

## Knowledge Sharing at PENNDOT

People retiring. People being promoted. Increased use of consultants. New management at all levels – including a new governor. Loss of institutional memory. This was the situation that leads the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) into knowledge management. PENNDOT developed three pilot projects, each addressing a different community within the Organization, to examine how knowledge sharing might contribute.

FIXIT, Fleet Ideas Exchange and Information Technology, was developed for the equipment management and repair community. They already had a culture for sharing through in-person conferences. FIXIT provided an intranet site for sharing expertise, tips and techniques, and eventually an “eBay” where they could trade equipment.

The Line Painting Agility Collaboration provided knowledge sharing to improve line painting throughout the state. The Collaboratory was also a pilot which brought many different partners together to achieve a common goal – improved line painting. Through the sharing of best practices, sharing expertise and information, the quantity and quality of line painting would be improved.

The Institutional Memory pilot was based on the storytelling techniques utilized by the World Bank. Research indicated that 60% of our specialized foremen (first-line supervisors on the road crews) were eligible for retirement. Further research revealed that they weren’t a group that liked to read and had minimal computer skills. Capturing their “stories” of handling various duties were videotaped which can be shared.

We’ve learned from these pilots that you must keep your knowledge sharing simple. I respectfully call this the grandparent test. Can my grandparents access the knowledge? We still have a lot of challenges with equipment, accessibility, computer skills, and locating resources to fund and maintain knowledge sharing. But our future changes everyday. People are beginning to see the value of KM and actually coming to us for our services!