

Unleashing your organization's true brainpower

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Contents

*

The Inconvenient truth about knowledge: the truly excellent stuff resides inside your people's heads

*

Most organizations have large, untapped knowledge reserves

*

New tools to the rescue: the case for collaborative technologies

*

What is holding organizations back? Why can't they be more like the Internet?

*

Simple recipe for capitalizing on untapped knowledge reserves

*

Staying in control: Fringe benefits of knowledge management new style



BENTHURST&CO
STRATEGY REALIZATION

Putting your organization's true knowledge to full use

The Inconvenient Truth about Knowledge

The most valuable knowledge in your organization resides inside your people's heads. We know how to capture mundane, explicit knowledge. But we are much less adept at capturing knowledge like experience, expertise, judgment, intuition, and creativity of your best people. It simply doesn't let itself be readily captured, codified, and disseminated.

The only way to really get access to this rich source of knowledge is to let your people interact with each other, with your customers, with your suppliers, and with your business partners. In other words, some of the best knowledge in your organization can really only be applied directly and is not codified for later use.

And herein lies a problem. Interaction between people is often severely inhibited by all sorts of mundane considerations like geographical location, time zones, organizational boundaries, as well as simple concepts such as agenda slots and travel budgets. On top of that, the interaction is often very difficult to transcript for potential reuse at a later time.

This makes it hard for organizations to fully capitalize on what they collectively know. It results for example in reinventing the wheel – over and



We used to exchange
messages, now the exchanges
create the messages

**The best knowledge is
accessed through people interacting**

over: the organization is simply not aware of what is being achieved in other parts of the organization (or in the past for that matter). And what about sub-optimal use of knowledge resources? Instead of using the knowledge already present inside your organization, you might hire additional people to fill the gap.

Until now that is

The last decade has seen the roll out and coming to full fruition of a new generation of productivity tools: collaborative and social technologies in the form of applications such as MS SharePoint, IBM's Lotus Quick'R, Google Business Apps, and many more. These tools enable knowledge workers to contribute efficiently to different initiatives across geographies, time, organizational affiliation, and other dimensions. And, it can capture the full richness of these contributions for later reuse. What's more, these tools are probably already rolled out through your organization!

Vast reserves of untapped knowledge

All in all a pretty straightforward business case: you probably already have the tools in place and when used to the full potential, they can give you unprecedented access to your organization's richest untapped knowledge: experience, expertise, judgment, intuition, and creativity. This access can be used in two major ways: improving knowledge processes and improving knowledge worker productivity by creating new resourcing configurations across organizational and geographic boundaries.

Why so little use inside organizations?

There are so many new, highly valuable and enriching uses found for these technologies on the Internet, that it really begs the question why there has not been a similar explosive uptake inside businesses.

Contrary to the Internet, organizations have deeply ingrained ways of doing things and there are all sorts of vested interests in the status quo. It frustrates rethinking the way things are done with an open mind as well as the adoption of new ways of working. The vast potential of new uses of collaborative technologies is not fully recognized by organizations, and so new uses are not learned, not endorsed, and not rewarded.

Capitalizing on untapped knowledge reserves

To capitalize on the potential and pave the way, a determined and smart approach is therefore required. Fortunately there is an increasing number of good examples of practices that we can draw on to help us use the potential, and change the way the organization is working. To get started, the following steps are in our experience prudent to consider:

- Educate yourself and your leadership team
 - Be able to truly lead the change, tackle your team's and your ringleaders' skepticism before you start
 - Be able to recognize and reward the best and most constructive contributions

- Take individual knowledge rich activities to the next level – one by one
 - Create the tangible benefits, make knowledge processes truly better and easier for everyone
 - If at all possible, kill the old way of working to make it stick
- Adapt organization and HR practices as required
 - Make the necessary changes to accommodate collaborative ways of working and make them sustainable

means dodging all sorts of typical as well as specific change hurdles. The new use of collaborative technologies for example is highly threatening to those not pulling their weight - it will accelerate their exposure as adding too little value.

On the plus side: collaborative technologies can also be used to make change itself easier. They allow you to involve more people, much earlier in the change process to create better, and above all, easier to implement solutions. Change can thus be one of the first new activities to be taken to the next level through better use of the organization's knowledge.

Staying in Control

One concern that you might have is how you control such contributions from broader cross-sections of the organization. How do you stand a chance of knowing the excellent contributions and how do you reward them? The answer here lies also in the use of collaborative technologies. Enabling knowledge rich processes with collaborative technologies cannot only make them much more effective, it will also capture the interaction between knowledge workers in its full richness.

This provides a free-of-charge knowledge management system and a new and very powerful form of control. Much more powerful in fact than you can achieve with traditional forms of organizational control.

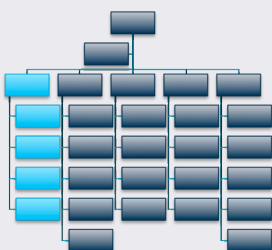
Success

Ultimately the success of revolutionizing your knowledge rich processes depends on your ability to truly change the way your knowledge workers go about their business. This

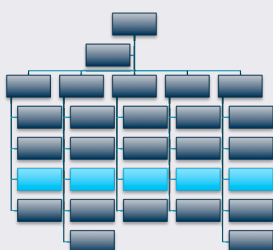
Want to learn more? Contact Benthurst & Co through gillis.jonk@benthurst.com

SideBar: The essence of collaborative work

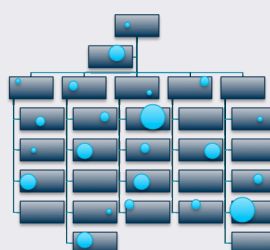
“Analogue” & “Physical”



Process Optimized



Knowledge Optimized



- New Resourcing Configurations
- Ad-Hoc Issue Resolution
- Focused Change Initiatives
- Productivity Enhancement
-

Collaborative technologies create the ability for knowledge workers to contribute efficiently to different initiatives across geographies, time, organization, and other dimensions.

As a result, resourcing can be based much more on the ability, interest, and capacity to contribute of your people, instead of proximity or organizational affiliation.

For individuals this represents a chance to pursue their ambitions more directly. For organizations it means that they can use their resources more effectively.