

Reshaping ISN'S Knowledge Management Expedition

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1. About the Case Organisation

Institut Sukan Negara (ISN) is an agency under the Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS) and is entrusted to spearhead sports science, sports medicine and sports technology initiatives in Malaysia. ISN's core business as enacted in the ISN Act 729 (2011), focuses on the application of sports science, sports medicine and sports technology for national high-performance sports teams, in order to enhance elite athletes' performance as well as providing professional educational courses to coaches and the sports fraternity at large, together with ancillary support services. In addition, ISN has commercialisation initiatives in line with its mission to advance the sports industry.

2. About the Challenge

The sports industry, especially the high-performance global arena in sport, continues to evolve rapidly through translating scientific knowledge into practice. As the national sports science, sports medicine and sports technology institute in Malaysia, ISN is a pioneer in this area. ISN has access to a wealth of critical knowledge (explicit and tacit) that needs to be leveraged, acquired and integrated systematically. ISN believes that continuous development of Knowledge Management (KM) will enable a dynamic transformation of ISN since the initiation of our "KM expedition" three years ago. Hence, ISN has set up KM Committees and invested in human capital by providing training to knowledge managers in order to strengthen its Community of Practice (COP).

In ISN there is a great deal of untapped and potential knowledge from various specific disciplines such as sports nutrition, biomechanics, psychology, exercise physiology, strength & conditioning, talent identification and development (TID), Sports Technology, coaching science and education.

We strive to be the sports reference centre in Malaysia mainly in the areas of sports science and sports medicine. The expertise and resources of practitioners namely our staff, coaches, athletes, and researchers are in high demand and the process of acquiring both tacit and explicit knowledge is crucial in ensuring continuous success and achieving the desired goals.

These are ISN's KM objectives:

- i) To counter knowledge loss mainly knowledge related to the development of high performance athletes and innovative strategies for improving performance;
- ii) To increase productivity and improve the working culture (e.g. silo mentality, lack of knowledge sharing and communication);
- iii) To ensure continuity and sustainability of knowledge-based work and projects and their outcomes; and
- iv) To encourage innovative inventions and creating new ideas.

3. What We Did

The establishment of our KM strategy focuses on three (3) main outcomes:

- i) To increase involvement and utilisation of knowledge by ISN staff;
- ii) To increase knowledge content pertaining to sports science and medicine; and improve the visibility and accessibility of that knowledge; and
- iii) To improve ISN's knowledge culture based on ISN KM's values: Integration, Respectful, Knowledgeable and Practice-oriented.

There are three (3) main initiatives which aim to increase participation, strengthen our Community of Practice (COP), improve processes and cultivate our KM culture:

- i) **Quick-wins:** We worked with the departments to map their processes, create knowledge assets inventory, and explore KM's role in those processes for quick win opportunities and improvements. We monitor progress by each department and apply relevant methodologies to support them. Hence, ISN has embarked on a KM classification with six (6) categories of ISN KM initiatives. As a result, each staff member is applying KM initiatives in handling their routine daily tasks.
- ii) **Knowledge capture:** We acquire, manage and maintain knowledge contributions such as scientific articles, reports, dissertations and others. This includes converting tacit to explicit knowledge; eg. gaining insights and lessons from the experience of sports figures and relevant individuals such as sports scientists in sharing sessions; and
- iii) **Technology support :** We are working on synergising all our existing systems and platforms in ISN to explore potential areas to produce and share/reuse valuable knowledge.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

4.1. Clarity of KM and buy in from stakeholders:

- i) Regular briefings to key stakeholders and maintaining effective communication to bridge the gap in order to gain and maintain top management support;
- ii) Organise regular roundtable session to clearly define ISN's KM context, processes and programmes/ initiatives; and
- iii) Drive transformation by applying top down management approach in order to gain confidence and support from each level of staff in ISN.

4.2. Awareness and staffs' support:

- i) Introduce KM awareness initiative by frequently disseminating sports related information through ISN's KM official platform;
- ii) Implement knowledge sharing/ contribution measures through voluntary basis activities and also structured documents (i.e reports, infographics, etc.) by each department; and
- iii) Regular updates to all key stakeholders and top management regarding their department's knowledge sharing / contributions.

4.3. Best practise (process) vs tools:

- i) Previously, ISN had emphasised the tools and technological demands without properly establishing the best practice approach first – we have changed that approach to look at the process first; and
- ii) Our knowledge classification provides better clarification and understanding on the required processes and outputs.

5. Impact and Benefits

By having good KM practice in the Institute, we anticipate greater integration and enhanced interdepartmental knowledge sharing culture which we believe will lead to improved productivity, service and innovation capacity.

6. Next Steps

We are exploring all necessary means in rebranding and reconstructing our portal in order to connect with more sports practitioners and experts, as well as cultivating the knowledge sharing culture among staff. We are very focused on the key initiatives that could build and create more Communities of Practice (internally & externally) through physical and digital platforms. In line with the ISN motto “beyond performance” we are optimistic that our strategy could put ISN in a solid position in moving towards becoming the centre of excellence among sports resource centres in this region.