

## ABM LAUNCHES "COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE".

ABM has launched an exciting initiative to create "Communities of Practice" relating to highly critical acquisition issues. The first ABM sponsored Community, the "Other Transactions" Community of Practice, met March 14, 2001. "Other Transactions" (OTs) are highly flexible instruments available to carry out basic, applied and advanced research projects. The flexibility of OTs has enabled the Navy to do business with commercial firms that have historically declined to participate in Navy projects. A Community of Practice enhances the performance of stakeholders involved in working urgent issues by providing a virtual collaborative work space where geographically separated work teams can quickly access, integrate and act on new knowledge. The OT Community of Practice will enhance and expand the use of OTs throughout the Navy and optimize the use of our existing intellectual capital. Participants in this group include NAVSEA, NAVAIR, ONR, SPAWAR, and MARCORSYSCOM.

### **Why is ABM committed to establishing Communities of Practice?**

Have you ever thought: "I know someone within the Enterprise has completed this type of task before. I just don't know who...?" Communities of Practice provide the best means for enabling organizations to share knowledge Enterprise-wide. Organizations are strengthened through an improved network of contacts and better results. Individuals benefit through peer-group recognition and continuous learning. Communities of Practice (CoPs) are the cornerstone of ABM's strategy for evolving a knowledge enterprise that can quickly access, integrate and act on new knowledge. CoPs offer a collaboration structure that facilitates the creation and transfer of knowledge.

### **What are the benefits?**

- Sustained mutual relationships between geographically separated professional peers.
- Quick mobilization for discussion.
- Shared methodology for attacking common problems.
- Rapid flow of information and fostering of innovation.
- Knowledge of what others know, what they do, and how they contribute. Institutionalized "corporate memory".
- Ability to assess appropriateness of actions and products.
- CoP developed (or sustained) tools, language, and definitions.
- Open communication channels.

- Satisfaction of specific knowledge goals.
- Reduction in hours needed to solve problems.
- Drop in rework.
- Increased number of innovative/breakthrough ideas.
- Adoption of best practices or innovations that were "not invented here".
- Less redundancy of effort among members.
- Avoidance of costly mistakes.

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