# IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND TRANSFER IN STATE AGENCIES

TEAM 7: CHRISTOPHER MCELGUNN, JESSE PATCHAK, MARIA REDMOND, EMILY ST. AUBIN, KAREN SCHMITZ, AND HILARY SHAGER

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# THE CHALLENGE OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN STATE GOVERNMENT

- High rate of employee turnover in WI State Government

  - Turnover in EMDA cohort

  - High rate of pending retirements

- How does this impact productivity?

  - Productivity loss during transition

    - For both employees and managers

  - Difficulty of transfer and loss of "knowledge"



"WE'VE GOT A HIGH STAFF FLUCTUATION, THAT'S WHY IT'S NOT WORTH FURNISHING THE OFFICES."

# TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

- Explicit Knowledge
  - Knowledge that has been articulated, codified, and stored in certain media.
    - Structured – Data elements that are organized in a particular way for future retrieval
      - Documents, databases, spreadsheets
    - Unstructured – Information not referenced for retrieval
      - Emails, images, audio or video selections

- Tacit Knowledge
  - Knowledge that people carry in their heads.
    - Difficult to access and capture.  Most people are not even aware of what they possess or how it is of value to others.
    - But important!  It provides context for ideas, experiences, people, and places

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & TRANSFER

- What is **knowledge management**?
  - Practices used by organizations to find, create, and distribute knowledge for reuse, awareness, and learning across the organization
- What is **knowledge transfer**?
  - Process of facilitating the learning of explicit knowledge and sharing tacit knowledge
  - Knowledge must both be **learned** and **useable in a relevant context**
- The **"business case"** for effective knowledge management and transfer
  - Reduces productivity loss due to employee turnover
  - Facilitates more efficient and effective onboarding
  - Improves ongoing performance management practices

# PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- How might state managers support successful knowledge management and transfer regarding…

  - Records (documents, electronic files, etc.)

  - Work tools (software, databases, etc.)

  - Work processes

  - Agency policies

  - Personnel matters

# OUR PRODUCT

- Research best knowledge management and transfer practices and tools in other states

- Develop a flexible knowledge management "template" that serves as main documentation tool

- Recommend revision/updating practices that leverage existing processes such as

  - Onboarding

  - Annual performance reviews

  - When an employee gives notice

- Introduce supplemental knowledge transfer tools

# THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS
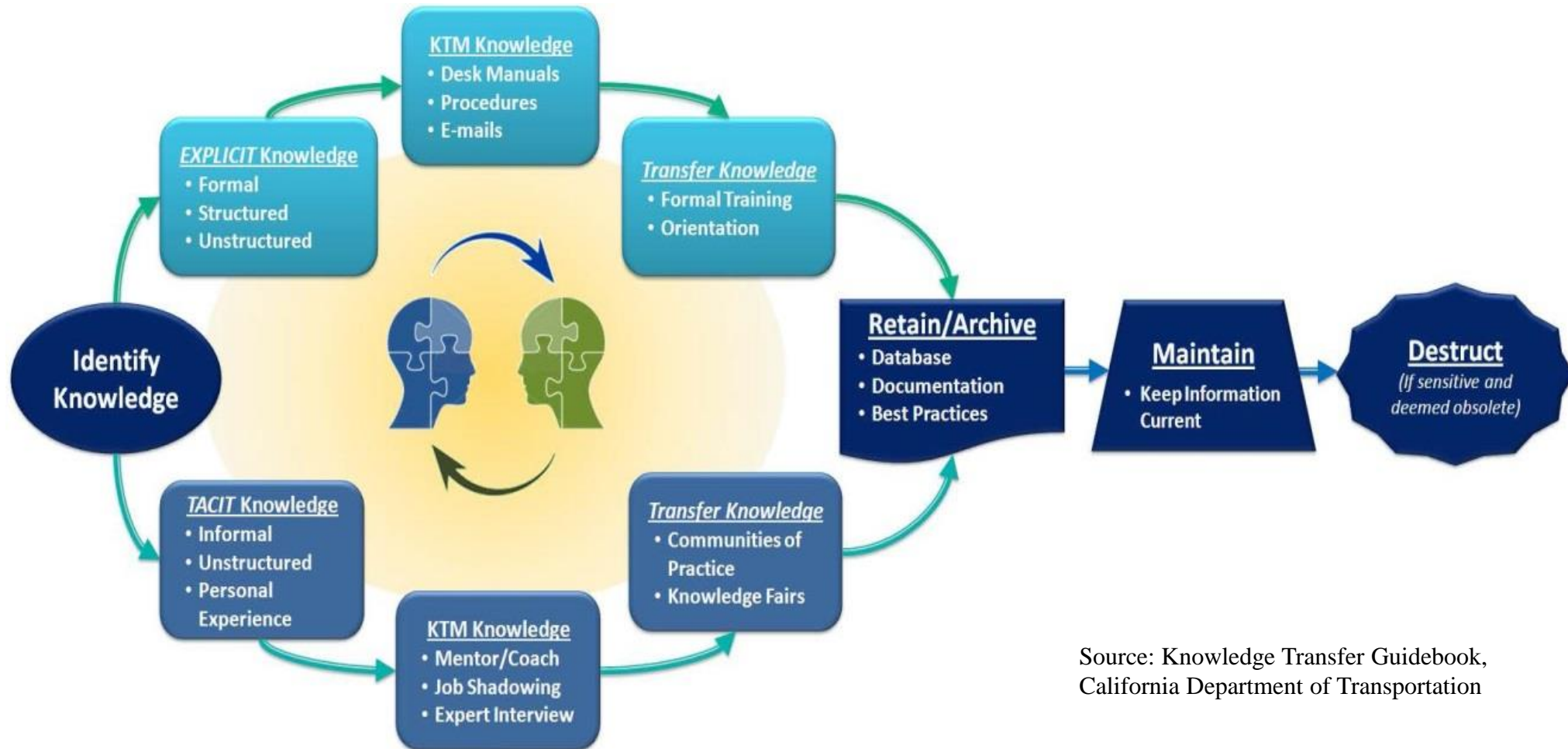


Source: Knowledge Transfer Guidebook, California Department of Transportation

# THE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PROCESS

1) Determine what knowledge must be transferred

2) Be able to articulate why the knowledge must be transferred

3) Determine to whom the knowledge is to be transferred

4) Determine how the knowledge will be transferred

5) Transfer the knowledge

6) Test knowledge transfer by observing its recall and use
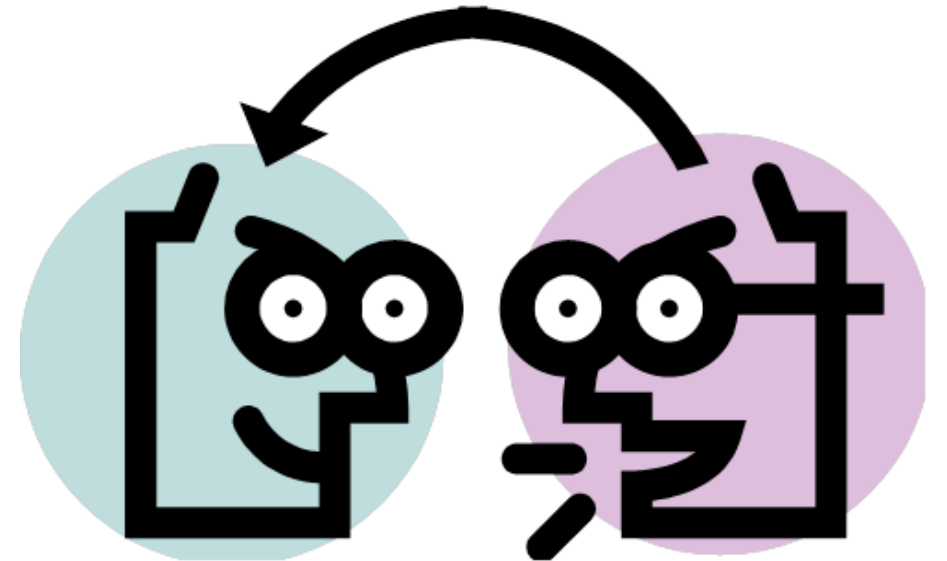
# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## Managers

- Identify critical knowledge components

- Develop Knowledge Transfer Plan including development of appropriate tools

- Assure Plan is accomplished

- Facilitate staff "buy-in"

## Employees

- Complete and maintain knowledge documentation

- Identify tacit knowledge and transfer to explicit knowledge via knowledge management tools and processes

- Participate in supplemental knowledge management and transfer activities

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TEMPLATE

- Template directions

- Template sections

  - Basic employee and organization information

  - Critical tasks summary

  - Collaborative Projects Summary

  - Other Activities/Resources

  - Calendars (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly)

# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1) What kinds of knowledge or skills do you have that your office will miss when you leave?

2) If you had to leave suddenly and only had one day to brief your replacement, what's on the list of things to tell him/her?

3) Looking back, what things do you wish your office had taught you early on that you eventually learned the hard way?

4) What are the key resources (procedures, manual, checklists) that you use to do your job?

5) What pieces of knowledge are you most worried about slipping through the cracks when you leave?

6) Are there important types of knowledge that take a long time for someone else to learn but are critical to your job?

7) How did you learn the things you know? What were the critical training programs, work assignments etc.?

8) What is unique about your background compared to the typical employee in a position like yours?

9) Who do you contact for assistance most frequently in order to do your job?

10) What are the most frequent issues or questions people bring to you? Which consume the most time?

# INCORPORATING TEMPLATE INTO REGULAR WORK PROCESSES

- It takes an up front time investment to complete, but…
  - Think about ease, value for hiring and onboarding new employees
  - Effective way to transfer tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge
- Framework for effective annual performance evaluation
  - Are critical tasks getting done, on time, with high quality?
  - Easy to track group projects, solicit feedback from others
  - "Credit" for work not in PD
  - Great time to update, maintain template and PD

# ONBOARDING

- Effective onboarding takes time and resources

- Example--new UW-HR Design policy

  - Year-long process

  - Orientation

  - Onboarding contact

  - Peer partner

  - First-day meeting with supervisor

  - In-person and online education

  - Templates, checklists, conversation guides

# SUPPLEMENTAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER TOOLS

- Smart hiring and management processes
  - Dual incumbency
  - Job shadowing, job rotation
  - Cross-training
- Person-to-person strategies
  - Coaching, mentoring, structured on-the-job training
  - Bootcamps, knowledge fairs
  - Communities of practice
- Additional documentation
  - Job aids (manuals, desk guides, etc.)
  - Critical incident review, storytelling, best practices
  - Document repositories, Wiki

# SUMMARY

- Effective knowledge management is crucial to reducing productivity loss due to employee turnover

- Use template and leverage existing processes to:

    - Facilitate explicit and tacit knowledge documentation and transfer

    - Enhance annual performance management

- Support with supplemental knowledge transfer tools

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- AK Dept. Of Administration, "Knowledge Transfer in State of Alaska Agencies"

  - http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/fileadmin/statewideplanning/pdf/workforceplanning-knowledgetransferinstateofalaskaagencies.pdf

- CA Dept. of Transportation Knowledge Transfer Guidebook

  - http://www.dot.ca.gov/docs/ct_knowledge_transfer_guidebook.pdf

- DE Knowledge Transfer Training

  - http://www.delawarepersonnel.com/orgdev/documents/knowledge_transfer_tools.pdf

- MN Dept. of Management & Budget

  - http://www.mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/workforce-planning/knowledgetransfer/

- NH Dept. of Administrative Services, Knowledge Management & Transfer Model

  - *www.admin.state.nh.us/*

- WY Dept. of Administration & Information, "Knowledge Transfer Concepts"

  - *http://wyomingworkforceplanning.state.wy.us/documents/Knowledge%20Transfer%20Tools.pdf*