

Working Knowledge^{CSP} Creating Value from Knowledge



Bill Kaplan

“Knowledge Management (KM) is about the effective use and flow of knowledge—its creation, use, and movement across the boundaries of the organization. It is a process of continual renewal. We collaborate with our clients to help them to more effectively leverage their knowledge so they can develop better solutions to the challenges they face, make better decisions using that knowledge, and operate faster than the speed of change,” begins Bill Kaplan, Founder of Working Knowledge^{CSP}. One of the early thought leaders in the application of KM in the government sector, Kaplan has been consulting on the leadership and practical application of KM as a business discipline to address operations and workforce performance challenges in the private sector since the 1990s. Looking back over his 20 years of practical knowledge management experience, he notes that a consistent challenge facing the public and private business sectors is mitigating the risk of knowledge loss from workforce turnover. “We know that organizations that invest the time and resources to develop a KM Strategy and use this strategy to implement a KM program will be better equipped to address and mitigate their risk of knowledge loss. Why? Because they will have in place a consistent and disciplined process to capture, adapt, transfer, find, and reuse the critical and relevant knowledge which is likely their most important strategic asset. To help mitigate this risk, we created a KM benchmarking methodology for clients to assess their KM maturity or health and the gaps between where they are and where they want to go in KM,” says Kaplan. Working Knowledge^{CSP} co-delivers with their clients comprehensive consulting solutions for KM assessments and “fit for purpose” KM strategies and frameworks. They also develop targeted KM training and workshops, deliver KM tools and templates, and connect clients with the necessary KM technology and tools.

“Every KM engagement co-delivers a solution with our clients,” says Kaplan. He notes that this has helped the company gain greater success by ensuring that their clients have key persons on the consulting team that delivers the KM solutions, helping to ensure that client retains an organic capability to sustain their investment in the newly developed KM environment based on what they learned as part of the consulting delivery team.

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Additionally, they have developed an agile approach to KM strategy development—KM^{Agile}. This approach helps co-develop and co-deliver sustainable client knowledge retention and sharing capability in approximately 14 weeks through the use of KM pilot projects built into the workflow. This informs the KM strategy real-time by involving the client teams in solving business or operational challenges using KM concepts and practices as part of getting the work done. “It’s kind of like flying the airplane while you build it,” quips Kaplan. Results and lessons learned from this agile approach are used to more effectively deploy KM across the organization.

Working Knowledge^{CSP} has developed a practice-based Concept-Strategy-Practice (CSP) Model that has three phases. The first phase is Knowledge Concepts, where a concept for KM in the client’s organization is developed based on factors including desired outcomes, organizational culture, and the dynamics of the workforce. The next phase is developing a business case and KM Strategy where a KM strategic plan that is linked to and grounded in the overall strategic plan of the organization



is developed to ensure funding and resources are available to sustain the investment. The final phase is Implementing Practices where insights gained from the previous phases are leveraged to create a framework that fits the organization’s goals and desired outcomes.

Their consulting solutions delivery model connects with the right subject matter experts from around the globe to deliver their client’s KM solutions and by focusing on the client’s business and operational challenges and on the business, functional, and KM outcomes that have to be achieved. This approach enables the company to ensure that their KM solution helps clients “create value from their knowledge” to “perform and learn” and to continuously improve their business and operational performance.

Kaplan denotes an instance where the company consulted with a major European bank to help the bank to leverage their critical knowledge from bank operations and begin to capture and make sense of all that they had been learning from the different projects spread across various locations. Working Knowledge^{CSP} worked with the Bank, delivered a comprehensive Bank KM Strategy and recommendations to implement the KM framework which was tied to their evolving IT architecture roadmap. They also developed and launched several Communities of Practice (CoP) supported by the Bank’s KM technology and trained the CoP facilitators to sustain their CoPs and to create and launch new CoPs.

Working Knowledge^{CSP} continues to stay focused on delivering effective and sustainable KM solutions to their clients. They envision continuing to work with clients to demonstrate that investing time in KM concepts and practices, while changing the organization behavior to better support KM outcomes, helps create a measurable return in performance and value both for the organization, its teams, and the individual employee. 