

mindswap®

Knowledge Transfer for IT people



DOWNSIZE OR GROW

Companies can downsize safely. Mindswap has allowed one company to exit 200 contractors and anchor the knowledge in-house. Conversely, companies can grow rapidly.

KEY PERSON DEPENDENCIES

Key person dependencies removed. One client said:

"We were very exposed to pockets/ gaps of knowledge within the team...This has allowed us to make 4 day weeks and 9 day fortnights available to all within our team"

OFF-SHORING & ON-SHORING

Off-shoring and in-shoring teams in a time bound and measured way. Jason at HBOS said:

"The Knowledge Transfer programme managed by Answer enabled staff who were new to a large and complex system to support it largely unaided within about 12 months."

FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE

Move from 'silos' to a flexible workforce model. Julie at Intelligent Finance commented:

"It simply would not have been possible to achieve this level of business change, yet still deliver projects for the business without the knowledge transfer programme"

What is knowledge transfer?

The practical problem of transferring knowledge from one individual to another or to a group of individuals or from one part of the organisation to another. Knowledge transfer seeks to organise, create, capture or distribute knowledge and ensure its available for future users. It is more than just a communication problem. Knowledge transfer is complex because knowledge resides in organisational members, tools, tasks, and their sub-networks and much knowledge in organisations is tacit or hard to articulate.

How do you define Knowledge Transfer and how will we know if we have achieved this?

Knowledge Transfer is the movement and application of knowledge. It is the sharing and communication of knowledge from a source, usually a Subject Matter Expert(s) within an organisation so that it is learned and applied by Subject Matter Recipient(s). Knowledge is taken to be transferred when learning takes place and when the recipient(s) understand the intricacies and implications associated with that knowledge so that he or she can apply it in context. sub-networks and much knowledge in organisations is tacit or hard to articulate.

Knowledge is very complex

Knowledge comes in many forms and types. The most common distinction is between explicit and implicit – open referred to as tacit knowledge. Explicit 'how to' knowledge is easily shared between people and is re-enforced in valuable documented knowledge which can be used or applied. Implicit knowledge is experience based knowledge built up over time – the 'why' rather than 'how' knowledge. When asked, most people say that over 70% of their organisation's vital knowledge is implicit. Yet knowledge sharing programmes focus on explicit knowledge or information. Why? Because that is the easier option if you do not have a structured approach and experience in drawing out this tacit knowledge.

Where does Commercial Knowledge fit in?

Commercial Knowledge may be explicit or implicit, or both, and is focussed on effective performance. Not 'what is right' but 'what works' or 'what works best' for a particular organisation. Key knowledge which can be shared and cascaded.

Knowledge Transfer is not new

Knowledge sharing and transfer has existed since humans started to teach each other how to use a tool or plant a field. However, what is new is the structured approach required to achieve success in knowledge initiatives and to be able measure that success in terms of ROI.

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WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY:

NEW LOOK

"One of the big benefits of answer's Mindswap approach is that the team is now able to deal with and react to enquires more efficiently, so there is more time for proactive project work. Answer has helped us build a much stronger team who have more confidence in themselves and can therefore do their job better."

Ruth Gurney, IT Application Services Manager, New Look Group

WILLIAM HILL

"Every company has individuals they rely on who store lots of knowledge and become experts in key business areas. The downside of this is when they are not around, the business suffers - they become single points of failure. Step forward the knowledge transfer programme. It allowed us to extract this knowledge and infuse it in a team of people, using a series of key steps within the programme framework. The benefits were improved productivity, more understanding of our business and increased team synergy".

Sean - Senior Developer - William Hill Organisation

If you would like to discuss further please contact:

Lindy Wainwright

Programme Manager for Knowledge Transfer and Principal Consultant



Mindswap is the only accredited knowledge transfer service with the Institute for IT Training.

Is Knowledge Transfer a fad?

Surveys which in 1996-97 showed the majority of managers citing knowledge initiatives as a 'fad', now show less than 5% believe so. Reasons such as the value and recognition of people resources as knowledge assets, the proven benefits of knowledge management and the momentum of the knowledge movement show that, however it might be labelled - Knowledge Sharing/Cascading/Transfer - its core strategies and practices are fundamental to the growth and flexibility of individuals and teams within organisations.

Knowledge Repositories are libraries relabelled

Knowledge repositories go beyond being merely libraries. They act as knowledge connectors and aggregators, linking people to information and people to people. They manage content on intranets, help nurture communities of practice, play a key role in information resources management, and embed a culture of responsibility to ensure information currency.

People won't share knowledge

Lack of a knowledge sharing culture within an organisation is often cited as a primary obstacle. However, in depth studies have shown this to be a myth. The real culprit is lack of time. This is the primary cause why knowledge does not get more widely shared. Time is not built into tasks and people's roles to allow them to do this. There is also the requirement to support this process through mentoring and facilitation to ensure that this type of initiative does not become a 'nice to have', and therefore the first thing dropped because of work pressures. Knowledge Transfer programmes need to be facilitated and driven to ensure success.

Osmosis is a key factor in Knowledge Transfer

There is a mistaken belief that sitting in close proximity to a colleague over time will ensure that you will know what that person knows; as if some form of invisible knowledge link will form between two people. The fact is that you could observe or shadow a colleague for any period of time and still not know what they know. You could of course replay situations which you had observed, but you will not know why that person made the decision they made because that is based on their tacit knowledge. Our approach and expertise allow us to scope that knowledge.

There's no obvious pay-back

Those organisations who have embraced the concept of knowledge transfer have cited numerous cases where there are positive and proven benefits.

Successful knowledge transfer requires a structured process and approach

A structured approach brings results you can measure giving you results with clear and visible benefits

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