Lotus Professional Services applies knowledge sharing inside and out, delivering sophisticated solutions quickly.

Overview

- **Business Challenge**
  Provide staff easy access to enterprisewide knowledge resources from anywhere in the world; Leverage intellectual capital to deliver client solutions more efficiently

- **User Community**
  1,800 consultants and other employees worldwide

- **Knowledge Management Solution**
  Knowledge Network for Interested Communities (KNIC), a global knowledge network portal based on WebSphere® Portal; Lotus Discovery Server™; Lotus Domino™; Lotus Workflow; Lotus Domino.Doc; Lotus Sametime™

- **Business Value**
  Single source to capture, manage and reuse for multiple projects the people, places and things of value; Ability to easily identify experts and leverage enterprisewide knowledge; Increased collaboration and staff efficiency; New revenue source from customized KNIC implementations

There's no substitute for firsthand experience, which explains why people who have “been there” are typically perceived to possess high credibility. In testifying to the far-reaching benefits and intricacies of knowledge management (KM), Lotus Professional Services (LPS) has indeed been there. The global consulting organization can stand behind its KM solutions with confidence and conviction because it uses them internally every day.

“Knowledge management is groundbreaking for our community. It generates better and broader collaboration around our valuable intellectual capital, reduces search times for information and helps us deliver solutions to clients faster.”

– Steve Robinson, Vice-President, Lotus WW Professional Consulting
Through consulting, education and support services, LPS helps its customers apply technology to solve core business challenges. An increasingly formidable challenge LPS faces is how to capture, preserve and leverage corporate knowledge. By creating an intellectual capital (IC) management tool that also has potential to be sold to customers around the world, LPS is becoming one of its own most compelling success stories.

Prior to 2000, LPS used a vast number of knowledge databases, and keeping them up to date was tedious and time consuming. The organization’s steadily growing staff sometimes was unaware that many of the databases existed, especially if they had been created by specialty sub-teams. “Quickly finding the most useful information and resources—such as best practices for running a workshop, migration tips on the latest software versions or the software code itself—was difficult,” says LPS Program Manager Paul Adams. “And validating those things was almost impossible without contacting the document creator.” Individuals relied on their limited personal networks—a peer in the next cubicle or colleagues with whom they worked on a project or interacted in a training course. As a result, staff members could spend inefficient hours spinning their wheels or duplicating efforts.

To tap into its rich but unmanaged IC, LPS created the Knowledge Network for Interested Communities (KNIC). Developed with Lotus K-station (now part of the WebSphere Portal Family), Lotus Discovery Server, Lotus Domino, Lotus Domino.Doc, Lotus Workflow and Lotus Sametime, KNIC is a knowledge management portal on which information from various sources is collected and linked.

Through consulting, education and support services, LPS helps its customers apply technology to solve core business challenges. An increasingly formidable challenge LPS faces is how to capture, preserve and leverage corporate knowledge. By creating an intellectual capital (IC) management tool that also has potential to be sold to customers around the world, LPS is becoming one of its own most compelling success stories.

Prior to 2000, LPS used a vast number of knowledge databases, and keeping them up to date was tedious and time consuming. The organization’s steadily growing staff sometimes was unaware that many of the databases existed, especially if they had been created by specialty sub-teams. “Quickly finding the most useful information and resources—such as best practices for running a workshop, migration tips on the latest software versions or the software code itself—was difficult,” says LPS Program Manager Paul Adams. “And validating those things was almost impossible without contacting the document creator.” Individuals relied on their limited personal networks—a peer in the next cubicle or colleagues with whom they worked on a project or interacted in a training course. As a result, staff members could spend inefficient hours spinning their wheels or duplicating efforts.

To tap into its rich but unmanaged IC, LPS created the Knowledge Network for Interested Communities (KNIC). Developed with Lotus K-station (now part of the WebSphere Portal Family), Lotus Discovery Server, Lotus Domino, Lotus Domino.Doc, Lotus Workflow and Lotus Sametime, KNIC is a knowledge management portal on which information from various sources is collected and linked.

“By providing interactive insight into the corporate memory, knowledge management makes LPS a better place to work, helping to ensure that our people have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.”

—Paul Adams, Program Manager, Lotus Professional Services

Today, the only wheels spinning within LPS are the creative ones in users’ minds, as they conduct searches, share knowledge assets and apply best practices. And, while KNIC is too new to have quantified its benefits, the quick adoption by 2,000 global staff members says it all.
“Knowledge management is groundbreaking for our community,” says Steve Robinson, vice president of Lotus WW Professional Consulting. “It generates better and broader collaboration around our valuable intellectual capital, reduces search times for information and helps us to deliver solutions to clients faster.”

**Bringing together a world of insights**

KNIC permits easy access to LPS’s vast IC resources worldwide. Whether in house or at a client’s site, LPS consultants have virtually instantaneous information-gathering, collaboration and realtime chat capabilities. LPS sales managers can speed proposal preparation by reviewing documents created for similar implementations. Project managers can pull together top-notch project teams at a moment’s notice by quickly locating experts around the world to participate. Technical staff can reuse code knowing that it is proven by experience. Based on their personal profiles, users can also receive e-mail alerts to ongoing discussions of interest and to new IC submissions to the KNIC portal.

“By providing interactive insight into the corporate memory, knowledge management makes LPS a better place to work, helping to ensure that our people have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs,” explains Adams. “Learning is accelerated. New hires can become quickly acclimated. And through leveraging intellectual capital, we’re able to deliver solutions to our clients that have been proven to work in the real world.”

**Making the knowledge management connection**

KNIC integrates several Lotus tools to manage the IC lifecycle, which includes the submission, review and approval stages, as well as the ability to reuse and adapt archived proposals, presentations, solution templates and code. On the front end, a community based portal provides the single point of entry into KNIC, tying the content, applications and people together and allowing users to search for qualified information and individual experts, engage in documented discussion groups or conduct instant chats with Sametime. Domino is the back-end server.

Discovery Server, with its abilities to create taxonomies to catalog and index documents, manages and maintains lists of experts and searches for experts on request. When authorized by an individual (in compliance with some countries’ privacy laws), Discovery Server also tracks relevant end-user activity to continually update its expert profiles.

Lotus Workflow manages the internal approval process of newly submitted IC. “If a consultant submits a piece of specialized code for reuse in other projects, the Lotus Workflow engine queries Discovery Server, which provides a list of experts on the code. Domino Workflow then automatically e-mails these experts to assess their interest in reviewing the submission,” explains Oliver Heinz, senior marketing manager, Lotus Knowledge Management Product Group. “When the code is approved, a synopsis of the IC is stored in a Domino database, and the file itself is archived in a Domino.Doc library.” Files can be stored in one or multiple languages; only the summary must be in English.

In addition to saving time, this review process enriches the end product by calling on the most qualified individuals for input. Similarly, KNIC allows LPS to identify “hot” topics and issues by tapping into Discovery Server's analytical capabilities to assign an affinity score each time a particular piece of IC is accessed or reviewed.
“The value of the validation process goes beyond the obvious benefit of efficiency,” notes Adams. “Participation by experts allows us to identify high-quality intellectual capital and document the instances as best practices.”

**Building on a knowledge management foundation**

KNIC builds on LPS’s original knowledge management tool, the Intellectual Capital Management System (ICMS). While widely adopted, the Domino-based ICMS lacked some of the realtime collaboration functions that are now catapulting the organization to new levels of efficiency. In fact, LPS is so pleased with KNIC that the group considers it a valuable selling tool to showcase each of the individual Lotus knowledge management products and demonstrate how well they work together. And, KNIC can be customized for any organization, including Lotus customers.

The scope of knowledge management will continue to expand at LPS. Discovery Server may soon manage documents from sources other than KNIC, enabling the initiation of even broader searches from the WebSphere Portal. KNIC’s “smart” tracking abilities could be applied to encourage users to take action—to review IC, for instance. And KNIC is just one place in what will eventually be a completely integrated portal of tools for each consultant.

“Our knowledge management tool is a living example of the Lotus knowledge management vision—the successful interaction among ‘people, places and things,'” says Adams. “Our people can offer their insights by meeting in virtual workplaces to take advantage of information, best practices and other valuable things. With this platform in place, there’s no limit to what we can do.”

For more information

Please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit us at:
ibm.com/websphere/portalfamily

For more information about Lotus Professional Services, visit:
www.lotus.com