How can Companies Retain the Knowledge the Software Development Team has Built into a Solution?

Knowledge Transfer Basics - Part 3

by Laura Morey

Enterprise software solutions, especially those that solve innovation and product development challenges, are difficult to implement and even more challenging to sustain. Are you creating saboteurs or advocates? Here’s how successful knowledge transfer can make or break your implementation.

It’s basic human nature for your team to want to understand how their actions fit into the greater whole. Without a clear sightline into the entire organization, people feel isolated, which feeds disconnection and is one of the root causes of fear and cynicism. To ensure a successful implementation and transfer into daily operations, be sure that the knowledge the software developers have built into the solution is communicated to the end users.

Beyond just eliminating the nay-sayers, sponsors of large software implementations need to create passionate advocates for the system. Just as educating the consumer on the value of a product is a key component of establishing a brand, educating teams on the new system is an essential step in gaining enthusiastic buy-in. This education requires work that is often seen as superfluous and soft, but successful project sponsors recognize the value of knowledge transfer and look beyond PowerPoint and traditional classroom training.

The first step towards sustainable success is looking at knowledge transfer from a systems level. By creating a closed loop of knowledge, project sponsors integrate the learning into a larger cycle of continuous improvement. This increases visibility to the metrics used to measure success, their owners, and the reason for those metrics.

Next, place high value on documenting the associated knowledge. You probably spent a lot of time documenting and perfecting the language in the contract you signed with the software provider. You need to spend even more time on knowledge transfer to assure that crucial information is delivered to those who need it most.

Finally, two additional key factors to retaining knowledge are accessibility of information and the delivery model. Create on-demand learning environments that deliver learning when the users want to access it in a manner that best suits their learning style, and pair with workshops that allow further exploration of the material. This one-two punch improves comprehension, increases active involvement in learning, boosts user confidence in their abilities and communicates to each individual that their understanding is valued.

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Laura Morey, CPG Business Manager, is perpetually curious about the world around her, thinks chocolate should be a food group of its own, and is ever-hopeful that the Cleveland Browns will win a Super Bowl in her lifetime.