

KM Exchange 2021

Case Study Cafe 2: National Sports Institute Malaysia and U.S. Department of Defense

Edited Notes of Chat Channel

Patrick: None of the case study cafes will be recorded but feel free to make notes in the chat channel which we will make available afterwards.

NATIONAL SPORTS INSTITUTE CASE STUDY

INITIAL QUESTIONS:

Ghazali: What's the strategy? What are the 6 categories you mention?

Bill: Our group has these questions:

1. What is ISN's definition of KM?
2. What are the quick wins?
3. How have they defined Critical Knowledge?
4. What are the 6 categories?
5. What is the time frame for the initiative? Post pandemic? Pre pandemic?
6. One of the quick wins was a knowledge inventory. Is this like knowledge audit?
7. She expressed there was difficulty in defining the Critical Knowledge. What has gone into the Knowledge Base if there is difficulty in defining the Critical Knowledge?

Edgar: How did she communicate with her leaders to get support?

How did she communicate with the wider sports fraternity/stakeholders?

Can she specify what the quick wins are?

Did they adopt a KM framework that can be adopted by others?

Can she give examples of systems she couldn't scrap but had to make do with?

Roznita: In the scoping of KM - need to look at the pain points of the organisation and align to the organisational goals

Sharifah: "Quick wins" was the term preferred by the people in the organisation - they are not actually typical quick wins. We sat with each department to understand their critical functions and activities, and identified KM and learning activities that would help them, and got their buy in. We also started identifying the critical knowledge we could capture into our repository. So it was "slow" quick wins - very customised approach to each department. Got the buy in on the KM interventions and took them up to senior leadership for their approval, who are very open to the proposals from the operational level. The key people are the managers.

Azlinayati: Knowledge repository is at the heart of all the initiatives?

Sharifah: KM Centre is former Information Resource Centre. Initially there was confusion between sports performance management (line departments) and sports

resource provision (KM centre). The “quick wins” exercise and the KM Committee played a role in aligning performance management with resource management - the KM Committee is made up on directors of the line departments.

Azinayati: Have you explored the value of lessons learned for performance improvement? Lessons learned can cover processes, as well as insights and content for the repository.

Roznita: They set up CoPs to capture and share lessons learned.

Syarifah: “How legends are made” programme is a kind of learning process - interviews with top performance experts and athletes, to gather insights and tacit knowledge - record and capture and share the interviews.

Patrick: Timeframe is just since the beginning of 2021 so a very young programme.

Arief: Does ISN's KM also gathers knowledge from the National Sports Bodies as they are the ones who runs the show?

Patrick: KM team: KM Centre has five people, working closely with managers in the departments, many of the KM contacts in the departments have been to KM training.

Brett: Whose programme is the KM programme?

Syarifah: The KM Steering Committee owns it - members are the department directors.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CASE STUDY

INITIAL QUESTIONS

Bill: What is the underpinning Doctrine for KM/IM?

Brett: Doctrine is guidelines and principles - out of which policies and procedures are generated. Our prevailing doctrinal guidance comes from Joint Publication 3-33: The Joint Task Force Headquarters”. The DOD now has a specific Annex covering KM/IM Governance.

Azlinayati: Talking about culture, do you have any challenges in getting KM practices to be embraced within the military team?

Patrick: What are the differences and similarities between KM in military organisations and other types of organisations?

Brett: Doctrine is the baseline advantage that military organisations have. Many non-military organisations don't have that baseline clarity on how they should operate.

However, decision making happens in all organisations, and all organisations can benefit from a deliberate approach to that.

GOVERNANCE

Azlinayati: How do you manage sensitive/confidential information within your organization?

Patrick: How do you balance the trade off between sensitivity and sharing?

Brett: Governance needs to account for fact that information is going to be scattered in multiple places, you just make a decision on where the broader body sits and how that is managed, and then identify and manage the exceptions? This process is especially important in joint task forces involving other countries and organisations, with very different information management systems/governance.

Edgar: Governance is focused around the disparate sources of information and what they can/should share with counterparts.

Bill: Brett came into the organization with established credentials and experience. The commander had told the Chief of Staff to 'do what Brett tells you to do'. He started by mapping the processes and then implemented specific operating rhythm management tools. Some of these tools are techniques and some of the tools are technology. Brett and the commander were in agreement on what the tool would require of the staff. The commander would back-up the use of these tools and governance.

Azlinayati: Can you elaborate further on your KM Governance - what does it cover, any specific governance structure setup, etc.?

Brett: Don't JUST publish governance, we have to communicate it to specific audiences. What are the methods and means we are going to use, and communicate to the receivers.

Patrick: What governance looks like can differ depending on the audience?

Brett: The more complex governance is, the less effective it's likely to be. Start with a few small things, and then get it accepted, then build on it.

Edgar: Who is in charge of the Knowledge and Information annex in a regular military unit?

Bill: Brett would you agree that governance should be a set of tasks which are repeatable?

LESSONS LEARNED

Murni: I am always interested to find out how does military encourage open sharing of lessons learned in view of the hierarchical structure.

Brett: The After Action Review actually started in military organisations - and it is a continuous effort at every echelon. The problem starts when you start documenting in lessons learned systems and expect people to pull from there. Security Level Classification issues can also arise - context and detail underneath the lesson can be classified at different levels and not all levels of detail are open for sharing. The most effective use of lessons learned is in processes and activities designed for that - eg training meetings when the sharing takes place. But sharing habits have to be inculcated. I am a big fan of Before Action Review, which is when you might use a repository of lessons learned. But this is not often done at all or well.

FOCUS

Edgar: The KM focus of the US JTF's deliberate approach is very clear - efficiency of new HQ in 120 days. This also seems to have helped get leadership support. Does Brett have any advice for how the KM focus can be made to be just as sharp in other non-military organisations?

Brett: It really helps to have dedicated people for KM, and also people who are linked to other KM networks in other organisations. You really need to engage with leadership - Commander and Chief of Staff especially. In military Chief of Staff plays an anchoring role for the Commander - so find the anchor point of the C-suite within the leadership structure. It is always more difficult and frustrating when the KM role is pushed deeper into the organisation, it's hard to get the same clarity and focus, if you can't see the whole picture across the organisation.

Bill: I think Chief of Staff role is like the Head of Administration in an office of around 300 people.

Murni: In many organisations, the stuff that Brett does could be a combination of biz planning, project control, information management etc, but in Brett's organisation it all came under the KM banner ... cool.

Arief: Brett: KM is an inherent part of everything we do.

Brett: I'm going to help you do what you do using proven KM practices - i.e. to help you do the voodoo that you do so well (to quote the old song) for what you do better. KM doesn't do what you do...it helps you do what you do better... And quick wins are only wins if they (robustly?) solve a problem.

Brett: But clarity around the command structure in military organisations really helps. In a joint task force, everybody's job is to help the Commander accomplish his/her assigned mission. One of the frustrating things about a recent non defense project - nobody was really sure who was in charge of things.

Patrick: Does it help to have deadlines?

Brett: Not for the big picture targets like “ we will implement a successful KM program in ‘x’ number of months” because KM is so context sensitive. But for specific tasks like getting a set number of tasks processed, e.g. we will have mapped 10 processes by the end of 2 months, yes deadlines can help.

ONBOARDING

Augustine: The operating rhythm process is very robust. Out of curiosity, how's the onboarding training for the newcomers? By practical / on job training or learning by paper materials? How fast can a newcomer adapt to this process?

Brett: Two aspects, how people get onboarded in his KM team, and how staff get onboarded in the Joint Tasks Forces he works for. In Brett's unit there is a regular cycle of learning: e.g. 3 day training course, a weekend get together per quarter, one week deployment per year to practice specific stuff, and learning through normal deployments. Continuous process.

In and out processing for regular task forces is a great question: everybody's in a rush, to get people in and out, and we don't spend the time we should on it, or the KM needs - we have mapped the processes for doing it properly but it's a challenge to get it implemented.