Knowledge Management Practices for Managed Services: A Case Study of Sirius Computer Solutions

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Abstract - *The paper discourses a case study of implementing and practicing Knowledge Management (KM)at Sirius Computer Solutions (Sirius). The indulgent of KM in Sirius panorama, and the cycle of deployment of Knowledge Management System (KMS) is well addressed in the paper. The KM program was initiated in Sirius with focus on harnessing the tacit knowledge of employees who have best situational awareness. KM practices at Sirius is pertained to be a set of activities that ensure knowledge created in all business interactions are captured, categorized and stored in organizational body of knowledge for future purposes i.e. organizational learning and reuse. The aim of KM program and its practice in Sirius is to connect individual and collective knowledge of workforce and transform the same into organization effectiveness in market place in generating workable modest advantage.*

Keywords:Knowledge Management, Knowledge Management System, Managed Services, Sirius Computer Solutions, Subject Matter Experts.

Introduction

Knowledge Management (KM) at Sirius Computer Solutions (Sirius) has been chosen as one of the several strategical tools to enable growth by sharing best practices of customer accomplishment and modernizing teams of different countries. KM aims to have one common database of knowledge assets to promote selling and cross-selling across uprights and topographies.

KM program was initiated in a project form at smaller scale to pilot out the practicability and suitability for the Managed Services (MS) business in Sirius. Later, it was mapped to meet the strategic business objectives without losing sight of the actual knowledge needs of the workforce. The development and roll-out was well planned in phases to ensure scheme goes the 'first time right'. The results of first project in Sirius India were used to demonstrate the value of KM to other organizational entities and countries.

Sirius Computer Solutions: An Overview

Sirius Computer Solutions (Sirius) is an internationally leading provider of information technology solutions and services from consulting to systems integration and IT infrastructure management. Based in Texas and offices in India, Sirius is a national integrator of technology-based business solutions that span the enterprise, including the data center and lines of business.

As a cross-sector business Sirius supports the IT Strategy, Security, Business Innovation, Could and Managed Solutions as well as Industry Solutions. Managed Services (MS) is the business division of Sirius Solutions and Services. MS in Sirius is involved in end-to-end

solutions, including strategy development, technology selection, implementation, and operations. Sirius offer multiple delivery MS models as shown in Figure 1 including: on premise, off-premise, cloud, and as-a-service mode.

Managed Cloud Services

We help make your cloud initiatives successful—from the application to migration and management.

- Cloud Enablement Services
- Managed Private Cloud
- Managed Cloud – AWS
- Managed Security For AWS
- Power Cloud
- SIEM as a Service
- Monitoring as a Service
- Patching as a Service
- Service Management as a Service
- Backup as a Service

Advanced Application Services

Sirius will help you modernize, transform, and migrate applications to cloud infrastructures.

- Application Modernization
- Managed Cloud Application Services
- Advanced Analytics

Managed Infrastructure Services

Leverage ITIL-based monitoring and management services to help you manage your existing environments and focus on your value-driving initiatives.

- Platforms
- OS
- Database
- Storage
- Network
- Unified Communications
- Application Managed Services
- Service Management

One Touch Support

More than just a phone number to call when something breaks, OneTouch provides premium support from senior engineers familiar with your environment.

Managed Security Services

We offer proactive management services to reduce your security burden, with a focus on continuous engineering and tuning. We secure both your on-premise and future-state environments.

- Managed Next Gen Firewall
- Managed SIEM
- Managed Malware
- Managed Proxy

Managed Resiliency Services

We help you maintain business continuity, and recover critical applications and data.

- Managed Backup
- Managed Disaster Recovery
- Managed High Availability

Enterprise Colocation

Run strategic cloud workloads at our Tier III data center in Chicago or through other third-party facilities.

- Industry-leading security features
- Private, high-density suites

Aggregation Services

We help you identify, select and procure colocation and connectivity, including private public and alternate service offerings.

- Global colocation evaluation & selection
- Connectivity portfolio analysis & procurement
- Software-Defined Wide Area Network
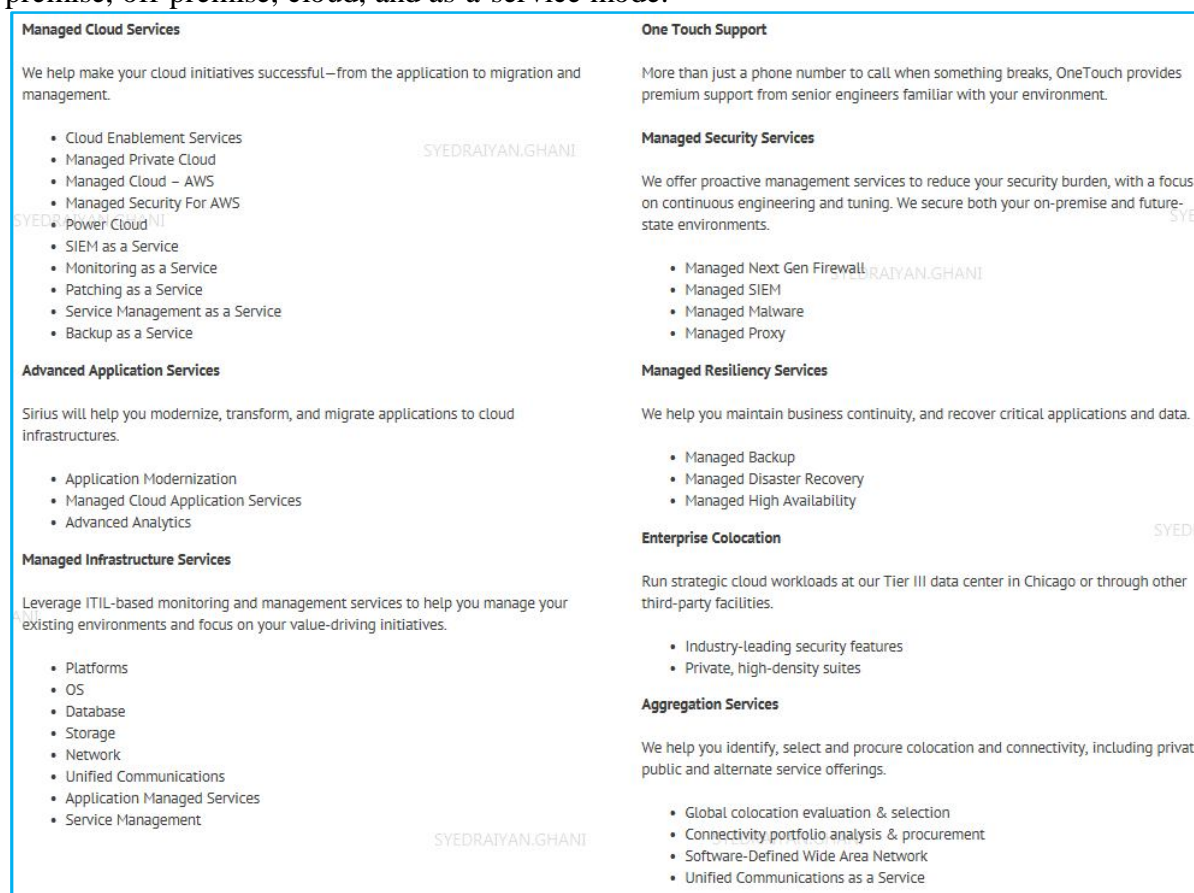- Unified Communications as a Service

Figure 1: Sirius Managed Services and Solutions

Knowledge Management: An Empirical Review

KM defines the cognizant and logical management of the means of knowledge and its directed application within an organization. (Raimond& Eden, 1990). The knowledge of company can be formulated in twocrucial ways: ameliorate the processes of havingexperienced people and formulate the practices of sharing knowledge among them (Burlton,1998).

The individual is at the center of all KM initiatives (Davenport,1998). This argument is important both for the foundation of KMmechanisms and also for the accomplishing of KMprocesses due to the circumstance that the introduction of any new innovation is contingent on employee support (Ghani, 2011).

Workforces are not ordinary users of a Knowledge Management System (KMS), but they alsoengender and lead knowledge to the KMS. Acknowledgement, in the form of bonuses, for their efforts inknowledge support, staffs can be further drivento add to the various developments of KM. (Ekbia & Hara, 2005).

When KM was introduced at Sirius it was not presented stand alone, but instead in the perspective of augmenting a business process. In the sterner sagacity, it was not about introducing KM, but about applying tangible KM mechanisms and processes that upkeep and boost a specific business process. This guaranteed that the excogitation is applicable to the

place of work and is more effortlesslyagreed by employees. In this perspective, it becomes clear that anample procedure for a persistent and credence-oriented implementation must pave the way the foundation of KMmechanisms and processes. This procedure was largely aligned on the prerequisites of the end user in order to essentiallycontribute to the optimization of a process.

Objectives of the Study

This paper is based on the first-hand learning out of the KM program in Sirius business globally which operates into Managed Services (MS) space. The project model has a target which comes with objectives to be attained:
• Quality in everything Sirius do
• Win new customers
• Better collaboration
• Foster Standardization and Industrialization

Setting Knowledge Management Team and Systems

The requisite for setting up a KM team and systems was felt by top management for multiple business reasons. These reasons attributed for having a robust KM system is distinctly classified in two categories; direct business reasons and the conservative problems addressed by KM. The direct business reasons were i.e. growth strategy in market place, ameliorating operational efficiency, driving consistent look and feel within all constituents of the organization and integrate and create one global organization. The other set of typical reasons for setting up KM were to reduce information search time for workforces, improve learning curves of new members, limit the knowledge drain with employee's attrition, avoid reinvention of the wheel across multiple geographies, improve collaboration among global manpower and last but not least, foster a culture of knowledge centricity and creativeness.

The consultants were used to work in closed teams intermingling within themselves and catering to one client. The proposed model needed to have one consultant working across several projects to enable higher capacity utilization. The next big challenge faced was to contain the mounting cost of operations. Due to the push in last several years for starting new initiative at country level and driving country or region specific approach have led to addition of uneven costs. In addition, outsourcing could not be hard-pressed very strongly due to region specific growth model. The management felt the need to amalgamate all such initiatives and attempt to synergize. For a long-term competitiveness, it was necessary to contain the operational cost and promote outsourcing in big way.

The second set of reasons that led to setting up a KM team at corporate level was to address the orthodox problems identified by KM in any organization. One major taskwas to connect knowledge isles. The challenge was not the inaccessibility of knowledge but the access to the right knowledge at the time when people need it. Another missing link was the circumstantial understanding of the knowledge. It all results into huge information search time which otherwise could have been utilized for more dynamic business purposes.

Gearing KM Strategy for Sirius

KM was first identified as one of the core project under the program of Managed Services (MS) in 2014. It started on a small note in global production center in India. The initial focus

had been to capture incidents and their resolution in a database for driving reuse of the same. The intended benefit was to improve productivity of consultants. After around two quarters, the need was felt to have a broader view of KM. It was also planned that a line function will be instituted which will carry forward the work of the project team and enlarge the scope of KM.

With the advent of the line function, KM team worked out a wide-ranging KM roadmap for MS through a wide-level consultation with KM leadership and country teams. The document also took the strategic business objectives of MS into consideration, the vision of program MS for 2014 and the knowledge needs of the workforce.

The following knowledge needs were identified to begin the further design of the Knowledge Management System (KMS):
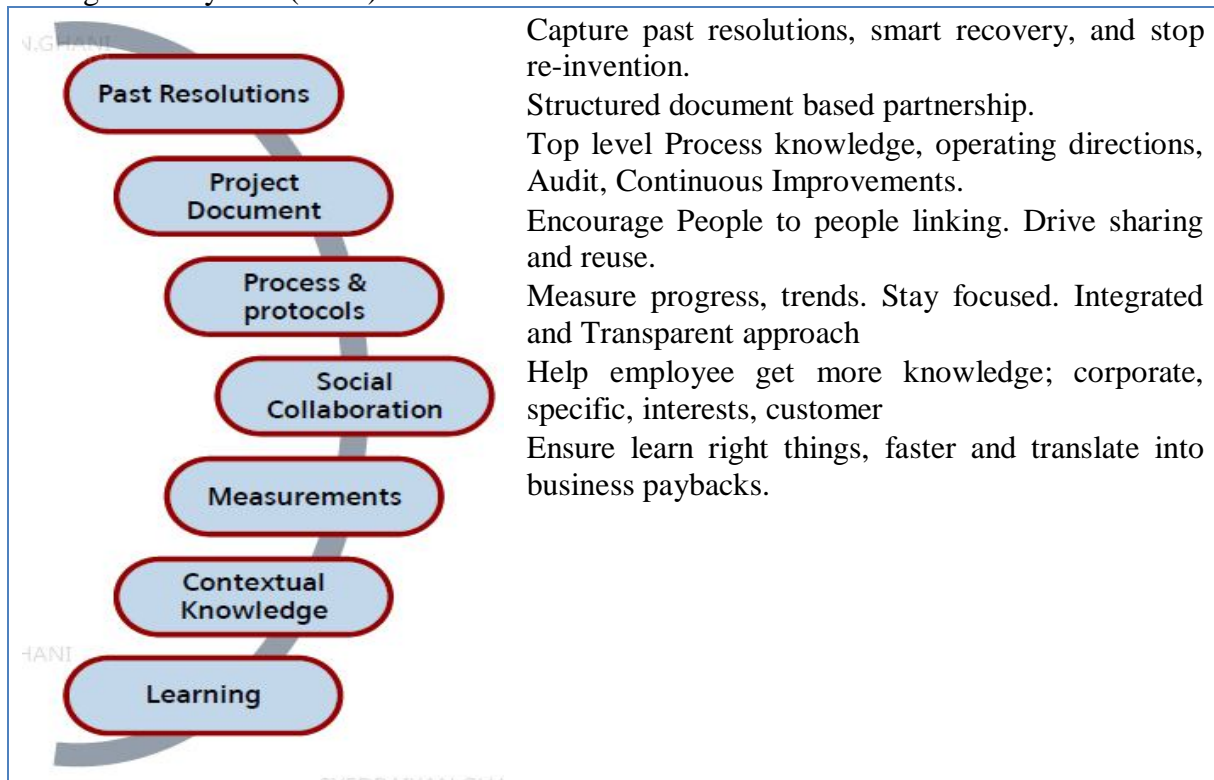

Past Resolutions	Capture past resolutions, smart recovery, and stop re-invention.
Project Document	Structured document based partnership.
Process & protocols	Top level Process knowledge, operating directions, Audit, Continuous Improvements.
Social Collaboration	Encourage People to people linking. Drive sharing and reuse.
Measurements	Measure progress, trends. Stay focused. Integrated and Transparent approach
Contextual Knowledge	Help employee get more knowledge; corporate, specific, interests, customer
Learning	Ensure learn right things, faster and translate into business paybacks.

Figure 2: Knowledge Management System Strategy at Sirius

After analyzing all of the three defining factors of KM strategy, the conceptual modelwas finalized which laid the foundation of basic tenets of KM. The first and foremost,a vision for KM has been carved out from the overall vision of MS.

KMS Strategy and Design for Sirius

The below principles explain the broad frameworks of the design of the KM program aligned to KM which was strategically planned and designed for MS:
- Strongly linked to the Sirius overall business aims
- Emphasis on driving culture of sharing and re-use of knowledge
- Form Sirius organizational body of knowledge for long-term benefit
- Prearranged (documented) to cater knowledge needs of the work-force
- Capture business dealdata. Experiential knowledge (tacit and explicit) and external knowledge to meet all-rounds needs of the consultants

- Guarantees knowledge is provided at the point of need
- Deals a combination of pull (self-service) and push (facilitated transfer) services to consultants
- Influence power of communities in safeguarding knowledge sharing
- Helps to bring several organizational units closer by providing opportunities of social collaboration and standardized documentation structure
- Measure business and financial impact of the reuse

Deployment of KM System for Sirius

The KM program at Sirius offers three services. Begin with, pull services (self-service) thatcontribute and retrieve knowledge as and when one's need it. Secondly, push services (facilitated transfer of knowledge) determined by the need of the organization. And, third, community exchange where aristocrats and experts join hands to discuss and share knowledge.

In the deployment of the KM System following procedures were taken care:

- KM strategy, plan, development design, training and support are provided by Global KM team
- Process Enhancement Management and Production unit determined regularization across MS
- Each local unit or Global Production Centers has a KM coordinator responsible for driving KM performance in the unit
- Every Global Production Center has a demand manager for confirming change and enhancement
- Infrastructure is maintained by a technical team which has a strong functional and technical skills
- Communication is managed through the Internal Communication Team
- Weekly reporting on KM whereabouts feeds into all offices of units heads and MS Head
- There were KM specific roles that are set-up i.e. Subject Matter Experts (SME) for each unit and global service areas.
- There was a point based system which was interlinked with every knowledge involvement and reprocess. So every knowledge operation gets recognized by offerings points to an individual.

Key Success Factors for KM in Sirius

Key success factors for KM project in Sirius can be counted as:

- Recently, good support coming in from country heads
- Parent organization, Global Operations toencourage KM initiative
- Strong linkage of KM with business objective which helps in generating buy-in from users
- Counselling approach in arriving at key features of design
- Formal set-up of regular and regular dialogue between global KM team and local country team
- A comprehensive and user-friendly KMS which keeps on getting enhanced regularly. The evolution of the system is an on-going feature.
- KM measurements have been proving very handy in driving engagement

Challenges of KM Deployment at Sirius

The challenging part was the mid-level teams which are usually very busy with too many in operation issues. The effect of top level buy-in did not directly saturated down as estimated. Hence exhaustive dialog started on regular basis. Things began to change when KM team could find few organizers and campaigners in each country who lead as the key change negotiators. Also, a new role of country KM coordinator was contributory in driving the change. Still in some nicks, KM performance dashboards are not being paid enough attention. But, it is probably too early to expect quick reversals in the remaining groups of people who are usual late changers. For sure, the value of many of KM tools and practicalities are slowly established at organizational level.

One of the most decisive factors was to involve real knowledge creators of theorganization. The guarantee of the top team did not influence the behaviors ofconsultants as much as initiallyassumed. This was true in initial phase but laterthings upgraded with collective efforts of local and global KM team.

Conclusion

KM Services offered are amalgamation of pull (self-service) and push services (facilitated transfer) specially intended to meet the needs of consultants. There is a vigorous measurement system around KM practice to ensure all contribution and non-adherence gets recounted. While the initiative is hardlythree years old in SCS, the early signs of success point out that change management strategy and plan are on the accurate track and other process and universal challenges are addressed suitably.

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