



1105 GOVERNMENT
Information Group

presents

The 9th Annual

Knowledge Management Conference and Exhibition

Conference: April 28 – 29, 2008 • Exhibition: April 29, 2008
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Washington, DC

TRACK 1: GETTING STARTED WITH KM IN GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Session 1-7

Prescription for Thriving Communities of Practice

1:45PM - 2:45PM

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

What attendees will learn:

- Strategies and techniques to increase collaboration and sharing, and better understand user needs
- How Web 2.0 technologies can strengthen communities of practice
- Effective knowledge capture and transfer techniques, and lessons learned on how to develop more adaptive teams
- What you need to know and do to support virtual teams

Presented by:

Jill Garcia (Moderator)

Knowledge Project Officer, Defense Acquisition University

Jill Garcia is a Knowledge Project Officer at the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), North East Capital region (Fort Belvoir, VA). She is the project manager for the Acquisition Community Connection (ACC). ACC is the umbrella community site for DoD's acquisition workforce (128,000+) and serves as the host for large scale communities of practice. She led the development of the DAU CoP Implementation Guide, which serves as the operational guide for establishing and nurturing CoPs within ACC. She is a content editor for the Logistics Community of Practice on ACC. Jill has ten years of experience working in the knowledge management field. While working at the Dept of the Navy she assisted in the development of the NAVSEA CoP Practitioner's Guide and was part of the team that developed the C-Port CD centered around communities of practice. She has a masters degree in Information Resource Management (Syracuse University).

Holly C. Baxter, Ph.D.

Chief Scientist, Strategic Knowledge Solutions

Holly C. Baxter, Ph.D., Chief Scientist of Strategic Knowledge Solutions, has spent the past decade specializing in Instructional Design, Evaluation Metrics, Organizational Development, and Training in both military and commercial environments. Her experience includes developing effective vignette based training for enhancing situation awareness, designing embedded training solutions for damage control personnel, developing evaluation metrics for simulation based training, identifying cognitive training requirements utilizing expertise in Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA), and using knowledge management tools to capture tacit knowledge in the field and turn that knowledge into effective just-in-time vignette based training. Dr. Baxter has published numerous articles in the field of cognitively based training solutions, has been an invited speaker at multiple conferences and events, and has given many workshops on CTA, Vignette Development, Intuitive Decision-making, and Leadership Development. Dr. Baxter earned a Ph.D. from Indiana University in Organizational Communication and Management with a focus on Instructional Design.



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Eric Sauve

CEO and Co-Founder, Tomoye

Eric Sauve is an expert on delivering results through the successful implementation and management of Communities of Practice within public and private sector organizations. Eric has led Tomoye's vision of user-driven Communities of Practice, which has resulted in tangible innovation and greater organizational agility for organizations including John Deere, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and the U.S. Army. Under Eric's leadership, Tomoye has become profitable, with the company and its clients receiving significant industry recognition for leadership in the Community of Practice market. He is a frequent speaker logging more than 20 speaking engagements over the past two years, and recently was the keynote at several public sector focused conferences.

Thomas E. Smith

Program Director, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Thomas W. Smith is a Program Director in the Department of Engineering Professional Development, University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the founder of the university's award winning on-line engineering leadership degree, the Master of Engineering in Professional Practice and currently teaches in this program. He also directs a series of short courses on telecommunications and remote work. He has been instrumental in the development of the university's web-conferencing, document management and course management systems for distance education. For this work he received the University of Wisconsin Award for Excellence and national awards from Telecom and ASEE. He has written more than 40 papers and articles on telecommunications, virtual teamwork and distance education and is a frequent speaker and consultant on this topic in the United States and Europe. He received his AB degree from Dartmouth College and MS degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



*Prescription for Thriving
Communities of Practice*

Holly C. Baxter, Ph.D.
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Prescription for Thriving Communities of Practice

- ▶ Capture Tacit Knowledge and Expertise.
 - Ask not only the right questions, but ask those questions in the right way!
 - Based on Cognitive Task Analysis Principles
 - Study and practice with Mr Ron Pruyt and the US Army's Battle Command Knowledge System Transition Team Forum.

Eliciting Expertise

- ▶ The key is not *what* you ask, but *how* you ask it.
- ▶ People don't know how to verbalize their expertise, and they need help to share it.
- ▶ Capture that expertise in the form of real lived experiences and stories.
- ▶ Interviews/questions often don't stand on their own; they build on each other.

Poor Transition Team Forum Questions

1. ***Was there a situation that you experienced that you weren't prepared for in your training? If so, explain.*** Many. The most difficult problems related CMO, personnel/pay tracking, contracting and others.
2. ***What would you have trained on more before deploying?*** CMO, contracting.
3. ***Describe a typical day for you and your team.*** It varied based upon op tempo.
4. ***Describe your hardest day.*** Hafra street ops or days we lost soldiers.
5. ***Describe how you developed your relationship with the coalition unit (if any) your team was/is attached to.*** Deep cooperation. You are a team working toward one goal, "Iraqis taking the lead." The TT worked on the Iraqis from one side and the maneuver team from the other.

Tips and Tricks

- ▶ Keep it short both in description and number of questions asked.
- ▶ Make sure the question is clear and easy to understand.
- ▶ Say, “Can you think of a time when. . .what happened?” What would you do differently next time?
- ▶ Specify a number.
- ▶ Be as specific as possible and ask questions in context.
- ▶ Ask follow-up questions.
- ▶ Ask a variety of questions; some short and some in more depth.

Good Transition Team Forum Questions

1. Were you able to influence your counterpart to adopt a course of action that he initially didn't agree with?
 - 2a. If yes, what techniques did you use to influence him to adopt that course of action?
 - 2b. If no, what actions of yours do you feel contributed to him not adopting that course of action?
3. Can you think of a time when you discussed or attempted to discuss the quality of your counterpart's performance on a mission/task with him? Describe what happened.

Good Transition Team Forum Question Response

Gaining influence with my IA counterpart was, as eluded to above, a function of developing a relationship first and foremost, establishing a baseline of mutual respect and being sensitive to the IA culture. But the relationship isn't the proverbial key to the city. Some aspects of the Iraqi Army's culture are so deeply ingrained that they can't be changed in a single one year tour; i.e., officer privileges, NCO dis-empowerment, commander centric command climates, among several others.

1. There isn't a clear yes or no.

a. For instance; in helping our counterparts refine their tactical operations center, we were able to influence them by collocating our team TOC which facilitated a discussion for improving situational awareness. Equally important in this event was the IA commanders open frustration with the ineffectiveness of his TOC. So individual example and demonstration were powerful influencers, assisted by the IA commanders directives. Our best tool for influencing was the provision of resources that they didn't have ready access to such as maps, dry erase boards and acetate. Unfortunately this transactional activity fosters a dependency relationship which is in the long term detrimental.

b. In some ways we were unable to influence their performance because we couldn't enable change of the culture of their Army in regards to their NCO Corps. I suspect that we were also unable to influence our counterparts, particularly in the conduct of aggressive offensive operations against Shia based militias because we were suggesting that they target individuals with the same religious beliefs. I felt that we as foreigners were exceeding the boundaries of our relatively new relationship. This led to suspicions that we were playing a shell game with the IA, especially when it came to combat operations. They were often prone to tell us what we wanted to hear, but as we would dig into some details their story would change.

Prescription for Thriving Communities of Practice

1. A CoP is a tactic designed to support your organizational development strategy
2. A CoP cannot substitute for effective fundamental communications tools
3. A CoP is not intended to provide Knowledge Management nor Process Documentation

Thomas W. Smith
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A CoP is a Tactic

- Must align with Organizational Development goals, objectives and strategy
 - This requires planning and discussion and ongoing management
 - Is subject to manipulation
 - Vendor influence
 - Personal agendas
 - True sharing requires trust and reward
-

A CoP is not a KMS

- Community of Practice
 - Knowledge Management System
 - Product/Process Documentation

 - A CoP may contribute to KM
 - A CoP does not provide formal documentation
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Conclusion

- A CoP is a specific tactic
 - It is potentially very useful in OD
 - There are many tools to support it
 - It is easy for managers to managers to over-generalize its role
 - It is tempting for users to manipulate
 -
 - What is your responsibility: manager/user?
-

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