Working Knowledge ^{CSP}

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Knowledge at the Point of Execution®

KM Concepts: *Fast Learning* (7 in a series)

In the previous article, we discussed "High Performing Knowledge Enabled Organizations" and how their high performance is sustained through three important attributes:

1. People share what they think others may need to know
2. The latest know-how and experience is routinely embedded in strategy and operations
3. People and their collective knowledge are secure, yet highly visible and easily accessible

Our focus right now is on the second attribute, "The latest know-how and experience is routinely embedded in strategy and operations," and how the know-how and experience gets captured and reused. This is done through the application of three distinct learning processes for learning before (Peer Assist), learning during (Action Review); and learning after (Retrospect).
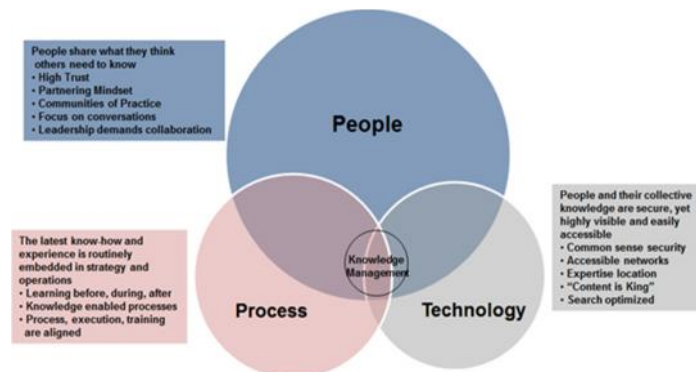
- **Learning Before (Peer Assists)**: "Learning before doing" is supported through the Peer Assist, a <u>facilitated</u> process which targets a specific challenge, imports knowledge from people outside the team, identifies possible approaches and new lines of inquiry, and promotes sharing of learning with each other through a facilitated meeting.
- **Learning During (Action Reviews):** These processes are a modified U.S. Army technique called After Action Reviews. Action Reviews enable people to "learn while doing" by answering four questions immediately after an activity or event: (1) What was supposed to happen? (2) What actually happened? (3) If different, why are they different? and (4) What can we learn and immediately apply?

An added benefit is that, if done well and if people feel safe and answer honestly, trust builds within the team.

- **Learning After (Retrospects):** "Learning after Doing" is supported by a <u>facilitated</u> process called a Retrospect. Immediately after the end of the project or project phase a retrospect encourages team members to look back at the project to discover what went well and why and what could have been done differently, with a view to helping a different team repeat their success and avoid any pitfalls— "learning after doing." The retrospect focuses <u>not</u> on what went wrong and who did it, rather it focuses on what was learned and how this can be applied in future projects by future teams so they will be successful. It is a "process of inquiry, not inquisition."

To be effective, these three processes for "<u>systematic reflection</u>" must be embedded in the organizations planning and operations, so they are not viewed as an extra task or effort. If it is, it just won't happen.

It is important to note that these processes involve behavior change within an organization since you are fundamentally changing how the organization plans, executes, and learns from the work that it accomplishes.

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Next: Communities of Practice