8) Knowledge Integration

Transform Work by Integrating KM Activities

The degree to which we, as knowledge workers, can integrate use of the knowledge base into our workflow will dictate the degree to which we will realize the benefits of KCS. The health and value of the knowledge is related to how much it is used. In most organizations, knowledge workers will seek information through a number of different avenues: asking peers, looking through documentation, searching past emails, and often as a last resort, searching or browsing a knowledge base. In a KCS environment, we want using the knowledge base to be the first thing people do, not the last.

An important part of the knowledge integration concept is the realization that the best people to create and maintain knowledge are the people who use it every day. A number of good things happen when using the knowledge base first becomes a habit.

1. We will find and benefit from the experience of others through existing knowledge articles.
2. If we can identify reuse of articles at the time of reuse, it allows us to use the Evolve Loop to identify patterns and opportunities to improve the business.
3. If we find articles that are confusing or we feel are wrong, we flag it or fix it. If we do not have the authority or license to fix it, or we are not confident in how to improve it, we flag it. Flagged articles go to the appropriate subject matter expert for review. If we are confident and licensed, we fix it. The flag it or fix it concept ensures the articles that are being seen are being improved.
4. If we reuse an article and improve it based on our experience, we will be constantly improving the knowledge articles that are useful. The words and phrases we initially used to try to find the article should be added to the article to improve its findability.
5. If we search the knowledge base and we don't find anything helpful, we have the opportunity to create a new article. Here again, using the words and phrases we used to search are content for a new article: searching is creating.

The frequency and quality with which we integrate these Solve Loop activities into our workflow is what enables all the KCS benefits. However, not everybody gets to do everything. Knowledge workers earn the right and privilege to fully integrate the Solve Loop activities into their workflow. The KCS licensing model enables those who show an ability to make good judgments and show an understanding of the content standard and workflow to have the rights and privileges in the system to work in an truly integrated manner. Those who have not earned the rights will have to flag articles that need attention. The more people we have who have the full rights and privileges to integrate the Solve Loop into their workflow, the more efficient organization will be at reusing, improving and, if it doesn't exist, creating knowledge.

Another key enabler to integrating use of the knowledge base into our workflow is technology. The functionality, responsiveness and level of integration of the systems we use can be an asset or a liability. The technology needs to support the Solve Loop activities and make it easy for us to use the knowledge base as part of our workflow. In order to
support the Solve Loop the technology must function at the speed of conversation.