

Knowledge Jam

Knowledge Jam is a facilitated and collaborative process to surface tacit (unwritten) knowledge, and get it into circulation.

Organizations often fail to glean insights from their experienced employees and veteran teams – especially when those insights deal with failures. Consider this:

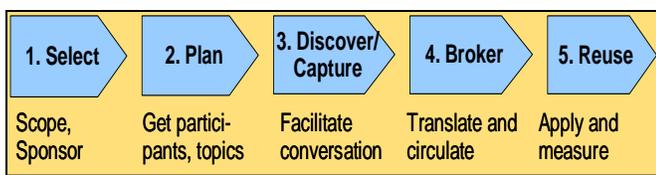
- A team has shaved several weeks off of the delivery of an application or service, but leaders fail to match that elsewhere;
- A seasoned manager is moving to a new division (or leaving the company altogether). She has been managing a critical account or research path solo;
- A technician has figured out how to solve a thorny problem, but is so overbooked he can't write it out.

Discovering hidden insights is only half the battle. Putting those insights to work is just as important. If your organization sees critical tacit knowledge going untapped, then Knowledge Jam may be right for you.

Knowledge Jam Methodology

Knowledge Jam is a proven methodology for knowledge discovery and action planning. As a collaborative knowledge-elicitation process, Knowledge Jam produces not just written insights, but also informed action. Knowledge Jam uses a five-step approach:

Knowledge Jam Approach



Hallmarks are *Facilitation*, *Conversation* and *Translation*:

Facilitation

The facilitator plans and coordinates the Knowledge Jam, establishes a sharing “climate,” and helps to stimulate connections among knowers (“Originators”) and seekers.

The facilitator draws out the curiosity and motivation of knowledge-seekers and helps make insights transparent.

Conversation

Knowledge-seekers responsible for reusing the knowledge (e.g., in their processes, training, or products) are called “Brokers.” Brokers and Originators join the facilitator in selecting the topics, and planning and conducting the Discover/Capture “conversation.”

As someone who understood the benefits of Knowledge Harvesting but didn't like the process, I now have a changed perspective because of you. Knowledge management is a piece of business that seems inefficient and a necessary evil when you are the one giving the information. But once you are the one on the other side – receiving the knowledge and using it to your benefit – it becomes clear why it is important.

Senior Program Manager, Fortune 500 Tech Company

Common terms, respectful dialogue, and a single visualization of the emerging topics yield a shared sense of ownership among Knowledge Jam participants.

Translation

Brokers “pay it forward”: Their role is to put the knowledge to work. They do this by translating knowledge for other users, such as project teams, product planners, process improvers, or new employees.

During the Discover/Capture event, facilitators encourage the Brokers to ask questions to help Originators “get out” not just content, but also context and reasoning. Armed with this, Brokers can more easily translate knowledge. Frequently, they extend the conversation in Web 2.0

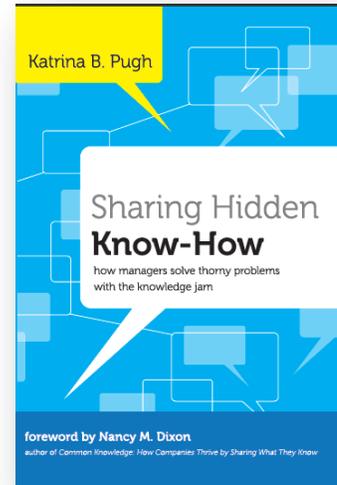
Results

Ultimately, diverse Originators, Brokers, and other seekers collaborate – helping the organization to convert knowledge into profit before the competition does.

To explore where Knowledge Jams will help your organization, visit www.alignconsultinginc.com



Katrina (Kate) Pugh is president of Align Consulting, specializing in business planning and knowledge-based transformation. She is also on the faculty of the Columbia University Information and Knowledge Strategy Masters Program, and authored [*Sharing Hidden Know-How: How Managers Solve Thorny Problems with the Knowledge Jam*](#) (Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2011). Kate has 17 years of consulting and seven years of industry experience in the healthcare, energy, financial services, and nonprofit sectors. Kate held leadership positions with IBM, Fidelity, JPMorgan, and Intel Corporation. Kate has an MS/MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management, has a BA in Economics from Williams College, and has certificates in project management, facilitation, mediation, and LEAN Six Sigma. Kate has performed Knowledge Jams with Fidelity Investments, Forest Bioproducts Research Institute, Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Intel Corporation, Save the Children and many other organizations.



More Reading:

[“Knowledge Jam: Three Disciplines to Beat the Merger Performance Odds,”](#) by Katrina Pugh, *Ivey Business Journal*, July/August, 2011.

[“Channeling Insight into Action,”](#) by Katrina Pugh, *KM World 2011* presentation, November, 2011.

[“Don’t Just Capture Knowledge – Put It to Work,”](#) by Katrina Pugh and Nancy M. Dixon, *Harvard Business Review*, May 2008.

[“Talk Trumps Text for Sharing Hidden Know-How”](#) by Nancy Settle Murphy and Katrina Pugh in *IT Performance Improvement*, August 16, 2011.