Chapter 5.16

Using Social Networking Analysis to Facilitate Knowledge Sharing in the British Council

Bonnie Wai-yi Cheuk

Improvement Service for the Scottish Local Government, Scotland*
month knowledge audit exercise, the global KM strategy was approved by the Senior Management Team in December 2003. The KM vision was to enable the British Council to develop and deliver world-class products and services to its customers by effectively sharing and utilizing collective knowledge. This will be achieved by finding the best ways to connect its employees with each other and by providing them with easy access to relevant documents and resources.

Over the last two years, we have launched a number of projects to increase awareness of KM and to get the buy-in of senior management for the program in order to invest in the tools and approaches needed to improve global knowledge sharing. Specific KM projects that are beginning to embedded into the organization include:

1. Knowledge audit conducted using Dervin’s Sense-Making Methodology (Dervin, 1992; Cheuk & Dervin, 1999)
2. Development of Knowledge Management strategies for business units
3. Building communities of practices using seven-phase methodology (Cheuk, 2004a, 2004b)
4. Enhancement of the intranet, collaboration tools, and global databases
5. Applying Social Networking Analysis to support collaborative working (Anklam, 2003; Cross & Parker, 2004)
6. Applying narrative techniques to conduct project debriefs

What Is the Nature of Knowledge?

A review of the KM literature largely defines knowledge using Nonaka and Takeuchi’s (1995) definition of tacit knowledge (i.e., knowledge in a person’s head, which has a personal quality and is hard to formalize and communicate) and explicit knowledge (i.e., knowledge that is transmittable in formal, systematic language). Sutton (2001) defines the latter as codified knowledge (i.e., knowledge that can be written down) and uses it interchangeably with information. Taken this view, KM systems were created to capture the knowledge of experts. The capture approach continued with an emphasis on capturing knowl-
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