

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT – NO MORE TIME SPENT RE-INVENTING THE WHEEL

By Pia Helena Ormerod, London Business Correspondent, *Svenska Dagbladet*

Comintell

The man who beat Bill Gates to the honour of International Brain of the Year is a Swedish Futurologist by the name of Leif Edvinsson. He has stated that every Western individual could achieve three times his income if companies were more efficient in using available knowledge resources. Edvinsson's view is that the intellectual capital within a firm is as valuable as other, more tangible assets.

However, the problem, is that most intellectual capital disappears through the door at the end of the working day. In fact, increased staff turnover might lead to competitors getting access to it. Most organisations are also totally unaware of the knowledge and experience their employees can provide, and therefore waste valuable time 're-inventing the wheel'.

'Knowledge management' is not just a new buzzword. It is as old as history itself. We used to learn from our elders, sharing skills through guilds, and later, by passing information over from desk to desk. Thanks to new technology, organisations can now record all the available knowledge of their global workforce in an easy to digest format.

So how can this be done? And can all companies harness the flow of their knowledge? What about the tacit knowledge – those facts that everyone knows within an organisation, but which never find their way on to any written files? Many management gurus are trying to find the answers to these questions. One company has now found a way of harnessing technology to aid the flow of knowledge.

Comintell is a leading provider of solutions, portals and applications for knowledge management. The company works closely with its clients to build tailor-made environments that turn staff into 'intelligent communities' – not another buzzword, but a descriptive term for a workforce, one that works together systematically in order to maximise the value of their combined knowledge, and thereby achieve the company's business goals in a competitive and fast changing world with ease.

"The keywords are information and technology," says Gabriel Anderbjörk, Chief Executive Officer of the company. "There is a lot of ineffective search for the right information within most organisations, and that costs money. By cutting search time, enormous savings can be made, but more important than that, every company needs to know what they know. Add to that the benefits of filtering information and being able to select only what is vital to the organisation."

Comintell provides two tightly integrated solutions: the portal suite 'Comintell Connect' and the change management service 'Comintell Community'. Backed by these solutions, clients can map both internal and external information into structured business processes that will enable everyone within the organisation to get the best out of all available information and improve business performance.

The founders of Comintell are Swedish, but the company is US-based, with offices in Boston, London and Stockholm. It is a privately-held company, founded in 1998 by the former management team of the well-known telegiant Ericsson's business intelligence operations. Added to the team now are US and UK specialists.

"This is not just a question of making the most of new technology", stresses Jesper Ejdling Martell, Chief Operating Officer of Comintell, "...it is a vital management tool. We do not sell the Comintell solutions to IT Managers, we go straight to the heads of management who want sharper decision-making. Any tool that can improve business development and, at the same time, strengthen employee involvement, must be the best way to use new technology."

Many major global organisations are already knocking at the company's doors. Maybe they are attracted by the fact that new communications technology has finally been given a human aspect. In order to succeed, we need to know, and Philosopher Francis Bacon's words that 'knowledge is power' have never rung more true.

"And that is not enough", adds Ejdling Martell with a smile. "You have to be sure to be first with the right knowledge as well. If you can exploit what you know before your competitors do, you will be a winner. The added benefit is that re-use of available information stimulates innovation, and without innovation an organisation becomes extinct." ●

For more information about Comintell – a leading provider of solutions, portals and applications for knowledge management and competitive intelligence – please contact:

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From Left: Jesper Ejdling-Martell and Gabriel Anderbjörk of Comintell

