

Build it. Will they come?
Major Angela Burth, USAF
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Today's technology has globally extended the reach to knowledge and information resources. Portals are built to engage organizational knowledge exchanges within communities of interest and practice, but in the end will the community members participate? How do you motivate both individual and organizational behavior to take advantage of this global reach? Managing knowledge gained from military lessons learned is often a matter of life and death in warfighting situations. If we do not learn from our experiences, we are doomed to repeat failures and forget best practices.

A good way to accelerate a Lesson Learned collection effort is to motivate individual and organizational behavior using a "market strategy". A market strategy treats the exchange of information as a tangible transaction between someone who has information and someone who needs the information. In the commercial world that equates to linking a buyer and a seller with currency exchanged based on the value of the product or service. In an information exchange market, the dynamic is the same, but the "currency" involved is usually not cash.

For example, a community of practice participant wants to capture specific subject matter information. Here are the steps:

- A participant posts a request for information to a common web portal
- Registered subject matter experts are notified of request based on their profile
- Field personnel are notified of the request based on their profile or may find it while searching the portal
- Responses (proposals) are provided based on expertise and experiences with a proposed point value
- Requestor accepts the responses that are of value or interest (see note 1)
- Responses are provided via the portal or on other networks as necessary
- The transaction receives a point value (score) with corresponding feedback to rate response quality and relevance (see note 2)
- Information may be re-posted for community use by subject category; gaining additional scores and comments based on participant needs

Two critical enablers are required for this sequence of exchange. First, at the end of the day, what is the value of participation and knowledge scores? What is the "currency" for this exchange? How the community or organization rewards the behavior will have a direct impact on successful exchanges. Here is how a currency is established for non-monetary exchanges. Using the above steps, a requestor asks for the best practices in

Improvised Explosive Device detection. In the posting the requestor provides a description of the request and delivery deadline. The web portal location where this is posted may provide the currency with the statement *“the units with the highest contributions to posted requests will be submitted for a Unit Citation Award signed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.”* In this case, total contributions are calculated based on the sum of individual transactions from the units. A currency has now been established, and point values are accumulated for the units that are represented in responses. The information and knowledge exchanges are executed with an objective scoring method and feedback to provide a valuation method for otherwise subjective and intangible assets. “So what?” and “what’s in it for me?” questions are answered with a standard currency. This type of motivation works well at the individual, organizational, and community levels. Recognition, awards, promotions, budget and billets are strong motivators and thus good currencies to leverage.

The second enabler of market-like behavior is a “monetary policy”, or supply of points. If unlimited points are available in the market, qualitative feedback and point

awards will not be maintained. The points available in the market should be regulated and limited. A monetary policy assures qualitative judgment is provided for accepted responses via point awards and feedback submissions. This provides decision makers with “market” indicators about the quality of the information proposed based on individual and unit contribution histories.

**International Lessons Learned
Demonstration Instructions**

- Available at www.c4imarkets.com
- Click the **International Lesson Learned** text link
- View and browse the right panel submarkets by category or all
- Register if you would like to submit, view or respond to requests
- **Top Site Contributors** shows an individual’s total and average scores
- Equivalent contributor lists are provided in each submarket activity
- **Demo only!** Information validity is not assured or protected on the site
- Your comments are welcome, submit to the Contributor blog space

To apply this strategy to exchanges between countries in an International Lessons Learned (ILL) Community of Practice, each country or organization can start with a bank of points to use in transactions (determined by the portal host and the ILL Community). Countries earn additional points to execute transactions by participating and sharing

information with community participants. This acts as a central barter system with points being awarded by participation that can be used as needed by the countries participating. Participant can not accept responses without available points.

As an example, Country X may want to find out how other countries integrate their lessons learned back into their Concept of Operations. Country Y and Country A respond with an outline of their integration process. Those Countries receive points for their lesson learned integration responses from Country X's point bank (as agreed upon in the transaction acceptance). Those points are then added to Country Y's and Country A's bank to spend on their own information and knowledge needs.

This request for information strategy provides the following advantages to the International Lessons Learned Community:

- Self-synchronize knowledge-sharing by linking community participants
- Empower knowledge users throughout the entire community
- Extend global reach to subject matter experts and knowledge sources for collaboration
- Calculate demand-based market values for intangible assets
- Extend trusted social networks with recorded contributions, scores, & feedback built into exchange process

- Motivate and institutionalize contribution behavior by answering "what is in it for me?"

You may take a demonstration tour of an applied market strategy for the ILL Community of Practice by following the instructions provided above. Provide any comments you have on the site's Contributor blog space from the main menu.

Note 1: Depending on the scope of information requested, responses may come in as a proposal stating a summary of the possible response and credentials of the responder and quoted point value for completion, for example 10-15 points. When accepted, the responder is tasked to provide the complete response by a deadline. For information requests smaller in scope, the response may contain the entire submission rather than a proposed submission. In this case a limited summary view and responder's response history and credentials are provided with the response. To view the complete response, the requestor accepts the response based on the summary and credentials. The acceptance commits the requestor to provide a point value within the quoted value, such as 1-5 points.

Note 2: The score (points) awarded for the transaction should correlate to the feedback provided on the transaction (preferably automated). So if the average feedback score on a transaction was a 4 out of possible 5, the points awarded should be equivalent. For a point value of 1-5 "quoted" and agreed upon for the response, a point value of 4 is appropriate value for the transaction. If the point value was 6-10, a value of 9 is appropriate for the exchange. Feedback is mandatory for these transactions and enforced with a time limit and scoring penalty for non-submission.

For further information regarding this strategy or the research behind it, please see the web-site at www.c4imarkets.com.