

## **IFLP: Business Challenge Executive Summary**

**Lucy Hirst – November 2024**

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Knowledge is an important asset in an organisation and especially within Arup where our knowledge is built up by the people who are our assets. We accumulate knowledge through completion of great works around the globe, we share knowledge globally to tackle challenges for our clients. Arup's strategy places a strong emphasis on collaborating with others to deliver excellence. Being able to easily gain information from the diversity of our colleagues' skills and experience enables us to mobilise the most effective teams for our work. Sharing our skills and experience increases opportunities for us all to deploy our knowledge on a breadth of interesting projects.

There are three core types of knowledge, explicit, implicit, and tacit knowledge. Each type of knowledge has its own properties and method to disseminate. Explicit knowledge can easily be passed on to others, implicit knowledge can be easily communicated but is not documented, whereas tacit knowledge can be defined as skills, ideas and experiences that are possessed by people but are not codified and may not necessarily be easily expressed. An example of a tacit knowledge is facial recognition, one knows a person's face and can recognise them among a thousand faces, yet the person cannot tell how they recognise that face. A person sees a face, they are not conscious about their knowledge of the face (eye, nose, mouth) but sees the face as a whole and recognises the person.

There are Knowledge & Information Management processes and a Handbook capturing the different methodologies to be applied throughout the organisation. Despite these being in place, the idea of this business challenge evolved in response to me personally experiencing the loss of employees through a combination of retirement, redundancy, or attrition and the loss of some key individuals in the organisation and the respective loss of their tacit knowledge. The objective is to establish a process for capturing the tacit knowledge of people that are due to leave the organisation so that where possible this type of knowledge does not leave the organisation when the individual does.

I appreciate that with 17,000 employees in over 90 offices across 35 countries I need to start and deal with the immediate area within which I operate which is comprised of ~150 colleagues. The scope of the challenge is:

- Identify tacit areas, and prioritise those that are important for future success
- Identify practical and appropriate means of tacit knowledge capture e.g. succession planning, coaching, and mentoring, job rotation, education and training, exit interviews, lessons learnt, day in the life of, etc
- Identify tacit knowledge distribution methods

Following the establishment and implementation of the tacit knowledge processes stated above my plan is to reflect on lessons learned and amend as required, and to seek approval to broaden it out to a wider group - Advisory Services London - which is comprised of ~320 colleagues. Following which, the wider adoption would require a business case to be produced in order to obtain approval via the corporate governance structure.

The benefits to Arup of the work is the retention of knowledge and minimising the reinvention of the wheel and the subsequent loss of revenue in the process. The personal benefits to myself are the retention of knowledge and the gaining of personal knowledge from colleagues.