

## Do You Know...?

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

Last week was very humbling for me. I'd recently moved into a new neighborhood, my car was in the shop, and I had to go by public transportation from the suburbs to a conference in D.C. It seemed as if everything was new and I didn't know how to do anything. I didn't know where to get the bus to the metro, where to get off the

metro, how to get to the convention center from the metro stop, where to buy coffee, where to go to check in, and who to talk to when my name wasn't on the registered list. You see how it was. Some of this information was available either online or on signs, but I found that the quickest and most reliable way to find out what I needed to know

was to ask someone.

Asking is usually faster than looking something up, 99 percent of people are friendly and helpful, and you're usually offered not only objective facts, but also subjective opinions that prove useful. For instance, in my case: "There's a coffee stand over to the right, but the coffee tastes terrible, so you're

This columnist discovers an innovative way to learn: Ask someone.

better off going to the Starbucks around the corner.”

How did the people I asked know the answers to my questions? They had experience, or expertise, doing what I was doing for the first time.

But wouldn't my week have been easier if I had some electronic gadgets to help me? If I'd had a PDA with mapping software and a global positioning system that enabled Starbucks to beam a coupon to me as I walked by? Or what if I was one of the first users of a wearable computer that annotated the physical space

around me as I looked through its eyepiece, so that I saw arrows in the direction I needed to walk? <img alt="arrow icon"/>

[www.se.rit.edu/~jrv/research/ar](http://www.se.rit.edu/~jrv/research/ar) for more on that concept, called *augmented reality*

Technology can inform us so we can avoid asking people for information, but we lose key elements. We lose not only the human interaction, but also the tacit knowledge a person can give us based on his or her experience and history.

When people start a new job and don't know what to do, they're more likely to ask another employee than check

a handbook or access formal learning tools <img alt="Knowledge Stagnation icon"/> "Knowledge Stagnation," *News You Can Use* (December T+D). But what if employees could have the best of both worlds? A new set of tools called expert management software integrate technology and the human touch.

In *Transform* magazine <img alt="Transform icon"/> [www.transformmag.com](http://www.transformmag.com), a recent article discusses these new tools, which do more than search for information. They enable users to create and share expert profiles and submit questions to be answered by the pros. In short, they enable companies to tap into expertise and tacit knowledge rather than just store and provide access to hard bits of information.

Knowledge management systems have to be continually updated. Expertise management software is inherently dynamic, and it puts the burden on the software—not the user—to sort through information and determine its value, and its author's merit as an expert.

And because most expertise management systems point to content rather than store it, IT requirements are minimal.

I'm not proposing that you immediately start convincing your manage-

# Executive Update

A new program at the University of Oklahoma aims to speed executive development. The New Lens on Leadership Center for Executive Success helps each executive define what's important to his or her own development and career success. Then, a blend of personal coaching, workshops, team diagnostics, and more help the exec achieve results.

<img alt="arrow icon"/> [www.cdrassessmentgroup.com/cesbrochurefinal.pdf](http://www.cdrassessmentgroup.com/cesbrochurefinal.pdf); call 918-499-0722 for more info

ment team to buy one more expensive technology. Many small organizations can do organically what expert management systems do technologically. But if you're in a large company, especially one that's geographically dispersed, a solution like this might be a big help.

Hey, it would've made my life easier last week.

<img alt="arrow icon"/> More and links to specific systems: [www.transformmag.com/db\\_area/archs/2002/09/tfm0209f1.shtml](http://www.transformmag.com/db_area/archs/2002/09/tfm0209f1.shtml)

## SurveySays

Can effective people management increase a company's profitability? That's one question PricewaterhouseCoopers attempted to answer in its recent Global Human Capital Survey. After polling HR leaders from more than 1000 companies in 47 countries, PwC found that these people management practices help a company's bottom line:

- an HR strategy that is documented and integrated into the business strategy
- people policies and practices that help deliver the business strategy across the organization
- an HR function that is on the leadership team and can influence the business.

In fact, the study showed that companies with a documented HR strategy had 35 percent more revenue than organizations with no strategy. <img alt="arrow icon"/> [www.pwcglobal.com/ushumancapitalsurvey](http://www.pwcglobal.com/ushumancapitalsurvey) to access the survey's executive summary

Read how people practices at Google <img alt="arrow icon"/> [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) have helped the search-engine company achieve its phenomenal success <img alt="arrow icon"/> [www.workforce.com/archive/feature/23/41/03/index.php](http://www.workforce.com/archive/feature/23/41/03/index.php) (must complete free registration)

## PolicyNews

A snapshot of U.S. federal legislation and policy affecting workforce development and the HRD profession.

### Legislation Introduced to Improve WIA

A top workforce priority for the Bush administration is the reauthorization of the *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* of 1998, which expires September 30, 2003. WIA is the US\$12 billion public-sector employment and training system that grants significant authority to local regions and the private sector to guide public-sector education and training programs.

A WIA reauthorization bill, the *Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act (HR 1261)*, was introduced in March by Representative McKeon (R-CA). The bill includes these primary reforms:

- Strengthen one-stop career centers.
- Provide a more effective governance structure.
- Promote better access to employment, training, and related services.
- Establish a targeted approach to serving youth.
- Improve performance accountability.

HR 1261 passed the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competitiveness in March.

Send press releases or short articles on news, trends, and best practices to **Intelligence**, T+D, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043. Email [intelligence@astd.org](mailto:intelligence@astd.org).