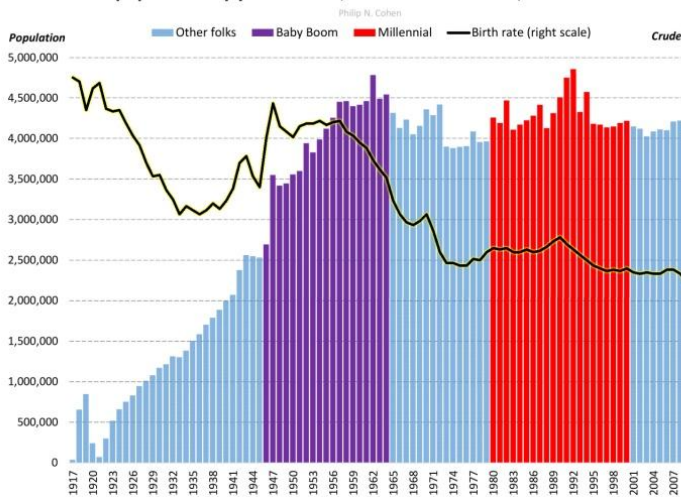


Smarter Innovation: Innovation through the Knowledge Continuity Process (*Abstract*)

Editor's note: John Hovell explores the centrality of conversation in a tacit knowledge- sharing process known as "knowledge continuity." The process involves experts' sharing with "nex'perts," who, in turn, translate from the experts context to future contexts. Hovell details four Knowledge Continuity steps and roles, and recounts millions of dollars of impact at Lockheed- Martin and BAE Systems. KC is social integration at its best. -- Katrina Pugh, Columbia University

Have you ever feared how you would continue to innovate and operate after your smartest employees left the organization? Many organizations are not prepared to handle the upcoming change in employee demographics due to retirements, mergers and acquisitions, economic changes and continuous re-organizations. By the year 2020, many organizations will find a high percentage of their employees and knowledge is "gone".

2012 population by year of birth, and crude birth rate, 1917-2012



Source: American Community Survey, US Census

Conversation is central to a knowledge sharing process known as Knowledge Continuity (KC). KC's four steps and four roles result in process improvements, innovation and employee engagement. KC is action-directed, a bold process for knowledge flow and accountability that addresses a critical gap in knowledge-transfer methods: Acting on knowledge-elicited. Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems and several other organizations are embracing KC as part of their

knowledge sharing, collaboration and innovation strategies.

As said, KC is a four step process supported by 3 roles. The three team roles are:

1. Expert is typically the person(s) leaving the role or the organization.
2. Next expert(s), affectionately called the Nex'pert(s) are the people most likely to continue in the role, or the tasks of the role.
3. The practitioner(s) are the people that have expressed an ambition or future desire for the role and practicing in the domain.

The four steps are:

1. Identify the unique and critical knowledge that needs to be shared.
2. Share the identified knowledge via conversations.
3. Document or codify the knowledge, converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge.
4. Apply the knowledge. By practicing the job day to day, deep learning ensues.

KC ensures the critical knowledge is not lost. For organizational memory and sustainability, KC teams study, discuss and practice roles in safety. KC is a consummate innovation process. Teams innovate across boundaries, socially integrate the old and new, and continually validate capabilities.

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