Knowledge Management Aspects of Publication Planning: Taking Collaboration to the Next Level

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ABSTRACT

At its base, publication planning is a knowledge management (KM) challenge. We describe the KM aspects of publication planning and present ideas on how companies can create more effective publication plans and increase the success of their scientific communications by applying good KM practices. Key points: The difference between information (explicit knowledge) and tacit knowledge and why it matters for publication planning; breaking down and preventing the formation of knowledge silos; improving collaboration among publication planners; capturing tacit knowledge and making it available to the people who need it; preserving organizational memory and continuity of the plan over time; steps companies can take to foster the changes in attitudes and behavior that will enable them to get the maximum return on their collective knowledge

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Knowledge about a product which is the subject of a publication plan exists in two forms.

Explicit Knowledge: Exists in tangible formats easily exchanged, codified, transmittable in formal, systematic language.[1]

Tacit Knowledge: Is associated with a person - something that someone knows. This is personal, context specific, hard to formalize and communicate.[1] "Knowledge lives in the act of human knowing."[5]

In publication planning, much of the most important knowledge is tacit. It resides with people within the company which developed the product.

- Team members (past and present)
- Research and development
- Medical affairs
- Marketing

The challenge, then, is to capture this tacit knowledge and transfer it to members of the team and others who can use it to advance the company's goals and objectives.
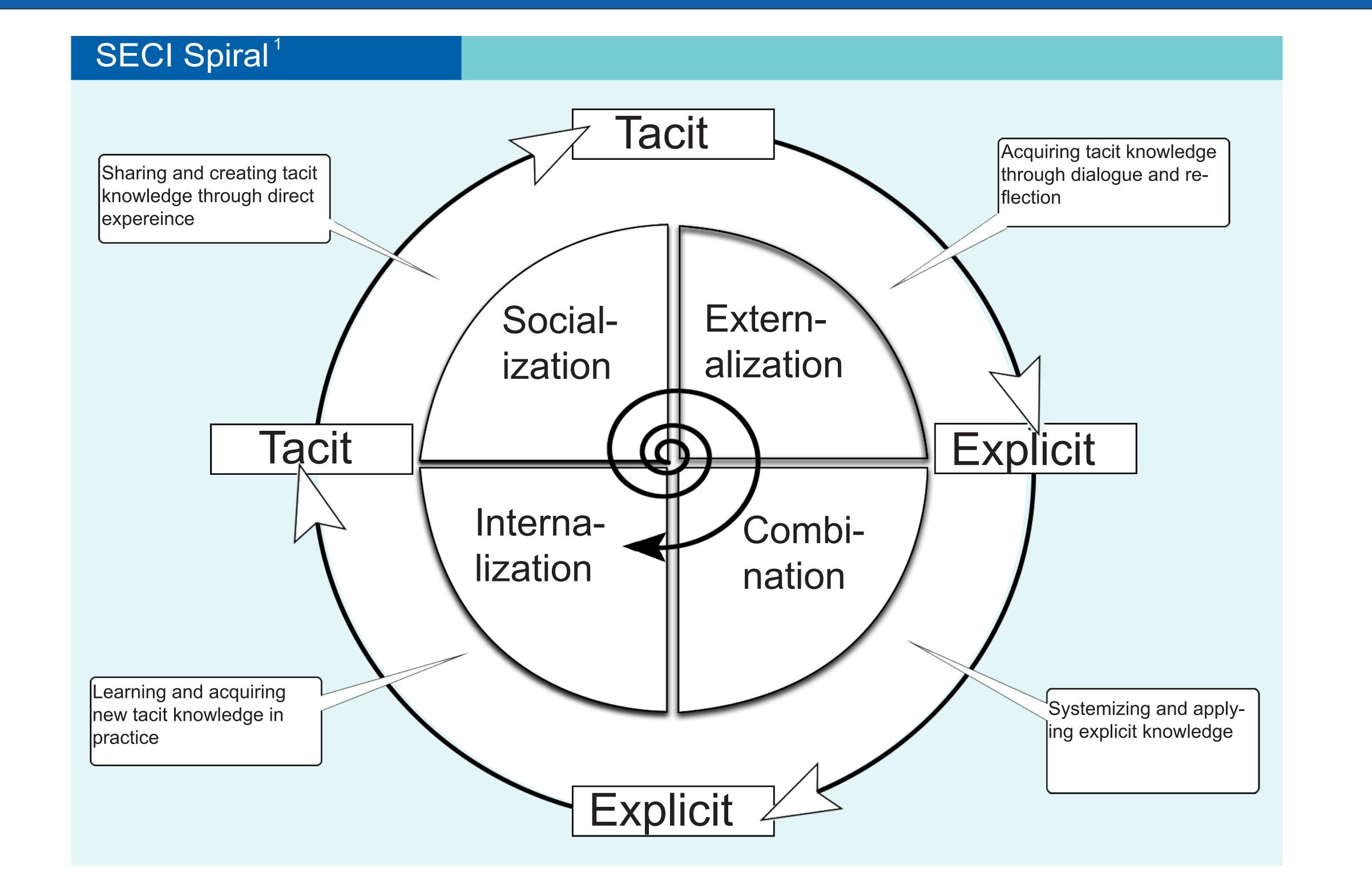
BARRIERS TO KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- Tacit knowledge exists at a very deep level and is strongly bound up with the sense of self[2]
- There is often little perceived personal benefit in sharing the result of hard-won experience[2]
- Tacit knowledge is so internalized that people are often unaware that they have it[3]
- Since it tends to be taken for granted, there is often no mechanism for sharing tacit knowledge
- In many cases there is little encouragement or expectation to share tacit knowledge

HOW KNOWLEDGE SHARING HAPPENS

The SECI Process[1]

Socialization	Tacit to Tacit	Sharing and creating tacit knowledge through direct experience	Individual to individual
Externalization	Tacit to Explicit	Articulating tacit knowledge through dialogue and reflection	Individual to group
Combination	Explicit to Explicit	Systematizing and applying	Group to organization
Internalization	Explicit to Tacit	Learning and acquiring new tacit knowledge through practice	Organization to individual

SECI Spiral[1]

PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Leadership
- Senior managers and the publication planning team leader – make the case but also lead by example

Create the Culture
- Send the message that knowledge sharing is encouraged
- Link knowledge management to value creation
- Promote a climate of openness and trust
- Get staff buy-in for KM as an operational value

Offer the Incentives
- Remove the psychological and emotional barriers to knowledge sharing
- Recognize and reward those who make contributions

Provide the Mechanisms
- Techniques
  - Modes of knowledge capture and conversion to explicit formats
  - Interviewing, videotaping, especially when members leave the team
  - Opportunities for informal interaction through storytelling, conversation, coaching and apprenticeship[5]
- Technology
  - Once tacit is converted to explicit, establish content management systems to store and make it available
  - Means of sharing and interaction in online formats -- creates an institutional memory that is accessible to all members

CONCLUSION

Publication Planning Team as a Community of Practice
- "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who can deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis"[5]
- By this definition a publication planning team is de facto a community of practice. However, all the publication planners within a company may be considered a community of practice as well

Principles for Publication Planning Communities of Practice[5]
- Design for evolution: Members will come and go. Allow for capture of knowledge as members depart and the transmission of knowledge to new members (organizational memory)
- Solicit multiple perspectives: Global, local, stakeholders in various working groups
- Create a rhythm for the community: Regular official meetings (virtual or face to face) but also informal conversations and exchange opportunities

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