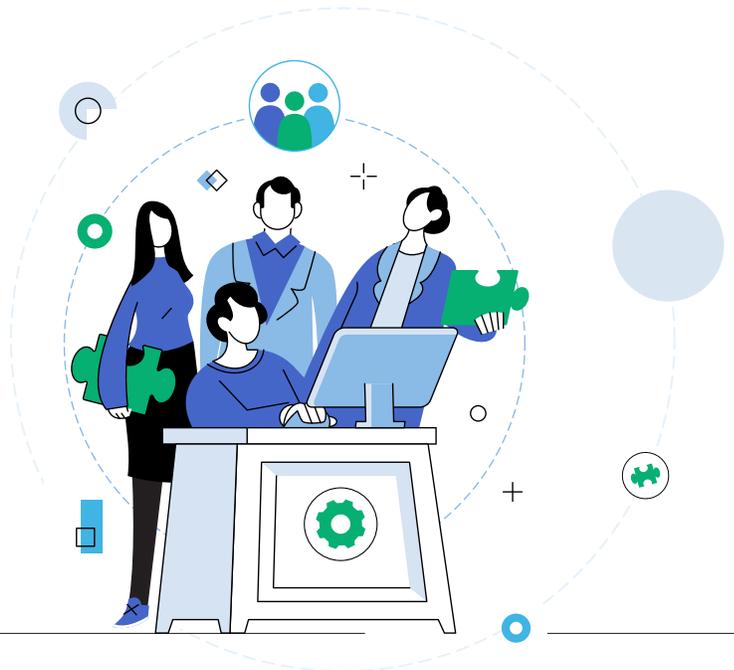


Power Productivity With Improved Information Sharing



Over decades, every organization collects a nearly incalculable amount of information about its operations and processes.

Unfortunately, disparate pieces of data and institutional knowledge often float around organizations without an effective way to capture and harness these resources. Oftentimes, longtime staff hold this information in their head, posing an operational risk to government agencies once these employees retire or leave.

State and local agencies must modernize how they share knowledge across the enterprise. To do so, they can use emerging technology, namely an enterprise productivity platform purposely architected for the future of work, collaboration and knowledge management.

Knowledge Transfer in the Public Sector

Government agencies are often mired in longstanding processes — including legacy knowledge management tools and paper-based processes — that make information sharing difficult. Hybrid work has made it even more challenging.

An industry marketing lead for the public sector at Slack says government business processes have traditionally been built

around a physical space and anchored around in-person service delivery. This has led to information silos where “the only way to get an answer to your question was to walk down the hall or schedule a meeting.”

Agencies have shifted to remote and hybrid work models as their workforce has gotten older. A wave of impending retirements could result in knowledge loss if that information can't be transferred to new employees.

“It's important to make sure that agency knowledge of how things actually get done doesn't leave with them,” the marketing lead says. “After 20-plus years of service for some of these soon-to-be retirees, they've learned not just what's written down, but all the actual tricks of the trade — who to call, who to talk to, how to move something forward more quickly.”

Agencies must take steps to create stronger information governance and knowledge management processes. The need for cross-functional collaboration is only growing within the public sector, and so is the need to digitally enable government workforces. In this evolving environment, agencies must find modern, technology-driven ways to collect, store and share knowledge.

An Action Plan for Agencies

Agencies can take several steps to improve knowledge transfer, starting with reviewing their current information landscape.

Step 1:

Understand where you are

Assess your agency's knowledge environment and technology capabilities to understand current pain points related to accessing and sharing information within your organization. Use a simple survey or email form to gather feedback.

Start with “low hanging fruit” processes, or information processes that will be the easiest to automate, such as time sheet submission or onboarding. Early success can drum up support and excitement for larger projects.

Step 2:

Centralize information — and make it searchable

Determine what type of central repository makes the most sense for your organization. This most likely will be a document management or file sharing system that makes information digitally accessible.

The ideal platform will facilitate seamless integration with other business process tools. It should offer artificial intelligence-powered search capabilities that improve



over time as more users leverage the platform. Any tool should be capable of complying with federal data security standards to support secure government work.

Step 3:

Create an information hierarchy

Establish an information hierarchy by either project, department or initiative to make information easier to find. For example, an agency can assemble all new-hire-related information into the platform and create a dedicated space or project channel that sends automatic welcome messages, reminders and notifications about how to access onboarding materials.

In this way, a hierarchy serves as an organization layer that streamlines information searches, ensuring the right people have timely access to the right information.

Step 4:

Prioritize mobility

Streamlined knowledge-sharing capabilities for remote employees or those in the field are also critical, so agencies should look for a mobile-enabled solution.

The marketing lead for Slack says it's paramount to have a unified experience across devices that allows employees to easily search for information, make simple requests and get approvals without

logging into a VPN. These capabilities also simplify communication and collaboration between agencies and external partners.

"You should be able to extend that knowledge sharing and collaboration beyond the digital walls of your organization without compromising security," he says.

Some agencies have started using an enterprise productivity platform to support collaboration across jurisdictions. One Connecticut police department uses the platform, which complies with the Criminal Justice Information Services Security Policy (CJIS), to coordinate intelligence sharing among 450 investigators and officers across the state. The platform delivers real-time information when first responders need it most and has contributed to numerous arrests and successful investigations.

Step 5:

Keep accessibility top of mind

We often think of information-sharing in the form of text, but varying the format in which information is presented can make it more accessible and useful.

Slack, for example, has a feature called Huddles with screen sharing and video capabilities employees can use. A separate feature called Clips allows users to narrate a screen recording or take a video to walk a colleague through a

specific process. Flexible platforms allow organizations of all types to deploy the features they need to improve their communications.

Knowledge sharing must be inclusive to be effective. Agencies should use enabling technologies to make information accessible to different employees regardless of where they work or their unique learning styles.

Transforming Knowledge Management in Government

State and local agencies are simultaneously undergoing workforce and digital transformation. Though paper-based processes, in-person collaboration and service delivery models have been the norm, agencies must adapt and become more digitally enabled – especially in regard to knowledge transfer.

An enterprise productivity platform purpose-built for government work can help agencies modernize knowledge management and collaborate more effectively. Ultimately, implementing technology-led knowledge management processes will better prepare agencies for the future of work and, more importantly, empower them to better serve the public.

This piece was written and produced by the Government Technology Content Studio, with information and input from Slack.



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