

## Roundtable "Takeaways"

The information revolution prompts a reassessment of how work is done. In other words, the principles of "scientific management" must, at least, be challenged in light of the shift from production to knowledge management. The purpose of this Roundtable, hosted by ARDEC, was to share thoughts and experiences on this important topic and consider its implications on the organization and the people who work in this changing environment. The presentations were very complete and the takeaways, which follow, are merely highlights.

Professor Joe Morabito, Stevens, shared some views (based on studies being done jointly with Professor Ira Sack, also of Stevens) on the impact of knowledge management on organizations.

- The differences between data, information and knowledge were highlighted. Knowledge, defined as justified true beliefs, and data (quantified states of the world), together lead to information: data endowed with relevance and purpose. Knowledge and data are characterized by meaning and context.
- The identification of the "information requirements" of a knowledge-creating process was addressed.
- The distinction was drawn between early and late "knowledge binding".
- Early knowledge binding is a highly centralized, top-down process, in which knowledge is applied early in the process by relatively few people with the necessary authority or expertise and then disseminated to operating management.
- Late knowledge binding is characterized by the application of knowledge late in the process, by more people (decentralized decision-making).
- It is critical to recognize the changes required in the new culture where employees are the principle assets of the organization.

Jim Biscardi, ARDEC, shared Picatinny's strategic programs on knowledge management

- Knowledge management was defined as the capture, retention, replay, sharing across the enterprise of experience in order to make decision-making more reliable, rapid, less costly and less risky.
- Objective is to select and integrate the "best-of-breed" systems from an integrated data environment.
- Knowledge resides in the human, not the collection of information.
- Idea is to shift traditional emphasis of systems toward systems that support.
- ARDEC's Web-enabled Knowledge Base was described.
- Key ingredients include simple access, self-motivated sharing, rapid and unfiltered communication, availability, consistency and critical self-awareness.

Knowledge management is personal – managers need greater appreciation for their intangible human assets.

Leo Strecker, BestFoods, discussed their version of knowledge management, termed Accelerated Shared Learning

- Several definitions were given, consistent with those offered by Joe Morabito.
- "Knowledge is the capability and capacity of individuals and organizations to integrate information with context, experience, interpretation and reflection which is applied to decisions and actions" (Sushil Bhalla, SKB Associates).
- "Knowledge management is the strategic application of collective company knowledge and know-how to build profits and market share" (Amy Zuckerman and Hal Buell, Quality Progress, June 1998).
- What is new is the recognition of the business value of knowledge and, therefore, the focus on developing processes to encourage and facilitate sharing.
- Numerous factors contribute to the need for Accelerated Shared Learning, including frequent reorganizations, cross-functional business opportunities, mergers and acquisitions, and need to leverage intellectual property.
- Requirements for Accelerated Shared Learning are culture, people, process and technology. These elements, as applied in the BestFoods Accelerated Shared Learning process, were discussed in detail and are summarized in the presentation vu-graphs.
- In summary: the critical problem for organizations is to create shared, persistent knowledge, and the key to success is to promote collaboration. The overall recommendation offered by BestFoods is to promote the building of communities of practice and to create incentives for knowledge sharing

Comments on Newsletter?

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