Society for Effective Lessons Learned Sharing (SELLS)

Information Dissemination Methods

Introduction

Dissemination is one of the most important elements of a lessons learned program. Once lessons learned information is documented, it is of little benefit unless it is shared and used. Dissemination methods should be as efficient as possible to facilitate accessing and using the information. The greater the diversity of the user community, the greater the range of options required to effectively disseminate lessons learned information. For example, while electronic sharing via Internet may be preferred by a manager responsible for overall planning and implementation of a cleanup effort, the same method may have virtually no use for a field worker who does not use a computer. That worker may benefit much more from a periodic notice on a bulletin board or a conversation during a brown bag lunch. The DOE Lessons Learned Program relies on several types of dissemination methods. It provides an Internet Site with links to individual site programs and other lessons learned sources, a List Server, a collection of fact sheets, and the opportunity for person-to-person sharing through periodic meetings. Primarily, the DOE Lessons Learned Program is an umbrella that provides efficient access to lessons learned information from sites, programs, laboratories, DOE contractors, subcontractors, and external organizations. The following summary provides examples of non-electronic and electronic dissemination methods that can be implemented to disseminate lessons learned information. Many of the non-electronic methods have already been implemented within DOE. Because many of these are site level techniques, this list does not include contact information for them. Most of the electronic methods included in the first table have been implemented as part of the Lessons Learned Program.

Electronic Dissemination Methods

Method	Purpose	Access	Contact
List Server	The DOE Lessons Learned List Server is limited to subscribers and is used to disseminate internal information across a broad spectrum of DOE personnel and facilities via the Internet and e-mail. Some DOE sites also have developed List Servers.	Fully implemented. Available to new subscribers. See fact sheet on the *Lessons Learned List Server*	John Bickford Fluor Hanford, Inc. e-mail: John_C_Bickford@rl.gov phone: (509) 373-7664 fax: (509) 376-6112
DOE Lessons Learned Web Site	Provides a centralized location for accessing DOE Site Lessons Learned Programs, lessons learned information from other sources, and the central lessons learned database.	DOE Lessons Learned Web Site is available at *http://tis.eh.doe.gov/ll*. See fact sheet on the *DOE Lessons Learned Web Site*.	John Bickford Fluor Hanford, Inc. e-mail: John_C_Bickford@rl.gov phone: (509) 373-7664 fax: (509) 376-6112
Electronic Mail (e-mail)	Provides a means of sending online messages, text files, graphics files, and video to single or multiple recipients.	Available through the Internet.	John Bickford (contact info above)
Teleconferences	AReal time@ video demonstrations that allow viewers to ask questions and make comments during the remote demonstration. May be used to share technical approaches to specific problems.	Teleconferences	AReal time@ video demonstrations that allow viewers to ask questions and make comments during the remote demonstration. May be used to share technical approaches to specific problems.
Fax Machines	Use of fax machines to disseminate lessons learned information to personnel without computers.		

Non-Electronic Dissemination Methods

Method	Examples
Meetings	Staff meetings, on-site Atool box@ meetings, safety meetings, and post-project appraisal meetings.
Workshops	Information exchange workshops that target specific topics and types of workers.
Cross-cutting Working Groups	Working groups to facilitate knowledge and information sharing across site, program, or functional boundaries.
Employee Exchange	Temporary exchanges targeted toward gaining experience in a specific area by working with Aexperts@ or sites with notable experience (e.g., sites nearing completion of a specific type of project provide knowledge and experience that can be transferred through employee exchange).
Lessons Learned Search Services	Search service that will identify, print, and fax or mail lessons learned on a requested topic (to assist personnel who do not have access to computers).
Posted Information	Use of bulletin boards, toilet doors (APorcelain Press@), or conference room walls to post lessons learned information in public areas.
Training	Inclusion of relevant lessons learned examples in all levels of employee training courses.
Direct Mail	Hard copy documentation of actual lessons learned sent via direct mail service.
Benchmarking Studies	Comparison of a specific process with the same process at an organization(s) known for Abest practices@ in this area. Identify the differences between the processes being compared and develop lessons learned to turn process into a best practice. Office of Environmental Management Benchmarking Clearinghouse provides information on the benchmarking process and specific benchmarking studies. The Clearinghouse can be accessed on the Internet at: *http://www.em.doe.gov/bch*
Publications	Newsletters, newspapers, local publications, bulletins, alerts, brochures, and fact sheets.
Lessons Learned Ambassadors/ Experts	Subject matter experts may provide information and advice in specific topic areas. Subject matter experts may participate in occasional information sharing lessons and may be contacted for guidance.
Conferences	Staff participates in public and private section conferences, including the semiannual SELLS conferences. Attendees share lessons learned from the conference upon return.