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CINCINNATI, OHIO

APRIL 13-16, 2008



ENSURING TRUST IN THE **ACQUISITION PROCESS**
THROUGH PEOPLE, TEAMS, AND TOOLS.



NATIONAL CONTRACT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



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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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



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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?

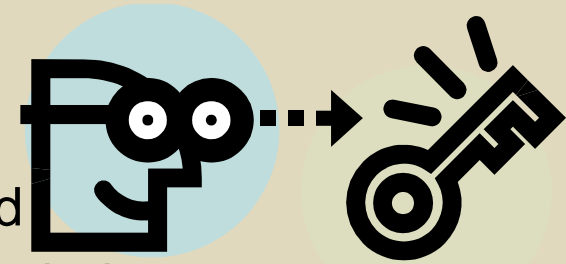


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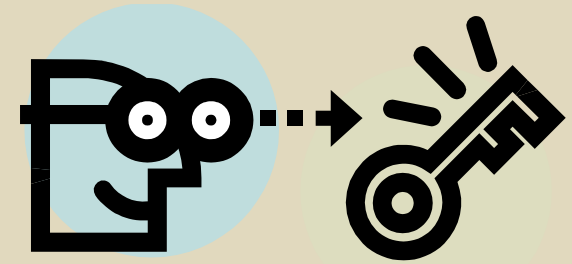
What Are Some Basics That Must Be Understood In Order to Set the Stage for Success In Addressing This Challenge?



- 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?



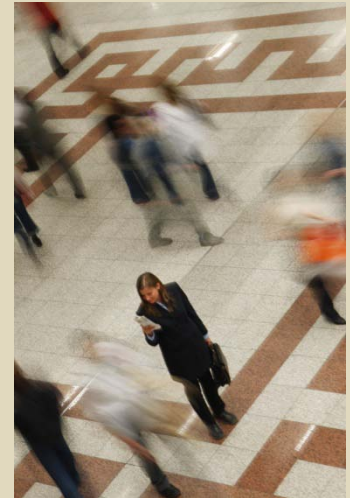
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What Are Some Things You Can Do Right Now In Your Organization To Be Successful In Reducing Knowledge Loss?

- 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?

