

All enterprises can benefit from knowledge sharing throughout the organization. Even highly diverse business units, having different targeted customers and diverse value propositions, still conduct many similar or identical processes, such as payroll, monthly financial reporting, recruiting, annual employee performance reviews, purchasing, vendor selection and payment, shipping, receiving, and scheduling.

By sharing information about common processes, the enterprise has more opportunity to identify a best practice that can be implemented quickly across all business units. This best-practice knowledge capture and sharing will occur sooner and at lower cost than if independent companies had to contract among themselves for periodic benchmarking studies. For knowledge sharing, the larger and more diverse the corporation, the greater the chance that a process innovation will occur that can be leveraged into benefits throughout the corporate business units.

In many cases, responsibility for knowledge capture and transfer has been assigned to a new organization position, the chief knowledge officer (CKO). Although the field of best-practice management is mature, ways to link specific best practices to strategic outcomes is less well understood. Traditional approaches to leveraging best practices are typically independent of strategy. We are now seeing many organizations use their BSC reporting capabilities to identify high-performing teams, departments, or units based on their ability to deliver strategic results. This makes it possible to document the reasons for high performance and to disseminate this information broadly throughout the organization, thus educating and training others about how they can improve their performance.

Crown Castle International's (CCI) knowledge management system, CCI-Link, is a comprehensive database and library of the company's best practices. This knowledge management tool centralizes and shares performance information and best-practice knowledge throughout this global and highly decentralized company.

CCI uses the BSC to benchmark each of its forty district offices on strategic performance measures. Benchmarking helps executives discover which strategic processes and practices are performed best within the firm and helps them train people in other areas of the organization on these processes and practices so that they can meet the highest performance levels. A focus on internal best practices allows Crown Castle to incorporate the lessons learned and helps integrate the strategy, scorecard, process improvement, and training activities throughout the organization.

Crown Castle's knowledge management practice has contributed immensely to alignment and operational efficiencies, especially amid a period of job cuts. CCI-Link's core architecture is common across diverse geographies. Countries have common, traditional functions listed, such as finance, assets, and human capital, but the content is largely local. A detailed analysis helps differentiate between geographic areas so that managers can understand the true basis for performance differences.