KMWORLD: CONNECTING TO THE "PEOPLE" KM PILLAR
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This year's KMWorld conference was titled "Hacking KM: People, Processes, & Technology" and took place November 14 - 17 at the JW Marriott in Washington DC. At first glance, this title made me very excited as I too agree that a successful knowledge management strategy must incorporate these three foundational pillars if the strategy is to be successful. As I continued to read KMWorld's teaser information on their site, I knew I had to attend (for my second year in a row) as I was especially drawn to their connection of the three pillars to the requirement of community building within the enterprise. Taking this approach moves the "people" pillar one step deeper into helping all knowledge workers — and especially knowledge strategists — really understand how and why people interact, not just at a high level in what they do or what resources they need to get their job done. After sitting in on the SharePoint Symposium track for most of last year, I was drawn to the idea of being able to marry the technological components of my KM skillset with that of the softer side of KM. And selfishly, upon completing the M.S. in Information and Knowledge Strategy (IKNS) from Columbia University nearly one year ago, I'll take any excuse to be back in a "classroom" setting!

Overall, KMWorld did a good job in breaking down these three pillars into three tracks: (A) KM strategies and practices: people, (B) Digital workspace of the future, and (C) Social Collaboration. I mostly stayed in the social collaboration track, which emphasized how different technologies and processes can help streamline people and their interactions to result in improved employee satisfaction and efficiency. Over the three days, I attended several informative sessions relating to a variety of industries, KM implementation, and outcomes, but one theme held true: digitalization and social trends are reshaping business like never before. A KM strategy officially must include (and I would argue has done so for a while now) not only the day-to-day information management of enterprise data, but also how to better connect and engage your people to boost key performance indicators such as productivity and retention.

The most interesting speaker I had the pleasure of learning from was Ryan Rose from Cisco. He spoke about Cisco's problem statement, which was "How can we create a smarter, more engaged, and higher-performing workforce?" Who wouldn't want that!? The solution, after a few iterations, was an in-house custom application that allows for digital social learning and collaboration. By developing learner- and customer- centric communities, managers were able to dramatically improve their learning outcomes. For example, at Cisco management was able to determine whether it would be effective to more quickly identify an expert in a specific subject matter, or to ask a one-off question and receive a timely, accurate response. Their ultimate solution was heavily integrated into their current processes, tools, and databases, which helped their adoption. Lastly, this application approached KM holistically,

incorporating talent innovation with real-time knowledge and learning, thus supporting immediate enhanced user adoption. In sum, Cisco was able to create an integral ecosystem for informal knowledge sharing, co-creation, and innovation that helped build and develop the skills necessary to be successful.

Like Ryan, there were a few more speakers who really stood out, not only in their stage presence, but in the wealth of information they spoke to and shared. However, with my current background in KM and knowledge services, I found the majority of speakers to be very foundational and high level in how they spoke about KM. So if you're new to the field or just looking to learn something new, you will appreciate the majority of speakers at the conference and learn a ton. On the other hand, if you consider yourself more than a KM novice, you might be better served attending a different conference (or undertaking the pursuit of a master's degree!).

Lastly, I felt like the speakers did not live up talking about the community-building component of KM and knowledge services as much as I originally hoped for. As a whole, KMWorld has become more technology and search focused, as evidenced by the search companies comprising the majority of the vendor showcase. In future years I hope they will include more community-building speakers and vendors into the conference and have them speak to creating specific KM strategies and tactics, including best practices and measurements.

End result? I'm happy I attended as I still came away with new insights and new perspectives to keep in mind. And — speaking of social and community building — I got to see many of my Columbia IKNSers who attended KMWorld!
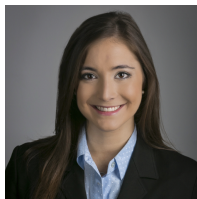
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