

Knowledge Management Transfer Strategies (Descriptions/Examples)

Introduction The following strategy **descriptions** and **examples** are suggested best practice methods to capture, record and manage institutional knowledge and experience of staff in key positions or functions. When feasible and appropriate, combine strategies to best transfer and share knowledge.

Archived Material **Description:** A historical record or collection of critical operational data held by an individual or organization that must be integrated into other delivery methods to ensure knowledge is shared.

Examples:

- **Individuals** - May include letters, memos, briefing papers, photographs, computer files, scrapbooks, records or journals created/collected by the individual (regardless of media or format).
 - **Organization** - May contain other types of records (stored/maintained in electronic database or storage facility) such as administrative files, business records, memos, official correspondence and meeting minutes.
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Benchmarking **Description:** A process to measure the effectiveness of internal knowledge against external sources that perform and capture information on the same work. The desired outcome is to identify, understand and adapt best practices from external sources and modify internal methods accordingly.

Example: Self-explanatory (contact another DGS office or State department that performs the same work to ascertain best practice information). The State of California shares best practices submitted by other State agencies for some categories via the following Wiki (<http://bestpractices.library.ca.gov/>).

Better, Faster, Cheaper Process™ **Description:** Concept developed by Ken Miller, President of the Change and Innovation Agency. The objective is to “cut as much time from process as possible” to create a more efficient organization. This process contains four actions: (1) observe the process, (2) flowchart the process, (3) measure process performance, and (4) improve the process. A recommendation when selecting workgroup members is to have a collaboration of subject matter experts (SMEs) and non-SMEs. This creates a great opportunity for potential successors to familiarize themselves in areas where they have little to no knowledge. For questions or assistance in this process, contact the DGS Office of Strategic Planning, Policy and Research at (916) 376-5028.

Real Example: In 2009, the DGS Governance Council formed the Human Resources Improvement Team using the “Better, Faster, Cheaper” process to improve DGS’ personnel hiring process.

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Boot Camp

Description (Specific Topic): A subject matter expert (SME) conducts a training session or sessions on a specific topic. Only one topic is covered and is a relatively short session (no longer than 4 hours). The topic may be an application or a unique aspect of it (e.g., a new approach to records management, a review or reconsideration of constructive intervention, a hands-on training to use or maintain a specific piece of equipment, etc.). The focus is on one topic only; and if something else arises during the session, it will be set aside for the SME to conduct future training sessions.

Description (Multiple Topics): For offices with multiple areas of operations, the Boot Camp can consist of training modules designed for knowledge that is applicable to: (1) all operational areas; and/or (2) specific or limited operational areas. User guides and mentor programs may be incorporated into these modules. New and existing staff shall go through sequences of training sessions depending on their assignments.

Real Example (blend of singular/multiple topics): The DGS Building and Property Management Branch uses this strategy to combine knowledge transfer and staff development efforts for a number of classifications and functions.

Briefing Paper

Description: Documented information (i.e., background, status and general input) from an individual on an issue, project or assignment they completed or have in process at the time they vacate a position.

Example (template attached): The document is included as an attached template entitled “*Briefing Paper*” for use on an individual staff basis to provide information on a single issue, assignment or project.

Coaching/ Mentoring Programs

Description: These programs are organizationally sponsored relationships that focus on coaching or mentoring employees without a performance management or supervisory component.

Example: Self-explanatory

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Communities of Practice

Description: A group of individuals sharing a common working practice, though not a part of a formally constituted work team. They cut across organizational boundaries to enable fast acquisitions of knowledge.

Example: The Personnel Advisory Communications Team (PACT) is an example of an internal Community of Practice (COP). The Office of Human Resources (OHR) representatives and Personnel Liaisons come together once a month to identify human resources issues of mutual concern and recommend solutions in a timely and effective manner.

The State Recruiter's Roundtable (SRRT) is an example of an external COP as it is a place where recruitment officers and analysts come together from various agencies throughout the State. They discuss and share issues, concerns, solutions, current practices, etc. Occasionally there are guest speakers from public and/or private entities who present specific recruitment topics to the group. Continual COP practices continue through periodic email communications between SRRT members and ongoing activity via a dedicated SRRT Wiki website.

Core Competencies Inventory

Description: A compilation of core competencies needed to complete a project, task, or assignment for a position. Also include an adjoining list of individuals who currently possess some (or all) of those competencies. This may be used to identify potential candidates for upcoming vacancies and/or supplement other knowledge transfer efforts.

The State of California provides additional resources on competencies that can be found at the following website: <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/hr-modernization/main.htm>.

Example (template attached): The attachment entitled "*Core Competencies Inventory Matrix*" is a template for use on a per classification basis.

Critical Incident Reviews

Description: A critical incident is an identifiable event that results in either a very negative or positive impact on a process, deliverable or relationship. An individual, work team, task force or project team conducts the review to capture best practices, identify root causes and identify remedies.

Example (template attached): The attached template entitled "*Critical Incident Reviews*" is provided to document the described information.

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Cross Training (Position Backup)

Description: The training of one employee to do another's work. Such training creates a backup system in the event where an employee becomes unavailable or the position becomes vacant. The backup assumes that role thus ensuring operations continue and program delays are minimized. Additionally, employees benefit from this as their skill sets are enhanced.

Example: Employee (A) is responsible for payroll while Employee (B) is responsible for accounts receivable/payable. To cross train these employees, have them take turns being the trainer. They can teach each other their procedures, approaches, and methodologies to complete those responsibilities. Another option is to have a supervisor conduct the training.

Desk Manuals

Description: A compilation of information for new employees and existing staff that serves as a guide to perform the work.

Example: A binder that contains contact information, important dates, instructions on completing tasks, job aids, etc. Another example includes a procedure toolkit (refer to the block entitled “*Procedure Toolkits*”).

Developmental Guides

Description: Provides information and resources on how to develop and improve staff performance and helps prepare staff for transition into other positions. These guides can also assist in establishing a plan to develop competencies needed to function effectively within a position.

Real Example: Department of Personnel Administration (DPA) developed the following guides:

- Leadership Competency Development Guides
(<http://www.dpa.ca.gov/hr-modernization/main.htm>)
 - How to Prepare to be a First Level Supervisor
(<http://www.dpa.ca.gov/hr-modernization/tools/learning-training/main.htm>)
 - How to Prepare to be an Analyst
(<http://www.dpa.ca.gov/hr-modernization/tools/learning-training/main.htm>)
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Document Repositories

Description: These are a collection of textual resources that can be retrieved, viewed and interpreted. Document repositories add navigation and categorization to shared information.

Example: A subject file or share drive subdirectory assessable to all staff that stores all “like” documents (e.g., Administrative Bulletins, Policy Memos, etc.) or “topic specific” documents (e.g., everything relative to a specific project, issue, task, etc.). In turn, a knowledge inventory (e.g., table of contents, etc.) is created to identify the stored information therein.

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Expert Interviews

Description: Expert interviews are sessions where one or more people (who are considered experts in a particular subject, program, process, policy, etc.) meet with others to share their knowledge. The format of the sessions can range from an informal one-on-one meeting to a larger group session with a panel of experts. Sessions can be audio or videotaped or even transcribed if the subject is highly technical. The experts can come from within an organization or from an outside source.

Example: DGS' Office of Human Resources (OHR) consults with subject matter experts (SMEs) on personnel related projects (i.e., job analyses, exam developments, etc.) to obtain their expertise and opinions on a variety of classifications within the department.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Description: A document (or other communication tool) that provides answers to frequently asked questions relative to operational issues, information, processes or procedures. Using the FAQ format is a valuable method to include whenever feasible with other knowledge transfer strategies.

Example: Self-explanatory (pose the question or state the issue and provide the response)

Help Desk Formats

Description (Traditional Help Desks): This format consists of designating employees as the point of contact for an operation's staff and/or customer base to resolve issues and provide information. Rotating employees through a help desk format facilitates multiple goals (i.e., train staff, transfer knowledge, and track/control workload, etc.).

Examples (Actual DGS Help Desks):

- Business Services Office - "BSO Services" @ BSO.services@dgs.ca.gov
- Office of Technology Resources - "OTR Call Center" @ OTRCallCenter@dgs.ca.gov

Description (Virtual Help Desks): This DPA format provides reference and training electronically for current or prospective employees in specific classifications. Also, it contains core information needed to be successful in a specific classification.

Examples (Actual DPA Virtual Help Desks):

- Analyst Virtual Help Desk - <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/training/analyst-virtual-help-desk.htm>
 - Managers and Supervisors Virtual Help Desk - <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/training/virtual-help-desk-for-supervisors-and-managers/main.htm>
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Internships

Description: These are formal arrangements where a person gains practical experience or knowledge by working for a prescribed period of time under the supervision of more experienced workers. Participants are given the opportunity to gain foundational and institutional knowledge through “hands-on” work experience in their field of study.

This strategy provides structured means for passing on specific knowledge and skills required for success in a particular job or profession. Since internships take place at an actual job site, they provide ready access to people who are experienced in the job and to hands-on learning opportunities. An intern could facilitate an organization’s KTM efforts via assignments dedicated specifically to completing KTM processes.

Examples: The DGS provides internship opportunities by employing Executive Fellows, Graduate Student Assistants, Student Assistants and Youth Aids.

IT solutions (Informal)

Description: Informal IT solutions include social networking technologies used to promote the sharing of knowledge and expertise among employees.

Examples:

- WEB LOGS or BLOGS – Web sites to post content including messages and images. Readers can respond to postings in the form of a threaded discussion.*
- WIKIS – Web site that is interactive and allows multiple users to author the same content while tracking changes. *
- PODCASTS – Audio or video files created for download onto portable digital media players (e.g., iPods, MP 3 players, etc.)

* Utilization necessitates notice to the DGS Information Security Office and Office of Technology Resources to address IT security and feasibility issues.

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Job Aids

Description: A job aid can take many forms, but basically it is a document that has information or instruction on how to perform a task. It guides the user to do the task correctly and is used while performing the task, when the person needs to know the procedure. A job aid can be as simple as a sticker on an answering machine that describes how to access messages.

Example: Types of job aids may include:

- Procedures manual
 - Step-by-step narratives
 - Worksheets sequencing a process
 - Checklists (planning or evaluating)
 - Flow charts
 - Reference resources (e.g., parts catalog or telephone listing, etc.)
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Job Rotation

Description: An employee is moved or rotated through a schedule of assignments designed to give him/her extensive exposure to the entire operation. In addition to KTM, a job rotation strengthens an organization by:

1. Identifying potential employees for higher positions
2. Encouraging employee retention
3. Promoting internal career growth

Example: The DGS Office of Fiscal Services rotates employees in their Service Revolving Fund Section on an annual basis. A new employee would typically start out in the Payments Unit, then progress towards other units (i.e., General Ledgers, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, etc.).

Job Shadowing

Description: A less-experienced staff performer partners with an effective and veteran staff performer on-the-job to facilitate knowledge transfer.

Example: Self-explanatory

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Knowledge Events

Description: A knowledge event is the sharing of information through venues such as fairs, meetings, and conferences. Events are designed to showcase and share information about an organization or a topic. These events can be organized in many ways using speakers, demonstrations or booths displaying information of interest to attendees.

Examples:

- ❶ Have a knowledge fair to display the various operations, services, effective processes and completed projects within each section/unit of the office. A representative can be available to answer questions or clarify information. Department staff and client agencies would be invited to attend as the information may directly affect them.
- ❷ An organization can set up a meeting comprised of individuals with similar interests to discuss and identify the available knowledge sharing practices. Participants can brainstorm and suggest ideas in a collaborative environment as to expand their current inventory of knowledge.
- ❸ The Department of Personnel Administration and State Personnel Board held a Workforce Planning Conference and provided 90-minute workshops on a variety of topics (i.e., data collection, workforce analysis, best practices, competency based selection, etc.) pertaining to workforce planning. There were instructors and presenters from private and public entities.

Knowledge Maps & Inventories

Description: A catalog of information or knowledge that exists in an organization and identifies its location. It references the information but doesn't contain it.

Examples (maps):

- **Staff Resource Directory** – Create a list of people with expert knowledge who can be contacted by others in need of the knowledge.
- **IT generated reports/programs** - When creating an IT report or program, write the program language and print a copy of the end report as a sample.

Examples (inventory):

- **Catalog files** – Create a list to identify subject data stored within a share drive, subject files or file room.
- **Information binder** – Create a binder of the organization's reports or other pertinent information indicating where the master or current data is stored and/or instructions to update content.

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Learning Academies

Description: These are formally structured programs designed to assess, educate, train and develop staff through the use of various techniques. Typically, these are conducted within a classroom setting but may vary depending on available resources and workforce needs.

Examples:

- **Division Learning Academy (Process Flow Chart Attached)** – Any division within DGS may develop their own academy in an effort to maximize the skills and knowledge of their workforce. The attached flowchart entitled “*Learning Academy Process Flow Chart*” provides the necessary steps and tools to create and customize a division specific learning academy. For academy development assistance, contact the DGS Training Unit (within Administration Division, Office of Human Resources).
- **Certification Programs***– These are programs geared towards a specific type of classification (e.g., managers/supervisors, analysts, entry level support staff, etc.) to increase staff’s ability to function effectively at their current level and/or develop skills and knowledge for future promotion.
- **Leadership Development Program*** – A program for individuals who set the vision and direction for the department. Participants include senior leaders (i.e., executives, upper level managers, etc.).

(***Note:** Contact the DGS Training Unit for information on the status of programs in process or completion.)

Learning Games

Description: A game is a type of structured learning activity used to make learning fun. It can provide a review of material that has been presented to strengthen the learning or evaluate how much learning has occurred. Games can also be used to:

- Help people prepare for learning by testing current levels of knowledge.
- Apply a newly learned skill.
- Learn as they play the game.
- Practice what has been presented to reinforce the learning.

Example: Create a “quiz show” format into structure in-house training that integrates knowledge (e.g., Jeopardy or Family Feud, etc.)

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Lessons Learned Debriefings

Description: Session(s) conducted at the completion of a project or activity, or at strategic points during a project or work team's ongoing work, where members of the team or group evaluate the process used and the results. They identify what was done right and what could be done better the next time. Results can be shared and used in future projects or work activities.

Example (template attached): The attached template entitled "*Lessons Learned Debriefing*" is provided to document the described information.

Real Example: The Real Estate Services Division (RES D) uses "Knowledge Base," an intranet web-based application, as part of their lessons learned process. This application allows them to collect, validate, store, distribute, and reuse experiences.

Additional information on RES D's Knowledge Base application can be found on the intranet at - <http://resd.dgs.ca.gov/knowledgebase/default.htm>.

Organizational/ Future Scenario Storytelling

Description: Storytelling uses anecdotal examples to illustrate a point and effectively transfer knowledge. There are two types:

- Organizational stories (business anecdotes) are narratives of management or employee actions, employee interactions, or other intra-organizational events that are communicated within the organization (either formally or informally).
- Future scenarios create a future vision for the enterprise that describes how life will be different once a particular initiative, change, etc. is fully implemented. These provide a qualitative way of describing the value of the initiative even before it starts.

Example: During a DGS Administration Division all staff meeting, the executive team illustrated the department's initiative of working as "One Enterprise" by sharing the "Canoe Theory" with staff. With the use of vivid descriptions and metaphors, this strategy engrained into staff the message of how a canoe (DGS) has a destination (DGS mission) and that its passengers (staff) must work towards the same direction to reach that destination.

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Procedure Toolkits

Description: A toolkit defines roles, responsibilities and procedures for multiple users who have different roles and/or work in different offices that accomplish the same goals or perform the same work.

Examples (DGS Toolkits) – All of the following toolkits are located on the DGS intranet @ <http://www.ohr.dgs.ca.gov/Toolkits/default.htm>

- Attendance Clerk Toolkit
 - Personnel Liaison Toolkit
 - Supervisor/Manager Toolkit
 - Timekeeping Toolkit
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Process Documentation

Description: Step-by-step documentation of any process, task or procedure.

Example:

- Flowchart that displays sequence of events, processes or steps to complete an assignment or task
 - Annual master calendar that displays process responsibilities and timelines (e.g., Budget Process Timeline, etc.)
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Question of the Day/Week

Description: A supervisor or manager asks staff a question on a regular basis (ie. daily or weekly) that relates specifically to their position or function. Each staff person must work independently to submit a separate response. Developing an effective question will force staff to research and use available resources to attain the answer.

Real Example: OHR's Examination Unit uses this strategy as one of their weekly practices.

Record Important Meetings/Events

Description: Self explanatory (refer to the example)

Example: Record information provided at a meeting/event that is important to support an organization's KTM efforts. Suggested information to record includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- ↔ Purpose
 - ↔ Objectives
 - ↔ Topics covered
 - ↔ Deliverables
 - ↔ Date
 - ↔ Time
 - ↔ Recurrence
 - ↔ Required attendees
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Retired Annuitants

Description: An officially retired State worker who is on the State's payroll and available for assignments.

Example: Many State agencies consider Retired Annuitants for positions ranging from technical classifications to Subject Matter Experts. They are great resources for extracting information as a majority of them have a multitude of State experience and service years.

Simulation

Description: A representation of the operation or features of one process or system through the use of another.

Example: The DGS Activity Based Management System (ABMS) Team provides a User Productivity Kit (UPK) consisting of modules for how to use the Oracle ABMS software application. Contained therein is an option that enables users to practice a task through a simulated environment. The UPK is located on the DGS intranet @ <http://abms.dgs.ca.gov/UPKPlayer/default.htm>

Structured "On-the-job" Training

Description: On-the-job training (OJT) is any kind of instruction that takes place at the actual job site and involves learning tasks, skills, or procedures in a hands-on manner. It can be informal (e.g., when a person asks a co-worker to show how to perform a task) or part of a more formal structured system.

If part of a structured system, there is usually prescribed procedures for training that specify the tasks and skills to be learned and sequence of activity to build on knowledge already acquired. There are also administrative processes requiring both trainer (sometimes called a coach) and trainee to certify that a particular task or skill has been mastered. Structured OJT is usually more effective than informal; however, informal can also be valuable.

Example: DGS' OHR has a variety of processes (i.e., personnel forms, data reports/entry, contracts, procurement, etc.) in which OJT training is used to educate and guide new employees. The trainer is typically a supervisor, senior employee and/or lead staff person.

Storyboards

Description: A panel or series of panels with a sequence of illustrations that depict the significant changes within a project or process. Storyboards allow for pre-visualization of motion graphics or interactive media sequence.

Example: Use to assist with instructional designs or development of websites or software. In addition to graphic displays, information can be presented and described via formats such as written, audio, motion/video and interactive events (i.e., user interfaces and electronic pages).

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Training Modules (in-house)

Description: For in-house training, an organization creates information modules to accompany hands-on staff training. A module can contain basic text, templates/forms, handouts and/or notes. Each module usually has a single topic with different information (depending on its overall purposes). The module approach is an effective way to not only document knowledge, but reinforce staff comprehension and retention as well.

Example: Self-Explanatory. (Contact the DGS Training Unit for module ideas and/or examples of training courses that have modules integrated into the curriculum.)

Uniform Standards

Description: A consistent and confirming set of principles, processes and/or rules defined for a specific role or process.

Example:

- Uniformed Standards of Professional Practices (for many existing professions such as realtors, auditors, etc.)
 - Uniform Commercial Code (terms for occupational groups such as accounting, business, real estate, etc.)
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User Guides

Description: A document for staff and customers that provides instructions on how to perform a function.

Examples (DGS's Activity Based Management System [ABMS]): The following user guides are located on the DGS intranet @ <http://abms.dgs.ca.gov/UserGuides/default.htm>

- ABMS User Guides
 - PAL User Guides
 - Miscellaneous Oracle User Guides
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Webinars

Description: Live informational and interactive presentations available online for training and instructional purposes. Once completed, webinars can be archived and reused for future training purposes depending on relevance of information. This is a cost-saving strategy used by many organizations facing budgetary constraints.

Real Example: DPA hosts the State Virtual Training Center on its website. (<http://www.dpa.ca.gov/training/virtual-training-center/main.htm>)
