only that needed for the task.
- **Visualizations in science:** Communicating science is hard, in part because scientific thinking is hard.
- **Diagrams tell stories:** gestures used in explanations have a narrative structure.
Abstraction and Metaphor


- **Metaphor:** A metaphor is a means of communication - its purpose is to convey a series of messages through a process of association and images.

- **Strategic Metaphor:** helps to achieve uniformity of purpose and development of emotional links across an organization.
# Metaphoric Transfer Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>Military Science</td>
<td>nations, armies, divisions, battalions, non-combatants, combatants, allies, military academies</td>
<td>strategy, tactics, missions, intelligence, deployment, action, diplomacy, espionage, preemption, rules and level of war, mobilization</td>
<td>theory of absolute war, theory of cold war, voluntary theory</td>
<td>victory, defense, retaliation, honor, duty to country, territory, conquest, economic gain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizational Culture


- **Becker and Geer 1960**: A set of common understandings around which action is organized.
- **Louis 1980**: A set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people that are largely tacit among members.
- **Allaire and Firsiootu 1984**: A system of knowledge, of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting.
Communications
Examples for KM

Applying Abstraction & Metaphor
Visualization

Some Examples...
How do you start?
1. Start drawing...
...well maybe think a bit first
Example #1

How do you start with a topic like “stewardship”?
Symbols...

People
Symbols...

Levels of “Stewardship”
Symbols...

Process Arrangement
All Together...
Example #2

A Knowledge Management “Roadmap”...
Objective: Show a “near-term” timeline to improve focus on current objectives...
Short Timeline for KM

Focus within a 3-yr Roadmap
Objective: Show how technology intersects with business objective for KM
Technology & Community

Document collection
Versions and comments stay organized during collaboration and peer review.

- Video conferencing
  Remote group-to-group meetings

- Screen Sharing
  Secure screen sharing and presentation

- Email
  Notifications and alerts

- Tags & Bookmarks
  Links and Vocabulary

- Wikis
  Collaboration and links to authoritative content

- Blogs
  Individual opinions, observations and experiences.
Objective:
Describe KM in a few simple terms
KM is Three Things...

1. Delivery to Customers
2. Collaboration with Colleagues
3. Ongoing Stewardship
Objective: Provide a simple “story” framework for illustrating success
It is Thursday afternoon. Air Force Major Castillo turns his attention to the urgent matter of a Program V vehicle that is due to start vehicle-level integration testing within 48 hours. He had decided to call Phil Park, his counterpart in the Program Office, to see if any open issues could stop the program from moving forward.

Phil picks up the first ring and says that he was just receiving the program's work plan and checking on the milestone for integration. He asks if they both had the flow to the IN4MATX to review the project state together. In IN4MATX, Phil calls Major Castillo's attention to four Mission Assurance items that were pending when they last briefed the major's superior, Lieutenant Colonel Crawford. The major is glad to see that each of these items has been addressed.

The final pending item is a critical component that is undergoing risk reduction testing by an independent team from the Chief Engineer's Office. Four other programs had noted anomalies in this component, so the team is investigating their root causes. The team's tests must follow a fully vetted and documented test plan in which each program has committed to a set of time-bound, deliverable, and customer-critical tasks.

Phil looks at the testing schedule in IN4MATX and notes that the test will be completed the following day. He sends an urgent email to alert Eva Ellers, the engineer in charge of testing. She has just logged into the company network, she also provides an alert through the instant message window.

Noting the urgent message, Eva quickly responds to assure Phil that she will send him all relevant charts and documents as soon as the test is completed.

Padma Patel is sitting at her desk in the Program Office, reading email with Major Castillo. She tells him that she has received a message from the contractor that the vehicle-level test plan is due within 48 hours. She is ready to proceed to production. She thanks you for your help and says that she will have to meet with everyone to finalize the plan.

Enrique explains that he is currently at a testing facility with other team members, but that he is happy to share what he knows with Padma since the correct NDAs are in place.

When presented with the same situation, Enrique explains, "I had to explain to the technical team the importance of following the test plan. They were ready to accept a lower level of testing, but I explained that we need to follow the plan to be sure that we are testing all the subsystems in the right order." When presented with the same situation, Enrique explains, "I had to explain to the technical team the importance of following the test plan. They were ready to accept a lower level of testing, but I explained that we need to follow the plan to be sure that we are testing all the subsystems in the right order." When presented with the same situation, Enrique explains, "I had to explain to the technical team the importance of following the test plan. They were ready to accept a lower level of testing, but I explained that we need to follow the plan to be sure that we are testing all the subsystems in the right order." When presented with the same situation, Enrique explains, "I had to explain to the technical team the importance of following the test plan. They were ready to accept a lower level of testing, but I explained that we need to follow the plan to be sure that we are testing all the subsystems in the right order." When presented with the same situation, Enrique explains, "I had to explain to the technical team the importance of following the test plan. They were ready to accept a lower level of testing, but I explained that we need to follow the plan to be sure that we are testing all the subsystems in the right order."
Objective: Describe the versatility and benefit of a codified business process.
Objective: Clarify the approach to streamlining complexity in operations “managing architecture”
Metaphor & Abstraction

- Interface
- Computing Hardware
- Processing
- Storage
- Data
Communicating an essential way forward
Communicating that “Something has changed”
Information Economy Shift to Social Computing

20th Century

- Resource Abundance
- Value in Transactions
- Business Stability
- Well-Defined Industries
- Limited Information

21st Century

- Resource Constraints
- Value in Relationships
- Business Flux
- Transforming Industries
- Abundance of Information

The Shift

Organizations

Communities

IN4MATX 143: Information Visualization 4-21-2011 - Stew Sutton
Provoking Dialog
The Corporate Social Media Monster

Each digital service creates a collection of unique assets that are managed (versions, access, etc.)

Encouraging the most effective communications channel to be used in support of collaboration

Improving person-to-person & person-to-group communications by organizing communications channels allowing greater transparency in dialog

Collaboration services are viewed as a digital asset that include revision controls, access control features and records management capabilities that associate with documents
Technology Stack...

Community in a Box

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capability</th>
<th>Tool/Application</th>
<th>Open Source Infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simplified Administrative Interface (ACL)</td>
<td>Webcasting</td>
<td>MySQL Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronized Presentation</td>
<td>Google</td>
<td>Postgress Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Search</td>
<td>Workflow</td>
<td>Apache (https)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Request</td>
<td>Workgroup Manager / LDAP</td>
<td>Tomcat (https)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Directory</td>
<td>Listserve</td>
<td>PHP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing Lists</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dspace.org">www.dspace.org</a></td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Repository</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sixapart.com">www.sixapart.com</a></td>
<td>Unix Operating System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weblog Publishing</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mediawiki.org">www.mediawiki.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Institutional Memory...
Illustrating a Complex Operational Process...
Showing “Data” From That Process...

1: Stepping Demand  
2: Provisioned Services  
3: source new equipment  
4: Integrate Equipment  

Hours

0.00  30.00  60.00  90.00  120.00
Creating a “story” with a recognized metaphor

- Technical Analysis
- Business Analysis
- Utilization Analysis

Automated Comparison of Alternatives

Fragmented Infrastructure

Optimized Infrastructure
End of Lecture

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