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Knowledge Management Roundtable Recap: Measuring the Value of Your KM Program

* **Why are we measuring?**

*There is an intangible nature of knowledge. It is hard to connect the dots. KM programs are difficult to measure. You should use both quantitative and qualitative measures to tell your story. Show the value that you bring. We all have busy jobs, so measuring a KM program or resource might not be the first thing on our agendas. It is key to show ROI and KPI for your KM programs. It is not always realistic to show KPI at the outset of a KM project.*

* Assessing past performance of KM program
* Assessing use of current KM resources – Allot resources
* Business case for future spend
  + Reporting to Leadership
    - Another reason to measure your KM program is the need to report to leadership; need to quantify and justify your existence to upper management. Promoting KM resources is more internally focused. Client facing – both internally and externally. We need to tell leadership what we are doing is important and why.
  + Consider your purpose(s) and audience(s)
    - Your audience is very important. Sometimes you might get pushback. Is this thing being used or not? Think in advance who you will speak to regarding the value of your KM program.
    - Corporate perspective - In many corporate environments, the KM program is a small part of a huge company. The goals are to encourage use, measure what is being used, and why it is being used. The objective is to show efficiencies and how to optimize knowledge for employees. Unlike law firms, corporations do not have to worry about billable hours. There is no mandate to use certain tools. However, it is important to make sure that the right KM tools are being used.
* **What are we measuring? How can KM be measured?**
  + Quantitative vs. Qualitative measurements
    - Nature of what we do needs data gathering, storytelling, anecdotal insights, etc.
    - Generating revenue, reducing administrative spend or client wins are all great success stories to share. It is important to tie your KM programs to client activities.
  + Metrics
    - Metrics are used as a talking point. Metrics for each quarter such as views of documents, opening documents, editing documents, and creating documents are compiled. For each practice group, a dashboard was created to show the actual numbers. The goal is to show quarter to quarter progress. They have noticed that sharing best practices has generated a lot of good discussion. Each practice group will have its own story and will rely on different metrics. Main drivers are risk management, efficiency, etc.
    - Data visualization technology is an effective way to present your story. Tie data to a dashboard view. Examples include: total searches, frequent searches, usage by role, usage by subject matter area, etc. When looking at data, see if you can detect if one audience is moving away from a KM tool or service. Does this KM resource serve the administrative community, the professional community, or both?
    - Infographics gather data points around usage, no deep dive. They show how much stuff is going on. KM programs are not as visible or as loud in most firms or corporations. Infographics help to show the volume of usage. Use entry points to tell stories. If needed, you can always get more granular to tell stories and share with management. Use metrics to show adoption and growth.
    - Create action items – visualization shows whether KM programs are being adopted or not.
    - Examples of metrics:
    - Time spent (margin on AFAs, admin time saved)
    - Revenue gained
    - Views, opens, shares, downloads on electronic resources
    - Search metrics
    - Heat maps for communications
    - Participants on collaborative platforms
    - Surveys
  + Varying levels of granularity
  + Qualitative

*You must have quality data to measure your KM programs against. Often when piloting new technology, you must rely on a pilot group to make sure it is useful for your practice or law firm. Storytelling will carry the day.*

* + - Surveys (gauging user impressions, experiences)
      * Surveys to convey success. Participation is always an issue. Can glean some information from surveys, but have to look at the participation rate. Be sure to include targeted questions. Pick the right people to speak on behalf of your KM program. Do a deep dive with specific folks rather than doing blanket surveys. Obtaining feedback from group settings/smaller groups might be a better alternative than conducting a formal survey.
      * UI/UX
      * Success stories, particularly from clients
* **The Value of your KM program. How do you show it?**
  + $ based valuations
  + Data visualization
    - What types of tools are you using? Precedent research, dashboards on practice group SharePoint sites. You can use Google Analytics, and/or use Tableau to visualize KM use
* Story telling
* Client experience
  + - Try to capture client stories, incoming work. This value will resonate with audiences. Using a particular type of technology, for example. Other examples – worked with a client as part of a pilot program; worked with a client as part of an iterative tool.
  + Tools with reporting mechanisms
    - You can use Excel – provides the ability to review search logs. Use a SQL query on the back end. This is a manual process. For the library, use OneLog to track data for electronic resources. Usage metrics by specific practice groups or user roles are important. Use library request ticketing systems. Use Excel charts. Infographics have been well received. They allow you to quickly present data in a visually pleasing manner.
* **Using metrics to drive adoption**
  + What are these metrics telling you, and how do you move forward with this data?
  + What to do vs what not to do (resources and activities to de-prioritize)
    - Find adoption stories internally within your firm or organization. Perhaps a practice group to automate the bulk of their forms, document assembly, who else is doing this? Point to other practice groups, always be prepared to answer the question “who is using this”? Gather stories from other law firms or your colleagues about what they are doing. Speak with ILTA attendees and network at conference meetings. Build up a library of articles, show data as to what people in the industry are doing. Obtain testimonials to see what other people are working on.
* End of the year infographics help raise awareness of all the KM tools a firm has to offer.
* Dashboards – important to have data in your face every day. It is extremely helpful.
* **Library Resources - Measuring adoption/usage and value**

*The purpose for measuring the performance of a library is to see how well it meets the needs of the law firm as a whole. What value do we offer? Does the library help contribute to the firm’s revenues? Does the library improve the quality of the services provided to the firm’s clients?*

* + For electronic subscriptions, there are tools such as OneLog and Research Monitor that allow you to track the usage of online resources. With these usage reports, you can normally categorize the data by an individual user, a practice group, or a city office location.
  + If resources are being underutilized, you will then know that you need to market or promote them more.
  + The usage reports can then be reviewed/shared with your vendors so that you can negotiate better contract terms and either increase or decrease license seats.
  + If you have fixed fee agreements/flat rate contracts, you should also consider obtaining monthly savings reports from your larger vendors – Westlaw and Lexis come to mind. These reports will help you track your contract savings versus the current retail rates being charged by the vendors.
  + For print subscriptions, your best bet to measure adoption and usage is with an integrated library system. An example would be EOS.Web by SirsiDynix. EOS.Web has a circulation module that keeps track of which books are checked out from the library. You can also scan any books or materials that are not formally checked out but have been removed from the shelf or placed on a shelving cart. If books are moving, you know you have made a worthwhile investment. If particular treatises or volumes have not moved in some time, then they would be good candidates for cancellation.
* **Library Staff**
  + Measuring the performance of the library staff should be done both quantitatively and qualitatively.
  + On the quantitative side, gather monthly statistics based on the number of research requests that are handled, the number of automated docket alerts the library sends out, and the number of loose-leaf filings completed. These are just some general examples.
  + Also gather accounting information each month to see how much time the reference librarians are billing to clients as well as the actual revenue they are generating.
  + Compile all of the statistics and figures are in a spreadsheet format. You can then use some of these numbers when compiling quarterly or semi-annual reports.
  + On the qualitative side, compile quarterly accomplishment or “kudos” reports that tell stories on the specific types of projects the librarians have worked on. It is a good idea to highlight unique or difficult research projects that showcase the value library provides. For example – conducted background research on 100 potential jurors, compiled a legislative history on the Lanham Act, etc.
  + It is important to show that the library provides value by saving the time of the attorneys and other professional staff members.
* **Library Miscellaneous**
  + Surveys can provide value feedback. With SurveyMonkey, you can create surveys quickly and easily. Send out surveys periodically and ask questions related to specific resources or library services in general. If the surveys are brief, to the point, and easy to complete, more individuals will take the time to fill them out. If your firm has a summer associate program, it is helpful to survey the associates before they leave to find out which library services were helpful and which were not.
  + For general benchmarking purposes, obtain and review the annual “Survey of Law Firm Management, Library and Research Professionals” that is published by American Lawyer Media or ALM. The report includes metrics on librarian salaries, library finances and expenses, relationships with vendors, staffing and resources for the AmLaw 200 firms. This data is valuable and an effective way to compare your library with other law firm libraries.