

# What Drives True KM?

## People. Process. Platform.

Technologists say technology (platform) is KM. The person who never had a chance to work with a chaotic company or the person who doesn't understand what is process thinks that it is all about people. The BPR consultant, system thinker or a typical KM consultant type of people think that process can transform people and hence the process mind is a precious entity of all.

Person who had the opportunity to see the technology, process and people in the work environment decide based on which one they know well. So the experience and perception help decide which is a great driver of KM. Only few people say that all three are important. These are like the three pillars and the building will collapse even if one of the pillars is weak. There is no stupid people, process or technology. Stupidity is the state of mind formed based on our expectations. If it meets our expectations, we call it great! If it doesn't we call it stupid. In this context, there can be smart minds with stupid technology can produce non-sense. Smart people are fortunate to blame the technology when something goes wrong. But unfortunately the technology cannot blame the people and say that "you are not using me properly or am not designed for you". This is when the conflicts come between the users of the technology and the technology geeks who doesn't understand the use of the users. If they have understood their need very well, they would not have prescribed this wrong medicine in the first place.

Where does the truth lie? Am just going to talk but not going to conclude. If this writing gives you any clue about what I have in mind, please ignore it and think through when you get the chance to experience and explore.

Those olden (or golden) days in our village, there used to be "Maruthuvachi" and "Maruthuvar" or "Nattu Vaithiyar" - the country-doctors without a formal degree. They learned about herbal-medicine and healing from their ancestors. Like the clinical trial, am sure they have also learned using a trial-and-error methods combined with some subject knowledge. They used the traditional methods of knowledge-sharing. It is a gurukulam or learn-by-observation model. They healed many problems using simplest approaches and they could not heal some due to the lack of knowledge or whatever. Through their own eyes and experience, they were able to find out many of the symptoms.

Today, the doctors use all kinds of tools and techniques to test every parts of the human body (both outside and inside, flushed and not flushed) and send the patients through all kinds of gadgets and equipments. Then, the doctors read the data and translate it into a language that patient can understand. Today all kinds of technological developments are taking place and going towards many wonders. I will not be surprised if someone invents a mobile phone that can be planted inside the womb for the mother to communicate with the fetus and make her to go through pre-baby school.

Think of a doctor today without those gadgets, systems and medical best practices. Can you separate the doctor right from dentist, gynecologist to heart specialist from these technological wonders? Can anyone skip the process such as clinical trial and diagnosis? Can a patient with an acute pain perceivable or not-so perceivable skip the doctor and talk to the technology directly or refer to the medical library for the medical practices?

**Technology is invented by people, process is discovered by people and people are nurtured by people.** Smart minds and nice hearts are behind the development of these three pillars: **people, process and platform.** When comes to knowledge management that deals with minds and hearts of the people, why someone needs to debate about who is great? May be this healthy debate could bring the best out of all these three.

If people are behind the technology why only the people who drive KM is more important than the people who have invented the system for enabling KM. Why praise only the pilot but not the minds behind greatest inventions such as airplane? When people hates technology is it because they are scared of technology or they struggled with THE-WRONG-TECHNOLOGY in the past. No technology is dumb. But no one is going to care about even the state-of-the-art technology that is not going to heal someone's pain.

Why would a technologist ignore people or process? Is it because they never understand the psychology of the people, the organizational behavior and model developed based on best practices? Can the business process consultant ignore other people or the platform (technology)? When people live comfortably in their own comfort-zone why they are not able to appreciate the creativity of people who live in the other zones.

If you see people is the greatest of all three, are you referring only to the KM team, users of KM or the people who invented the process and technology as well. If technology is the reason for failure, will you blame the people who took the decision to use a particular technology or the people who sold the particular technology?

If knowledge of the knowledge workers is so important, so as the knowledge of the technologist and the best practice consultants. When we can see through the power of the three Ps – people, process and platform – based on the context, purpose and expectations of the KM project we can see nothing but complete truth.

People may decide who or which is great based on intelligence, ignorance, intuition, impulse or interest. I decide based on scope and purpose of the KM project, what pain are we trying to heal, what is necessary and how we can heal that particular pain. If the pain persist blame the leader and if it disappears praise everyone. Ego must be taken out of the decision making process. The decision making mind must see, smell and sense the value by applying the principles and intelligence but not ego. But for more innovation to come and to combine the best of all three, it may be worth to keep the debate live as long as it doesn't negatively affect our decision making today. Manage, use and lead whatever make sense but do not get trapped by people, process or platform.

### **Who am I?**

A knowledge worker, dreamer and learner who wore the technologist hat for close to a decade and currently enjoying my KM role as entrepreneur, consultant, evangelist and architect since 1997. I keep my mind open and go through the greatest lessons in my life on Knowledge Management. Am interested in understanding the power of human touch, beauty of system thinking and wonders of technologies.

### **Lakshman Pillai A**

Chairman and CEO - LPCUBE Systems India Pvt. Ltd.

+91 93826 19660 [Lakshman.Pillai@lpcube.com](mailto:Lakshman.Pillai@lpcube.com)

[www.lpcube.com](http://www.lpcube.com)