

Talent Development 17 Knowledge Management

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Section 2.5 in the CPTD Certification program for ATD is Knowledge Management. Section B reads, “Skill in designing and implementing knowledge management strategy.”

For any organization to be successful in the long term, there needs to be an effective strategy to retain the knowledge that makes up the intangible assets of the company. The ebb and flow of people into and out of the organization make it imperative that the process knowledge of how things get done be organized and accessible.

Standard Operating Procedures

Gone are the days when a set of SOPs for the organization were maintained in current shape by an administrative group. Those books became extinct several decades ago. In most organizations, the content knowledge of procedures exists in some cloud-based system where people can access the knowledge and keep it current.

Security has always been a major concern when archiving organizational knowledge. The best approach is to have layers of information from readily available to the public to highly classified trade secrets. Each layer needs to have a special control relative to who can access and suitable passwords (normally two levels) to keep private information from getting out and hackers from getting in.

Management and Leadership Knowledge

I spend my time working with the leaders of companies in all different industries helping them sharpen their leadership skills. I have a listing of about 100 topic areas where I train supervisors, managers, and leaders. I let them select the areas of most benefit to them and then design custom training specifically tailored for their situation.

Over the years, I have found three areas where there is the most frequent need for training:

1. Building, maintaining, and repairing Trust
2. Holding people accountable in a principle-centered way
3. Reducing conflict between people in the organization.

Training Patterns

Normally, I split up the training into half day events. A typical application will have me work with a group of managers from 3-6 sessions to cover the materials of highest interest to them.

I have found that the half-life of information shared in a training session is about one week. That means that after one week, roughly half of the training benefits will be forgotten in the hubbub of daily activity.

Method to S-T-R-E-T-C-H out the content

What I do to improve the knowledge retention of my content is to follow up the half day (in person or virtual) training sessions with 30 days of very short and very professional videos of the content served up in a unique format.

To give you the idea of what these videos look like, here is a sample of one of them. This one is on the importance of trust.

By having the content metered out in these short bursts over a period of a month following the initial training, I get significantly higher retention of the tools I am teaching. In each video I provide the main point of the learning, then I describe why it is important to remember, finally I give an exercise for the person to do that day in order to use the content immediately.

By refreshing the content over a longer period of time, and by having the leaders actually do something with the content each day, they get significantly more out of the training.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*, and *Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.



