



I am fascinated by how knowledge is transferred and captured," says Denise Lee, who has facilitated the transfer of knowledge at NASA and the Goddard Space Flight Center in her position at EduTech, a contracting firm in Silver Spring, Maryland. Lee was hired by EduTech at the inception of a contract to manage NASA's Academy of Program and Project Leadership's Mentoring, and Knowledge Sharing Initiative. The initiative is part of a larger effort to leverage NASA's human capital through training, communities of practice, and leadership development.

In an approach that may seem unusual in such a rigorous scientific organization, Lee and her colleagues at EduTech decided on a storytelling approach to capture anecdotal knowledge about project and process management at NASA. The stories, detailing lessons learned and best practices, are recounted in *ASK (Academy Sharing Knowledge) Magazine*, now a handsome bimonthly print and online publication.

With her master's degree in social and organizational learning, with a concentration in knowledge management and organizational learning, Lee was a natural to lead the NASA contract.

In completing her master's, she had performed a consulting assignment with Verizon that analyzed and improved knowledge sharing within the company.

Lee, who is also an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University, describes one of her goals as "creating knowledge-centric cultures [by] leveraging knowledge and human capital resources through building communities of practice and developing innovative methods that capture, share, and embed lessons learned and unique practices into work processes." In addition, she belongs to a local Washington, D.C.-area storytelling group called Golden Fleece, whose 80 members meet monthly to discuss ways of using storytelling in business.

"Storytelling hasn't been fully explored as a [training] practitioner tool. We can't forget the fact that civilization is in fact rooted in story. It gives people the opportunity to connect and to explore different viewpoints rapidly.

"The practice of knowledge management has been taken over by the technology," continues Lee, who prefers the term *knowledge sharing*: "That keeps the focus on people. However, there's no denying that technology is extremely important.

"Overall, we're seeing a huge rise in interest in strategic human capital. That we're even calling workers 'human capital' reflects the increasing value of people and knowledge. Organizations are more valued for their people, but knowledge needs to be managed strategically."



denise lee

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GOTO/tdmagazine.astd.org to find out how to use storytelling as an effective knowledge sharing tool in your organization.

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