

# **Knowledge Management and Retention**

**A looming crisis for the unprepared**

**Presented by**

**VSE Corporation**

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Historical Attrition

- **Competition**
- **Retirement**
- **Career Change**
- **Catastrophic Accident**

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Advanced Technology
- Specialized Knowledge
- Baby Boomer Generation
- Uneven Hiring Practices

Expectation: 30% to 50% Attrition within 5 Years

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Knowledge at Risk:

- Historical Products Still Supported
- Networks and Contacts for Problem-Solving
- Complex Systems Corrective Actions
- Unique Diagnostic Capabilities

Usually Not Adequately Documented

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Why Is It Allowed to be Lost?

- Critical Knowledge (CK) not Documented
- CK not Shared
- CK not Recognized as Critical or Unique
- Time Required to Document or Share
- The Most Critical is Usually the Most Complex

Not a Matter of Risk – A Certainty

# Solving the Problem

## Step 1: Identify the CK in the Workforce

### Leading Questions:

- What are our core competencies?
- Why have we been able to succeed?
- What sets us apart from the competition?
- What do we do better than anyone else?

# Solving the Problem

## Step 2: ID Present Method of Storing CK

- May Be Adequate
- Improvement may suffice
- Major Action May Be Needed

# Solving the Problem

## Step 3: Identify Who Has the CK

- Who Do Managers Rely on Most?
- Can Alternates Perform the Function As Well?
- Peer Reviews
- Who Do Employees Seek Out?



# Solving the Problem

## Step 4: Develop a CK Storage System

- Many Options Available
- Must Be Tailored to Organization's Culture
- Must Be Efficient
- Critical Balance

# Solving the Problem

## Step 5: Gather & Store CK

### Difficulty Dependant On:

- Organizational Culture
- Amount of Segmentation
- Time Available
- Resources Allocated
- Number of Individuals with CK
- Amount of CK

# Expected Roadblocks

## The Knowledge Miser

- Status Achieved Through CK
- May Be Reluctant to Relinquish Status

# Knowledge Miser Solution

## KM's Interests Addressed Through:

- Org. Ability to Maintain Long-Term Benefits
- Potential Near-Term Layoffs
- Status Through Knowledge Sharing

# Expected Roadblocks

## The Distrustful:

- Feels ill-treated by Organization
- Resentful
- No desire to help organization

# Expected Roadblocks

## The Distrustful Solutions:

- Identify Source of Resentment
- Re-Establish Positive Relationship
- Assign to Project Teams

# Expected Roadblocks

## The Contractor

- CK Increases in Value Near Retirement
- CK Considered a Commodity
- Give Away Now or Sell Later
- Only Delays the Problem

# Expected Roadblocks

## Contractor Solutions:

- Exchange CK Prior to Return as Contractor
- Initial Assignment: Clarify process & Methodologies



# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Knowledge Management Systems

- **Training**
  - Structured process
  - Results measured & evaluated
  - Significant resource requirements
  
- **Storytelling**
  - Informal, casual
  - Social activity

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Knowledge Management Systems

- **Coaching**
  - Provided as needed
  - Growth process
  
- **Exit Interview**
  - Most commonly used
  - Least effective

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Knowledge Management Systems

- **Critical Incident Report**
  - Easy implementation
  - Limited application
  
- **Network of Specialists**
  - Serious cross-training
  - Mutual support

# Knowledge Management and Retention

## Knowledge Management Systems

- **Exit Interview**
  - Most commonly used
  - Least effective
  
- **Mentoring**
  - More structured than coaching
  - Dependent on favorable relationships
  - Most effective, most challenging

# CK Management & Retention Summary

- Match Culture, System, and Resources
- System Must Be User Friendly
- Resource Requirements Increase with Time
- Management Choice:
  - Develop a System that Captures and Retains CK
  - Re-create CK at a later date
  - Lose the capability

# Contact Information

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