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Arthur Shelley (2009) *Being a Successful Knowledge Leader* What knowledge practitioners need to know to make a difference. ARK Publishing

Chapter 2 Capability methods and support toolkits:

Section: Guideline for Knowledge Champions, Performance Measures pp79-83

The article explores how to relate intangible outcomes to Key Performance Indicators so that the benefits of knowledge initiatives can be translated into the language of management decision-makers (Financese, Productivityese, efficiency and effectiveness etc). Such alignment and translation enable them to visualise the intangibles in tangible ways and therefore engage with the value KM initiative create and justify why they benefit the organisation and assist delivery of strategic goals.

Performance Measures (*Qualitative outcomes measures for Knowledge Champions*)

Success in this role can be reflected through a range of outcomes, some directly attributable to activities of the KC and some indirectly through their influencing activities of others. However, a range of qualitative and quantitative performance measures can be applied which collectively build a total picture of how well the KC fulfils their role and the value they create through knowledge sharing. Not all of these measures should be applied to each individual. It is better to select those most relevant considering how a particular individual can best contribute and the opportunities they can access or influence.

It is important to differentiate between the *outputs* and the *outcomes* when assessing performance. Objectives are often written as outputs, which are object or task oriented, because they are easier to measure and easier to attribute to one person. This enables the line manager to be objective and fair in their assessment. However, it does not always measure the ultimate desired outcome which drives the benefits.

For example, a project can be delivered on time and budget, but be rejected by the stakeholders because they do not understand it. The project manager may work completely independently of the stakeholders and technically deliver everything asked of them, but not achieve the benefits which justified the project. In this case a measure based on the desired outcomes would have been more effective, even though it may be harder to achieve and measure. An outcome-aligned measure applies pressure to engage others in delivering the benefits. Outcomes drive cultural development, behavioural change and continuous improvement, which ultimately determine the real success or failure of a project or program.

When desired outcomes are not achieved there should be constructive and open discussions to determine why this was the case. Well facilitated, these conversations increase our understanding of ourselves, the team dynamics and the organisation. A “failure” can be a great learning opportunity and a situation which generates new knowledge or changed directions, but only if it is managed constructively and openly.

Selected measures should be agreed with the KC’s line manager and form part of their annual performance review process. Performance assessment should reflect what the KC can reasonably achieve, but still reflect the desired outcome as well as the specific task. It is

important to recognise the primary reason for the assessment is to acknowledge the importance of knowledge related activities in the work of the individual, NOT to punish them for non-delivery of these. Listing performance measures for knowledge activities justifies them as a critical component of the work and therefore something that cannot be treated as a low priority. Collectively these measures justify the role of knowledge champion as a related set of tasks and outcomes which positively contribute to the overall performance of the organisation. Some generic examples of possible measures for knowledge champions are included in the table below. Note the relationships between the outcomes, actions and themes. These will vary with individuals and should be adjusted to be specific enough to be reliably assessed through qualitative (surveys, opinion polls, interviews, quality assessment etc.) or quantitative measures (counts of publications or outputs, percentage milestones or dates met, number of people involved or impacted, number of issues resolved or avoided, risks mitigated etc.).

Table 3: Examples of the relationship between outcomes, actions and measures for knowledge based activities.

Potential Knowledge Champion Performance Assessment Criteria		
Outcomes	Actions	Basis of Measures*
Improved performance from collaboration and knowledge sharing.	Identify and work with appropriate parties to bring in new ideas and expertise. Drive existing projects and new ideas to fruition. Apply resourceful problem-solving tools and explore risks. Discover, develop, share and implement ideas which increase revenue growth or improve efficiencies and return on investment.	Number of new ideas introduced to team. Number of successful knowledge based projects. Number of success stories. Financial value of benefits. Number of local ideas shared with others Times asked for help
Greater productivity through wider and better connected networks and communities.	Arrange face to face and virtual events to enable members to build relationships and share ideas. Provide agenda and relevant reading materials before all meetings and timely follow up agreed actions.	Number of events Number of participants New members Success stories delivered Project outcomes Commitments delivered Value from actions Times assisted by others
Enhanced innovation through generation of new value creating opportunities.	Track industry trends and other external information sources and anticipate implications for the organisation. Stimulate actions and keep interested parties informed of decisions and progress.	New ideas introduced Ideas implemented and their value Turnover of content on shared sites Number of contributions to discussion forums Number of shared documents
Knowledge leadership motivated by demonstrating the	Motivate others to share by leading the way. Adjust personal style to match others	Actions motivated because of interactions Number of people in your

<p>desired behaviours yourself and increasing awareness of knowledge sharing and collaborative activities.</p>	<p>to build identity and relationship. Be approachable, relate to others in a straightforward, personal and open way. Publish communications which engage others to become involved. Tell success stories to highlight benefits. Encourage peers and direct reports to participate in knowledge sharing or knowledge initiatives.</p>	<p>personal network Number of people you help regularly 360 Degree feedback Number of publications Readership of publications Feedback (solicited and unsolicited)</p>
<p>Strategically aligned outputs reflected as bigger, better, faster initiatives through development of individual, team and organisational capabilities.</p>	<p>Create and deliver capability development programs based on personal development needs and business priorities. Build and maintain effective team relationships. Encourage leaders to publicly recognise collaborative successes and acknowledge personal contributions. Inspire colleagues to take actions which add value and highlight personal satisfaction amongst team members.</p>	<p>Anecdotal evidence of benefits from capability development programs Strength of networks between people attending same programs. Contributions to workshops, conferences review meetings and the knowledge management system</p>
<p>Culturally diverse environment which attracts and retains talent to reduce knowledge loss and build the leaders of the future.</p>	<p>Foster a culture which acts ethically and demonstrates strong corporate and social responsibilities. Provide structured development plans and career paths for high potential individuals and others. Build a performance appraisal process which acknowledges and rewards collaborative behaviours and knowledge sharing. Provide induction and ongoing development which addresses social development, diversity and inclusion of new ideas. Develop mentoring and coaching programs using internal staff to grow employees to fulfil long-term goals. Identify capability gaps and recruiting people with the appropriate knowledge. Develop team members by delegating responsibility and accountability when appropriate.</p>	<p>Talent turnover Speed of induction (to productivity). Degree new employees networked after x weeks. Time taken for all administrative and technical logistics to be in place for new employee. Number of people who positively rate the performance appraisal process. Percentage of employees with an internal mentor Number of coaches in senior management roles. Percentage of retiring employees who have to be contracted back to consult on critical knowledge.</p>
<p>Engaged workforce from feeling part of the organisation and</p>	<p>Engage sponsors, network members and other colleagues with a sense of belonging by inclusion in knowledge</p>	<p>Level of participation across all levels of the organisation</p>

identifying with the business values	<p>sharing activities</p> <p>Invite individuals to participate in a formal manner through speaking opportunities, panel discussions and on-line contributions.</p>	<p>Quality of debates and feedback around important issues</p> <p>Climate surveys</p> <p>Informal feedback and workplace stories</p> <p>Narrative analysis</p>
<p>Increased competitive advantage by embedding knowledge principles into normal operations.</p>	<p>Capture, share and apply learnings from own organisation and others. Subscribe to market research services, industry alerts, external knowledge sharing forums and other publications.</p> <p>Reflect on the knowledge exchange and information sources. Use insights to enhance decision making and proactively act, rather than react to the environment.</p>	<p>Degree to which knowledge based principles are part of other processes.</p> <p>Assess benefits derived from subscription services.</p> <p>Percentage of people acting on external advice.</p> <p>Market share improvements derived from more informed decisions.</p> <p>Number of times you discover another part of the organisation has already resolved the issue at hand.</p>
<p>Enhanced business continuity capability through better critical knowledge transfer</p>	<p>Develop an inventory of business critical knowledge to maintain awareness and risks.</p> <p>List knowledge at risk or where it is tacit and held in an individual or small number of employees.</p> <p>Understand hubs and bridges in organisational networks and impacts of losing these.</p> <p>Documented succession plan for subject matter experts.</p>	<p>Percentage of critical knowledge listed or recorded.</p> <p>Completeness of list of where critical tacit knowledge is held that cannot be recorded.</p> <p>Programs in place to transfer critical tacit knowledge to other employees.</p>
<p>Reduced risks through better insights and decision making.</p>	<p>Manage transfer of critical knowledge, especially tacit subject matter expertise.</p> <p>Deploy parallel thinking and other decision making tools.</p> <p>Challenge ideas and concepts across networks and communities to minimise.</p>	<p>Risks neutralised or mitigated.</p> <p>Problems avoided through constructive dialogues and sharing.</p>

* Measures need to be in SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant and Time-bound) to optimise their effect and provide clarity to all parties. These examples require the specific number, percentage, date, time etc. of the measures to be added which are relevant to the situation for an individual knowledge champion.