Running our high-turnover organisation

A case study - Knowledge Management project

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Introduction

Fast change of management!
Each year 1\textsuperscript{st} \textbf{July}: change

How do we cope with this?
Board of European Students of Technology

International non-profit association
For technology students by technology students.
95 Universities in Europe -- 1.7 million students reached
3200 members

1 International Board of 6 people
Unpaid, full-time dedicated (~60-70h a week)

Differences with other organisations
I. Culture of 12-14h working days during events
II. We tend to do things ourselves (eg. coding)
Problem statement

Volunteers (uncertain level of involvement, dedication ...) ! “Lifetime” of a member = 3 years av. – max 5 years

1 year to learn the job and become good at it
+ execute at the same time & prepare successor
Valid for each level of the organisation.
Problem statement

✓ Internal working platform
  incl. wiki & document repository
✓ Making reports culture. (so so working)
✓ Training system: for all levels of involvement
✓ Intense preparation programme for new board.

BUT...

Knowledge is lost too often...
Many times especially the critical knowledge!
The solution

The magic words in industry since ~90s

“Knowledge Management”

BEST is INPA by technology students

- We don’t have professional experience (yet)
- Can’t afford expensive consultants.
- We are students: we know how to study

→ Decision to research the topic and come up with a solution tailored to our organisation.
The execution

July 2012: Decision for the topic

October – November ‘12: research phase I

Setbacks: other priorities (General Assembly)

December-January ’13: research phase II

February: preparations at live-event

March 2013: **Knowledge Management Workshop**

= **5 days, 16 people**, discussing problems, creative process to find solution, defining **24 projects**

March 2013 – present: implementation of the 24 projects
The outcomes – an example

3 people gained in depth knowledge on this topic
What about the other 2984? And plenty after them?

- How to ensure long term results?
- How to enable local groups to benefit from effort?

“Generic local knowledge management system”
The outcomes – an example

Step 1
- Collecting acquired knowledge before people leave
- Make it available for future generations

(internal) Training

March 2013 - First version ready
April 2013  - First delivery
August 2013 - Second delivery + second version
April 2014  - Final version
The outcomes – an example

Step 2
- Testing new training
- Setting up generic system

Test group: BEST Ghent

October 2013 - Receiving training
Oct - Feb - Discussion about implementation
March 2014 - Implementation finished

Now: Implementing on large scale with limited resources
Future plans

11/20/2014

UIA Roundtable Dublin 2014

– Knowledge Management

Gert Willems

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Lessons learned

Believe in your potential
Try out – it can’t get worse, can it?

Know your limits

Present day: 3-4 projects are implemented…
Will it ever be done? Who knows?
We are still the same organisation with the same limits.

We have improved our situation – Victory 😊