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CINCINNATI, OHIO

APRIL 13-16, 2008



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# Managing the Risk of Knowledge Loss Due to Workforce Attrition

Retaining and Leveraging the Critical and Relevant Knowledge of the Workforce

## ***Breakout Session # 1205***

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Date           15 April 2008  
Time           1410



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What if...

... risk of knowledge loss could be managed like this???



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# Why Is Knowledge Loss A Key Workforce Challenge We Are Facing?



- Loss of knowledge -- and people with the knowledge -- between agencies and those leaving government is increasing
- No integrated process or framework to capture and reuse the workforce's relevant information, experience, and insight on a consistent and disciplined basis
- Complicating factors:
  - (1) increasing size and complexity of acquisition workload
  - (2) decline in number of professionals in acquisition workforce
- It exists at the leadership level and at the workforce level – it's multi-generational and still not priority for most organizations





On a scale of 1 to 10 (1=Poor to 10=Excellent), how would you rate your organization's performance to reduce the loss of critical knowledge?



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# People Have Always Retired Or Left With Their Knowledge

What's different about this now and why should we care?

- We have the “workforce gap” – knowledge of the workforce is inversely proportional to the age of the workforce
- There is a real issue when there is not a ready and continuous stream of knowledgeable replacements due to an inability retain workforce with the critical skills to fill the gaps of growing retirement eligible
- Example → Acquisition Workforce:
  - The average age of the acquisition profession according to a 2007 NCMA survey is 47 years old
  - There is competition for the remaining scarce resources among all agencies and the private sector
  - We need a deliberate means for learning, capture and transfer of the “experience” of acquisition – the “know how” and “know why” of acquisition



# What Actions Can Be Taken Right Now to Remedy The Loss of Knowledge from Government Agencies?

- Prepare the environment and help people to take action
- Recognize that this is not easy—look for help within your organization or within the federal government or from outside expertise
- Create intern and mentorship programs for the next generation workforce and leadership to ensure relevant knowledge gets transferred



# What Actions Can Be Taken Right Now to Remedy The Loss of Acquisition Knowledge from Government Agencies?

- Find ways to maintain a dialogue with those who “know” who have left the workforce
- Create a common approach for knowledge capture and reuse focused on collaborative behavior—it does at its core require cultural change – it is not easy
- Recognize that this a long term effort that is not just an initiative for this Fiscal Year –it is a fundamental change in how you work



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What are your organizations doing to address these workforce challenges?

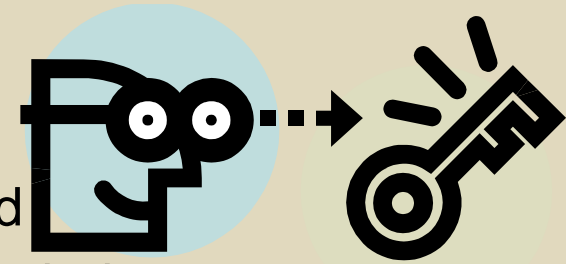


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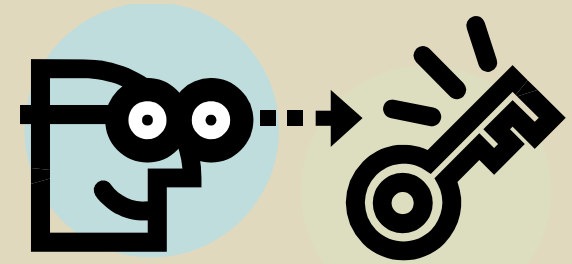
# What Are Some Basics That Must Be Understood In Order to Set the Stage for Success In Addressing This Challenge?



- Understand there is long term value in capturing and reusing knowledge and how and where it can be applied  
– it's about performance!
- A desire to make this part of the way you operate and work—look for a place to start where it will have a significant impact on performance
- Focus on the people and the processes necessary to move knowledge across the workforce — not the technology  
– it's about changing behavior!



# What Are Some Basics That Must Be Understood In Order To Set The Stage For Success In Addressing This?



- Recognize that it is a long term commitment to maintain and sustain a knowledge enabled organization
- Understanding the multi-generational nature of the federal workforce
- Create awareness by articulating and communicating the knowledge loss problem as a “burning platform”





What questions should we be asking?



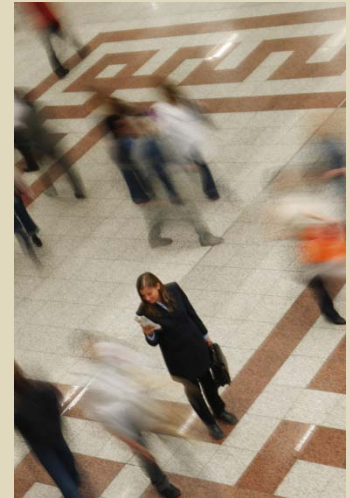
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# What Are Some Things You Can Do Right Now In Your Organization To Be Successful In Reducing Knowledge Loss?

- Recognize that it's never too late to start addressing this challenge and its associated risks  
(risks might be acceptance, not having a sharing culture, view that it's extra work)
- Recognize that the concept of knowledge capture begins at the beginning of one's entry into the workforce, not when they are leaving the workforce!!
- Evaluate how you currently capture what you know and how you reuse it and leverage what good things you already are doing



# What Are Some Things You Can Do Right Now In Your Organization To Be Successful In Reducing Knowledge Loss?

- Pick a place to start – at the leadership level or at the workforce level – and look for the early adapters in your organization to begin to move your efforts forward
- Then, pick a pilot project to demonstrate the value of these efforts and the investment in time and resources
- Think about how you will measure or value the outcome of your efforts to demonstrate success and to convince anyone that not doing this is a risky alternative



# What Are Some Things You Can Do Right Now In Your Organization To Be Successful In Reducing Knowledge Loss?

- You can't capture everything that everyone knows, nor would you want to do this
- Decide what knowledge is critical to the organization or is necessary to improve all aspects of your organization's performance
- Start small and engineer for success so people can see it's doable
- Technology cannot do this alone because it can't get what's in your head into someone else's



# What Are Some Of The Key Considerations In Establishing And Sustaining A Framework For Capturing And Reusing Knowledge?

- Understand that beginning is the easy part
  - maintaining and sustaining the effort over time and continuously demonstrating value is the really hard part
- Support and encourage a culture that values knowledge sharing through collaboration
- Reflect on the alternative of not changing the way you work





# What Are KM Tools And Techniques You Can Use Even If You Don't Have An Established Framework For Capturing And Reusing Knowledge?

- Mentoring and internships
- “Communities of Practice” can create an ability for the workforce to share what they know across boundaries enabled by existing technology
- Learning Before, Learning During, Learning After
- Knowledge Repositories (Knowledge Assets) to store the “know how and know why” of processes or methods
- Leadership transition workshops





- What are some of the tools and techniques your organizations are using for capturing and reusing knowledge?
- How well are they working?

