

Title of Case:

Using social software to engage staff and keep content current.

Presenter's Name, Position and Organisation:

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The Background and Purpose of the KM Effort in the Case

The main objectives are to

- ensure that employees know roles, responsibilities, issues, problems, procedures, relating to their job and living in Singapore.
- ensure that the descriptions of roles, responsibilities, issues, problems, procedures, are up to date
- ensure that there is only one documented version of this information in one place
- ensure that employees know who to ask for this information and are not afraid to ask

Prior to our new approach, staff

- felt frustrated and anxious at their lack of understanding
- didn't know who to ask or were afraid to ask
- referred to multiple MSWord documents (poor version control)

What to do

1. Identify the need.
2. Gather a small group of 'owners': mostly senior staff and other 'people who know'. Explain why they are going to use a wiki. Make one of them the wiki administrator. Ask them to transfer existing documents to the wiki. Provide plenty of shoulder-to-shoulder support at this stage. Explain that once they have finished, they will pass their ownership to new staff as part of an 'induction activity'.
3. The 'induction activity' requires new staff to make changes to the wiki document for content which they consider to be: out-of-date, unclear, incomplete, incorrect, or long-winded. They do this by checking with other 'people who know' (identified in the document), by meeting and talking with them. The inductees listen and make the necessary changes to the wiki document.
4. The document should be reviewed six monthly or annually by senior staff/all staff

Lessons Learned

What hurdles or barriers do you face?

- Ownership. Managers find it hard to let go. They start off being keen content owners, but become reluctant to pass ownership onto new staff later on. Managers then fail to keep the content up to date.
- Delegation. When they see that they won't have time to keep the content up to date, they delegate the job to subordinates who don't know enough about the content and end up asking new staff.
- The wiki software is only a tool. Tools don't solve problems, people do. The need for shoulder-to-shoulder work is essential to the success of the wiki. Unfortunately, some people often expect the tool as the solution and neglect the work people need to do.

Impact and Benefits

- What were the business benefits of your KM effort?
 - Cost down – new staff do the work (not senior staff)
 - Quality up – All staff kept up to date on current practices
 - Risk down – content is updated regularly

One of the main benefits is that the activity of talking to the 'people who know' establishes understanding of job roles and helps establish relationships and channels of communication.