

EVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEEDS A CHIEF KNOWLEDGE OFFICER

This outline was created by Clint Dantine for school districts within the State of Delaware. The premise of this outline in regards to the position of a Chief Knowledge Officer may apply to any educational institution.

RE: Recommendation for district communication and information distribution

In the 21st century, a new role has emerged in many organizations called the **Chief Knowledge Officer** (CKO). For a competitive school district, this position is essential. A CKO is much more than a public information officer, press secretary, public relations specialist, or communications coordinator.

Wikipedia defines a Chief Knowledge Officer as “an organizational leader, responsible for ensuring that the organization maximizes the value it achieves through knowledge.” It goes on to explain “CKOs can help an organization maximize the returns on investment in knowledge, exploit their intangible assets, repeat successes, share best practices, improve innovation, and avoid knowledge loss after organizational restructuring.” Wikipedia also states that “CKOs must have skills across a wide variety of areas. They must be good at developing/understanding the big picture, advocacy, project and people management, communications, leadership, team working, influencing, and interpersonal skills.” Online source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chief_knowledge_officer

The Chief Knowledge Officer for a school district would include such responsibilities as:

1. Developing an overall framework that guides knowledge management
 - a. No Child Left Behind (www.ed.gov/nclb) and Title 1 program
 - b. Vision 2015 (www.vision2015delaware.org)
 - c. School district Strategic Plan
 - d. Individual school improvement plans
 - e. National Center for Education Statistics (www.nces.ed.gov)
2. Promoting the knowledge agenda within and beyond the organization
 - a. Use the school district Strategic Plan to measure success
 - i. Remind the district employees of the strategic goals and objectives
 - ii. Publicize the individual strategies when proven successful
 - iii. Congratulate the department or individual when goals achieved
 - b. Inform both staff and community of the resources and special programs available
 - c. Enlighten the perception that school choice improves public education through competition and increases value for local communities
 - d. Encourage the philosophy of equality embedded in the preamble of the United States Declaration of Independence stating "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."
3. Overseeing the development of the knowledge infrastructure
 - a. Coordinate continuity of district and school web sites
 - i. Inform public of school news and general knowledge
 - ii. Promote meetings and special events
 - iii. Archive school history online
 - b. Manage catalogued database system and historical archives
 - i. Personnel public information (obtain through human resources)
 - ii. Pictures – digital picture archive from school yearbook and photojournalism classes
 - iii. Audio – recorded sound archive (MP3 format) of public meetings, special lectures, and school music performances
 - iv. Video – recorded digital video archive (DV format on tape before compression) of special events, student newscasts, and stock footage

1. Stock footage would include various school location points of view (indoor/outdoor/aerial shots), classroom interactions, and generic student activities
2. Video may be converted to Adobe Flash for online viewing
4. Facilitating connections, coordination, and communications
 - a. Connections
 - i. Act as an informational liaison between the school board, administration, teachers, support staff, local media, and general public
 - ii. Teach seminars and answer questions at staff professional development days
 - b. Coordination
 - i. Work directly with the office of the superintendent
 1. Represent at board meetings
 - a. Archive meetings on web site as audio podcasts
 - b. Report with honesty and integrity according to the Freedom of Information Act/Open Meetings Act
 2. Designate a public information officer (either volunteer or EPER position) at each school then collaborate as an information committee
 3. Intercede with the media for questions, comments, rumor control, and news briefings
 - ii. Act as an administrative supervisor for media related high school activities
 1. Newspaper
 2. Yearbook
 3. Web site
 4. Television and video studios
 - a. Journalism via closed-circuit television
 - b. Video yearbooks
 - c. Training and instructional videos
 5. Radio station (campus radio or internet station) operates serving the:
 - a. Educational development of student participants
 - b. Promotional needs of the school district
 - c. Listening community with music, entertainment, news, and information
 - c. Communications
 - i. Effectively communicate to all school district staff via weekly e-newsletter
 - ii. Promote the district accomplishments and objectives via frequent press releases to the local media – CKO to be the school district cheerleader
 - iii. Act as editor of the school district printed newsletter
 - iv. Make use of radio station to promote school district news and events
 - v. Utilize internet technologies to disseminate information quickly
 1. Web sites
 - a. Post school policies, rules and regulations, public data, school closings, and other necessary information
 - b. Post each official job description as indicated by the school district human resources department
 - c. Post each teacher’s professional qualifications as required by federal law
 - Utilize a master MS Access database of school personnel to incorporate within web site
 - d. Allow each teacher to have their own web page on the main site to post homework and classroom information
 2. RSS - syndicating text as a feed for web sites, blogs, cell phones, PDAs, and other portable devices
 3. Podcasts - syndicating audio such as board meetings, news actualities, instructional lessons for visually impaired, and educational workshops
 4. Vidcasts - Wikipedia states “Video podcasts enable students and teachers to share information with anyone anytime. If a student is

absent, they can download the podcast of the recorded lesson. It can be a tool for teachers or administrators to communicate curriculum, assignments and other information with parents and the community. Teachers can record book talks, vocabulary or foreign language lessons, international pen pal letters, music performances, interviews, and debates.”

Other CKO tasks (according to Wikipedia) include:

1. Encourage individual learning and innovative thinking
2. Implement reward plans and incentives
3. Determine what technology is needed for the knowledge management effort and implement these technologies
4. Put processes in place in order to facilitate the creation of organizational learning
5. Measure the impact of knowledge management on the organization

The mobile tools of the CKO for information gathering would include:

1. Digital still camera
2. Digital video camera
3. Portable digital audio recorder
4. Cell phone
5. Notepad and/or PDA (personal digital assistant)

At the office, the CKO would need to be proficient in:

1. Writing (articles, press releases, scripts, and speeches)
2. Creating non-linear video projects
3. Recording and editing digital audio
4. Manipulating digital photographic images
5. Developing web sites

If the position of Chief Knowledge Officer is created at the school district, it should be a priority to present the best possible image to our community. Dale Carnegie said “There are four ways, and only four ways, in which we have contact with the world. We are evaluated and classified by these four contacts: what we do, how we look, what we say, and how we say it.”

The CKO should publicly recognize the valuable contributions of the teachers and staff, generate enthusiasm for the necessary work being done, and implement motivation techniques.

TEN MOST POWERFUL MOTIVATORS [source: unknown]

1. **INPUT:** Solicit employees' ideas, and use them. Involve employees in planning, decision making, and problem-solving. Not only will this motivate them, but you will be amazed how many great ideas workers will come up with.

2. **CHOICE:** Let employees make choices about their work. Obviously there are “mandatory” tasks that have to be performed, but letting employees fill out their job descriptions with “discretionary” tasks of their own choosing will give them a far greater sense of ownership in their work.

3. **RESPONSIBILITY:** Expand employees' responsibilities. Employees today want more responsibility, not less – as long as it is real responsibility (not just dumping more work on them) and it comes with commensurate authority.

4. **TEAMWORK:** Use the power of teamwork. You can mobilize enormous energy by forming teams to improve every aspect of an organization. But, make sure each team has clear goals and guidelines up-front.

5. **LEARNING:** Increase learning opportunities. You don't need to spend a fortune on formal training classes; just include learning goals in each employee's job description.

6. **FUN:** Add a little fun to work. No matter how tedious and routine work tasks might be, any work can be made more motivating by interspersing occasional fun activities, such as humor, contests, surprise treats, and “productive” social interaction.

7. MEASUREMENT: Encourage continuous “scorekeeping.” The key to motivation measurement lies in the feedback it provides. Identify key measures for each job and keep a running “scorecard” for each employee and each work group. This way employees will always know exactly how they are doing and will be better able to improve their own performance.

8. GOALS: Set challenging goals. Don't be afraid to set goals high. Ambitious goals are highly motivating, as long as employees understand why the goals are important and are confident that they won't be penalized should they fall a little short.

9. APPRECIATION: Create a “climate of appreciation.” Nothing motivates like sincere appreciation. Unfortunately, few organizations show adequate recognition for employees' contributions, especially for their extra efforts. When extra effort isn't appreciated, employees stop trying so hard.

10. SIGNIFICANCE: Stress the significance of work. Some employees perceive their work as drudgery, while others view the same work as “a calling.” In other words, do employees recognize the value of their organization's products or services and their contribution to improving customer's lives?

Incidentally, not one of these motivators costs a penny!

TEN “MOST DEADLY” DEMOTIVATORS [source: unknown]

1. POLITICS: Most employees are all too familiar with subjective decision-making which operates according to unwritten “rules of success,” having little to do with performance. Under such conditions, the lion's share of rewards, promotions, and resources go to those who are the best at “playing politics.”

2. UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS: Mixed messages and confused priorities often cause employees to work on the wrong tasks and accomplish the wrong results, only to find out – after the fact (usually at performance appraisal time) – that they were on the wrong track.

3. UNPRODUCTIVE MEETINGS: Meetings are important, but too many are unnecessary, disorganized, passive, lengthy, and boring – leaving employees, according to one observer, “feeling powerless as another meeting wanders into oblivion.”

4. CONSTANT CHANGE: Change is vital to organizational success, but today's workplace is turbulent enough without unnecessary changes, which employees deride as “programs-of-the-month” and which are often adopted and discontinued without any follow-up whatsoever.

5. DISHONESTY: Whether it involves making a false claim, covering up a mistake, omitting a key fact, saying one thing but doing another, or an outright lie, nothing demotivates employees like being deceived by their organization.

6. WITHHOLDING INFORMATION: One of the most common employee complaints is “not being informed.” How many times have you heard, “I wish I had known that earlier” or “The Company doesn't keep us informed about what's happening”? Lack of information makes employees feel stupid and distrusted.

7. DISCOURAGING RESPONSES: Too many organizations and managers say they want employees' ideas, but then ignore them. Most employees are familiar with discouraging phrases (such as “It can't be done here”) and many suggestion systems are “black holes” into which suggestions seem to disappear, never to be seen again. Just consider how many millions of great ideas were killed by this demotivator alone, not to mention the devastating impact it has had on workers' self-esteem.

8. UNFAIRNESS: Nothing offends employees like preferential treatment, special favors, and perks given to some but not to others. Most workers become particularly irate when they learn of astronomical management compensation packages, while excellent employees are paid only a few dollars more than those who do the minimum.

9. BEING TAKEN FOR GRANTED: Employees everywhere report that they receive little or no positive feedback or recognition, not even for their outstanding efforts.

10. BEING FORCED TO DO POOR-QUALITY WORK: Short-term time and cost constraints too often force quality compromises. Being robbed of the right to pride in workmanship is demoralizing and demeaning to employees. As one discouraged worker lamented: “We all knew the product was garbage, but it was shipped anyway. We left work each day feeling awful.”