Virtual Knowledge Communities in an Industrial Environment

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Introduction:

Honeywell CA is a worldwide company leader in industrial automation. As a high tech business, needs to have its employees on the top of the technological advancements which means permanent training and development. Also it is going through a process for making digital all the activities including employees training. The strategy being used is the creation of a Knowledge Communities (KC) portal in the Intranet. This strategy is being supported and implemented in order to achieve the most of the employees learning by using the many opportunities available in that site. In this paper, the emphasis is the learning processes, cost reduction and goals. There will be also analysed the pros and cons of that modality of training for one Latin American affiliated.

Knowledge Communities at Honeywell IA Portal:

A KC is a remote virtual space for communication, problem solving, lesson learned sharing, training and knowledge building among Honeywell employees. It is a very rich learning environment represented in a portal that includes: 1) Knowledge Communities on products, markets, disciplines, roles and methodologies, and certifications. 2) templates, video tutorials, tips and tricks. 3) Training by using on line presentations, video tutorials ordered and schedule. 4) Links. 5) e-Library. 6) Other key information resources.

The Knowledge Communities: There are 60 knowledge communities in the industrial portal by disciplines, products, markets, roles and methodologies. Each KC has a similar structure: members, best practices, tools, topics, lesson learned. The rationale behind each one is: sharing knowledge, problem solving, challenging our professionals and collaborating to improve and innovate for the generation of new knowledge. Each one has a Knowledge Manager.

Training: The Employee Learning Portal includes courses, links for training, video tutorials, on line presentations, technical support and certifications. This is one the portal most important features for the digitization of the company. It is expected to reduce in a very significant amount training investment. Benefits expected: maintain people up dated on products and technology in a more effective way. On line training sessions are available to people anytime. Distance learning on line is also scheduled. The training opportunities and options are renewed and scheduled maintaining people up dated.

E-Library: people can find documents, resources and e-books in digital format. Key to Honeywell digitization initiatives as well as efforts to reduce paper copies.

Links: There are 60 links to possible sources of information, tools and key sites.

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**Other Key Information Resources:** there is available a diversity of information from airlines, dictionaries, people, search engines, writing guide, business, organizational charts, news, etc.

**Cost Reduction Measures:**

The system implemented in the portal permits to measure cost reduction by asking questions regarding: the number of people being trained, T&L costs if the training was taken in another place. That information is recorded and reports presented to the site administrator.

**Some Advantages:**

- Sharing of knowledge at most, that was not done before.
- Lesson Learned sharing between world wide affiliates
- Improving of communication
- Cost Reduction

**Challenges:**

- Creation of the distance learning culture among employees.
- Creation of the knowledge sharing among people
- Creation of incentives for training on the web achieved