

How to Stop Knowledge Walking Out the Door with the Team When a Project Is Completed!

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SUMMARY

How to stop knowledge walking out the door with the team when a project is completed! Big projects are often undertaken by a team of consultants or contractors who work with organisations, deliver the goods and then leave. How many organisations have experienced the situation where particular knowledge that has been gained by the team disappears out the door as they leave? Project management methodologies collect some of the knowledge or intellectual property through the documentation process. A lot of details are not kept such as why certain decisions were made and who was important in making things happen that are often key pieces of information for solving issues that arise after project closure. There are a number of tricks of the trade that have been learned by practitioners, often the hard way by being caught out.

This paper will outline some of the issues faced when trying to capture knowledge from project staff who are hired as 'mercenaries' and have no ongoing connection to an organisation. It will provide a number of case studies of how various project managers have successfully overcome aspects of this issue and document the resulting benefit to organisations. Suggestions for ways to design projects to preserve knowledge for the initiating organisation will be provided.

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