



Accumulating and Sharing Process Knowledge – A DDC culture update

The Defense Logistics Agency Culture Survey provides the organization with the opportunity to identify areas for improvement based on the insights of employees across the enterprise. The leaders throughout the Defense Distribution Center use the results to guide them to key areas to focus on improving their cultures. Improvement with respect to an organizational culture denotes that an organization is learning something that helps them move their performance from a current state to a “better” future state, better being clearly defined by a standard of performance.

A key organizational and leadership capability that has been shown to facilitate organizational performance improvement is to accumulate and share knowledge about work processes. Knowledge being defined as familiarity or understanding that is gained through experience. This knowledge is usually gained through efforts at solving problems within the work processes. Once anyone (usually a work team) in an organization identifies and then effectively solves a problem that results in an improvement it is important that the knowledge gained from that experience be made explicit (or accumulated) and then shared with others in the organization. There is nothing

more frustrating than to have to solve the same problem over and over again or to work on a problem that others in the organization have already solved and not know about it. “If I had only known that...”

There are many ways in which organizations can implement tools to facilitate the accumulation and sharing of process knowledge. “This can be as basic as an update to a Standard Operating Procedure ‘and subsequent training on the process change’, a lunch and learn training session, or a morning team meeting, and with the rapid change and availability of technology it can also become a much more complex endeavor, like shared best practice libraries or on-line tutorials,” said John Destalo culture champion and member of the DDC Organization Development team.

One DDC organization that has implemented a tool that helps them to accumulate and share process knowledge across their organization is the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa. The sheer size (number of employees) and diversity of work in their operations makes organization-wide communications a complex endeavor for them.

As part of their efforts to facilitate the sharing of improvements within their organization they have

developed a publication entitled “Lean Times” with the purpose of sharing their internal efforts to improve their operations. This also helps to recognize people who have worked with their co-workers to improve their operations and encourages others to take part in these efforts. In recent publications they have recognized one team for standardizing pack stations and another team for improving the accountability of returns. They also use this opportunity to communicate basic lessons in lean tools and concepts.

“Another effort that is on-going within DDC that facilitates the accumulation and sharing of knowledge is the DDC Headquarters Public Affairs Office publications of the DDC Review,” said Destalo. “They have recently become monthly publications which allows them to increase the amount of knowledge being shared and reduce the lead time between the actual experience to when it is delivered.”

Although usually longer than a bottle of milk, information and knowledge have a shelf life; situations change and knowledge gained can become less relevant over time so that the faster relevant knowledge can be delivered to recipients the more value an organization can gain from its use.