



State of Delaware Human Resource Management Statewide Training and Organization Development

Knowledge Transfer Tools



The goal of Knowledge Management is not to manage all knowledge, but to manage knowledge that is the most important to the organization.

Adapted from “*Knowledge Transfer Concepts FY '06*,” State of Alaska and *Knowledge Transfer Strategies*, State of Iowa.

BEST PRACTICES

What: Relevant processes or systems to perform work that have had measurable success and effectiveness. Best practices are determined through meetings, polling employees, internal or external surveys through benchmarking with other organizations.

Why:

- ❖ Identifies practices that have worked in other organizations and may be transferable
- ❖ Can spark innovation
- ❖ Can broaden network and increase performer expertise

When:

- ❖ New process, task or competency needs to be developed
- ❖ An existing process, task or competency needs modification
- ❖ Success depends on staying up-to-date; focus is on gathering info

How: Determine the knowledge or skill needs. Identify sources of the information. Establish the meeting or study parameters then develop, and then implement the plan

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Clarify the best practices to be researched and evaluated
- ❖ Define scope and role of project and performers
- ❖ Avoid vague or ambiguous goals and research topics

Example: Look for organizations that do a particular aspect of your business well and then contact them to benchmark your policies or procedures with them. Sample topics include Workforce Planning, Public Administration Practices, Office Safety, and Government Accounting.

COACHING

What: The employee receives feedback and guidance from his/her manager while practicing new skills.

Why:

- ❖ Effective method for transferring organizational culture information
- ❖ Develops higher level of proficiency

When:

- ❖ Skill set(s) to be developed is best learned through one-on-one transfer
- ❖ New employee or employee new to work level (e.g., entry level professional, manager, etc.) has specific skill set gap and/or the need to quickly and effectively have knowledge of organizational culture and norms

How:

Determine what knowledge or competency needs to be mastered. Work with the employee to gain the knowledge through training or education.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Identify and agree upon the specific skill set or competency to be developed.

Example: Supervisor works with employee in process problem solving, root-cause analysis and collaborative problem-solving skills, and other work-related issues.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

What: A group of individuals that share a common work practice over a period of time, getting together to share information and knowledge, though not part of a formal work team.

Why:

- ❖ Provides a sanctioned mechanism for sharing knowledge
- ❖ Leads to improved network of contacts
- ❖ Provides peer recognition and continuous learning
- ❖ Provides a mechanism for sharing tacit knowledge

When:

- ❖ When sharing tacit information is important to achieving better results
- ❖ When knowledge is being constantly gained and shared it is beneficial to meeting organizational goals

How: Determine the purpose of the group (e.g., solving everyday work problems, developing and disseminating best practices). Clarify roles and responsibilities and provide resources and support.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Membership should be voluntary
- ❖ Recruit those who are seen as experts and trusted as information sources
- ❖ Management should not dictate action
- ❖ Focus is on gathering information rather than making decisions or taking action

Example: Finance officer meetings, cross-departmental IT meetings, administrative staff meetings, and computer or software user groups.

DUAL INCUMBENCY

What: When two employees temporarily occupy the same position.

Why:

- ❖ Provides a limited time for the employee leaving the agency to share knowledge with the new employee.
- ❖ Decreases the learning curve for the new employee
- ❖ Provides the opportunity for the incumbent to ask the more experience employee questions as they work side-by-side.
- ❖ Provides a mechanism for sharing tacit knowledge

When:

- ❖ When sharing tacit information is important to achieving better results
- ❖ When approved by the directors of Human Resource Management (HRM) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

How: Determine the need, write justification, and obtain written approvals from the agency head and the directors of HRM and OMB

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Resignation or retirement documents are on file.
- ❖ Obtain agency support of request
- ❖ Determine length of dual incumbency needed
- ❖ Determine focus of activities for knowledge transfer

Example: A HR Director with 30+ years of experience decides to retire. A new employee is hired as a dual incumbent for one month to shadow the HR Director to become familiar with the agency, issues, and processes.

FLOWCHARTS (Work process Map)

What: Documentation of a process step-by-step using pictures and symbols to tell a story. It is a graphical representation of what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

Why:

- ❖ Conveys the big picture quickly
- ❖ Creates a visual cue in the learner's mind - can see entire process from start to finish.
- ❖ Facilitates discussion about process; can help performers identify their knowledge and skill gaps in process
- ❖ Can help performers to identify areas for improvement in the process itself
- ❖ Can be used by a multitude of users

When:

- ❖ To standardize a process.
- ❖ A process is being developed, modified, or examined during problem solving root cause analysis.
- ❖ Roles and responsibilities in the process are being developed or modified.
- ❖ To document instructions for a task that does not require written instructions.

How:

- ❖ Identify steps and roles in process.
- ❖ Develop step by step illustrations to convey information using pictures and symbols.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Document the process from start to finish
- ❖ Include process roles and tasks
- ❖ Avoid partial process documentation
- ❖ Keep the process documentation flexible and up to date
- ❖ Include special circumstances / options when possible
- ❖ Make it an employee standard practice to review process documentation
- ❖ Use easy to understand symbols and pictures.

Example: Workflow Chart – Process Map – Linear Outline; Value Stream Mapping.

JOB AIDS

What: Anything that assists people in applying knowledge to complete tasks as they do them. Knowledge can be stored in the job aid and accessed through low-tech methods by performers when the need arises.

Why:

- ❖ Little or no additional training required to the perform task
- ❖ Can be easily accessible to users
- ❖ Can be used by a multitude of users

When:

- ❖ A standardized process exists
- ❖ Process may be performed periodically

How: Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop step-by-step instructions.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Keep job aids current
- ❖ May be used as is and require little or no additional explanation.

Example: Checklist – Desk Manual – Process Map – Guide – Instructional Sign

JOB ROTATION

What: A formal program in which a person exchanges job responsibilities with another employee for the purpose of cross-training and gaining more knowledge of the organization. It is designed to develop an individual's knowledge base to prepare him or her for positions of increasing responsibility and scope.

Why:

- ❖ Can develop a pool of qualified applicants for positions of increasing responsibility and scope
- ❖ Decreases the impact of "brain drain" when individuals leave key positions

When:

- ❖ Career development requires knowledge and experience in several different areas or programs
- ❖ On the job experience is the most effective method of knowledge transfer

How: Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop a formal program that assures individuals will experience full variety of identified knowledge and tasks. Clarify requirements for successful completion of program.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Clearly define requirements for acceptance and successful completion
- ❖ Clearly communicate the program purpose and goals to all potential participants
- ❖ Program should be available to all who qualify for acceptance

Example: Areas that may use a job rotation program include: HR management team; agency management teams; financial operations, technical areas, computer programming positions.

JOB SHADOWING

What: A less experienced employee is paired with another employee with the desired skills or position to transfer knowledge. Information and knowledge is shared (and perhaps hands-on practice) in dealing with everyday problems in addition to the most difficult situations he/she has faced on the job.

Why:

- ❖ Provides “real life” exposure to the job
- ❖ Could be offered to several individuals; expanding the organization’s overall knowledge
- ❖ Can be helpful in succession and workforce planning efforts

When:

- ❖ To allow opportunity for individual(s) to learn about a particular occupation
- ❖ Exposure to the job itself can enhance knowledge transfer, particularly with effective coaching

How: Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Identify veteran performer who possesses competency in coaching and knowledge transfer. Identify individual(s) who will shadow veteran performer. Establish timeline and knowledge transfer goals.

Dos & Don’ts:

- ❖ Should not be used as a comprehensive on-the-job training program
- ❖ Clarify roles and expectations up front
- ❖ Avoid pairing less-experienced performers with slightly more experienced performers
- ❖ Use debriefing sessions for coaching opportunities
- ❖ Discuss educational requirements; the career ladder for the job and related positions

Example: Attending strategic planning meetings with veteran performer; observing veteran performer for a day on the job.

MENTORING

What: An organizationally-sponsored program that pairs an employee with a more experienced employee or manager to receive guidance and advice on career development. Mentors offer advice in a situation on what to do, how to do it and why it is worth doing.

Why:

- ❖ Customized training for specific situations and developmental needs
- ❖ Effective method for transferring organizational culture information
- ❖ Establishes reliable experienced contact outside supervisory chain
- ❖ Develops higher level of proficiency

When:

- ❖ Skill set(s) to be developed is best learned through one-on-one transfer
- ❖ New employee or employee new to work level (e.g., entry level professional, manager, etc.) has specific skill set gap and/or the need to quickly and effectively have knowledge of organizational culture and norms

How:

Determine what knowledge or competency needs to be mastered. Identify experienced mentor with coaching and knowledge transfer skills. Allow mentor and mentee to establish mentoring contract.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Participation in mentoring program should be voluntary, for both the mentor and the mentee
- ❖ Identify and agree upon the specific skill set or competency to be developed.
- ❖ The mentee's supervisor should not be involved in the mentoring program, beyond receiving reports from mentor
- ❖ Mentor and mentee should respect confidentiality of their mentoring sessions

Example: Mentor advises mentee on knowledge and skills required for a job in another area. Mentor guides mentee in the job application process.

ON-LINE LEARNING

What: The combination of artificial intelligence, real-time learning methods, and a computer for the purpose of transferring knowledge and information. As a user encounters a problem, he or she can access all organizational policies and procedures through the referencing system, gain advice from past experience from the expert system, and even learn in real time using the training component.

Why:

- ❖ Same information provided to everyone
- ❖ Available 24/7
- ❖ Can be used by multitude of users

When:

- ❖ Policies, procedures, problems, solutions and training are documented and can be combined into one system
- ❖ Organization is wide-spread and distance learning is more efficient than in-person training

How: Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Document knowledge and collaborate with programming experts to create system.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Should address a broad range of issues and questions
- ❖ Should relate directly to the problem being resolved
- ❖ Offer additional resources options

Example: Know Your State Government course and DEL.

ON THE JOB TRAINING (OJT)

What: Instruction that takes place on the actual job site with task accomplishment as part of the process. It involves learning skills and applying knowledge in a hands-on and on-the-job manner following or part of a defined structured learning process.

Why:

- ❖ Provides less experienced performer, or trainee, with real-job experience
- ❖ Allows work of agency to be accomplished during training

When

- ❖ Tasks have developed procedures and aids for teaching
- ❖ Real-life experience needs to be developed

How: Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop step-by-step instructions. Identify trainer. Establish learning objectives and timeline for completion.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Use good performers who can also teach and coach
- ❖ Provide training and resources for those coaching
- ❖ Analyze the job, breaking into tasks, and develop procedures and aids for teaching
- ❖ Describe, Describe and Demonstrate, Trainee performs, Trainee describes and performs, Trainee practices
- ❖ Provide trainee with resources to go for help
- ❖ Follow-up with trainee
- ❖ Avoid assumptions about the depth, level and scope of knowledge already possessed by the trainee

Example: Data entry – Writing monthly status report – Processing employee payroll

RETIREEES

What: Past employees that return to work to provide the organization with knowledge and expertise, train less experienced staff, or share specialized knowledge.

Why:

- ❖ Specialized knowledge may be accessed from a readily recognized and available source

When:

- ❖ Knowledge is mission critical
- ❖ Retiree is immediate source of knowledge

How: Determine what knowledge employees need to know. Identify the retiree who possesses the knowledge, coaching and knowledge transfer skills and is willing and available to return to work.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Allow time for various knowledge transfer practices to be implemented in the agency
- ❖ Organization should be able to perform critical tasks after knowledge transfer
- ❖ Retiree on retainer should not continue to be sole source of knowledge

Example: Retiree provides: training program on specific program procedures; advice and consultation during special situations; written trouble shooting guide for future performers.

WIKIS

What: A collaborative website comprised of a collective work of many that allows individuals to edit, delete, and modify context.

Why:

- ❖ Facilitates collaboration between individuals on documents, implement work flow, and share information.

When:

- ❖ Knowledge is mission critical
- ❖ Participants do not work in close proximity to one another
- ❖ Collaboration on documents is critical
- ❖ Input is sought by many individuals for the purpose of information sharing

How: Determine what type of site will meet your needs (i.e. Microsoft *Sharepoint*). Work with administration and IT to obtain approvals for purchase.

Dos & Don'ts:

- ❖ Get the necessary approvals
- ❖ Set up the site and assign an administrator of the site
- ❖ Provide team members access to the site
- ❖ Work with IT to get all participants training on using the site
- ❖ Post documents to the site

Example: You have a process improvement team that is working on developing a new procedure. The team meets frequently to review the flowcharts and provide input for changes. The team members work in different locations throughout the state. The team gets approval to use *Sharepoint* as a wiki site. The flowchart and other documents are posted to the site where all team members can edit, comment and update the documents prior to the meeting. This allows the team to meet less frequently and be more efficient in their meetings.