

Barrick's Knowledge Centre Promotes Employee Awareness and Collaboration

OpenText Communities of Practice provides global teams with immediate access to relevant information, expertise, and best practices

Industry

Mining

Customer



BARRICK

Business Opportunities

- Understanding of organizational expertise
- How to effectively share best practices
- Improve knowledge management through a centralized repository framework
- Ability to search effectively for critical company information
- Retaining knowledge as an asset within Barrick

Business Solution

- OpenText Content Server
- OpenText Communities of Practice

Business Benefits

- Enhanced expert availability globally
- Increased ease of collaboration and information sharing
- Improved capture of specialized information for better accessibility
- Connecting knowledge and expertise increases productivity, corporate awareness, and innovation

Headquartered in Toronto, Canada, Barrick Gold Corporation is the gold industry leader, with a portfolio of 26 operating mines and advanced exploration and development projects located across five continents. The company employs more than 20,000 people worldwide. Barrick's vision is to be the world's best gold mining company by finding, acquiring, developing, and producing quality reserves in a safe, profitable, and socially responsible manner.

Barrick employees are the backbone of the company's enduring success. To document organizational expertise and ensure that corporate knowledge and best practices are identified and shared, Barrick created the Barrick Knowledge Centre – a central repository for policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, good ideas, and best practices. It uses OpenText Content Server as the content repository for documents and information. With the OpenText Communities of Practice module, it offers the capability to leverage the collaborative power of popular Web 2.0 social networking tools such as wikis, blogs, and forums.

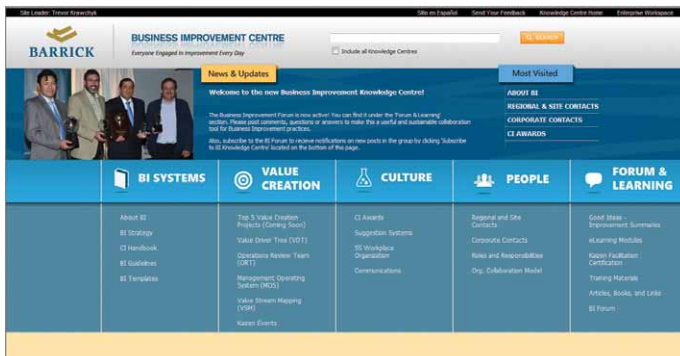
Improving employees' ability to find, share, and apply Barrick information

"The Knowledge Centre initiative began after our COO visited one of the regions and talked to a mine worker about an excellent process, but discovered it was not published in a central place for other workers to see," says Tony Santillan, Senior Manager of Projects in the Information Management and Technology (IMT) group at Barrick. "At the same time, a steering committee led by our VP of IMT noted that our IMT policies, standards, and procedures were not published for easy access by Barrick employees. The steering committee requested that IMT come up with a Knowledge Centre to publish all of these standards."

Trevor Krawchyk, Business Improvement Specialist at Barrick, notes that Barrick faces many of the same information management challenges that most companies face today. "We have many different repositories," he says. "Our users store information on various sites, on their personal drives, or on the network drives. With so many different repositories, it was hard to get at the information or know if you had the latest version. Part of the reason that we created the Knowledge Centre is because we didn't have visibility to all these repositories or a search tool that allows us to search across repositories. We wanted a central location for information."

"I think one of the reasons why our Knowledge Centre has been successful is because, in the last several years, we've seen social platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn take off," says Krawchyk. "We've been able to harness the momentum of these platforms as a base for our collaboration and knowledge sharing."





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Solution requirements

Led by IMT and the Business Improvement group, Barrick created a matrix of the characteristics deemed important, and used the matrix to rank different potential solutions. “Some of the key requirements were a professional looking GUI, a simple user interface, and strong search capabilities,” notes Santillan. “We also wanted an application that is easy to maintain.”

“From a business improvement standpoint, if people are spending a lot of time searching for information, that time is wasteful and expensive to the company,” adds Krawchyk.

An RFI was issued to several vendors. Based on the vendor demos, the team evaluated each solution, and, in the end, selected the Communities of Practice module that was available with OpenText Content Server, the document management solution that has been used by Barrick since 2006.

“Content Server aligns with our document management strategy, our records management strategy, and our collaboration strategy,” says Santillan. “It has many of the key characteristics that we were looking for, including strong search capabilities, a document repository, auditing, permissions, and a customizable appearance. It also gives us all the tools that we required for a knowledge centre. That includes the Communities of Practice module, blogs, wikis, and forums. It also has all the social media capabilities that we will eventually introduce. So for us, it’s the complete platform. We have the ability to use appearances and custom views, as well as HTML to re-skin the application, which is what we have done. But in the background we’re using the Communities of Practice module.”

“We also wanted to leverage the Content Server platform and create a template that all the departments or functions would use so we would have a standard look and feel across the organization,” says Krawchyk. “Each department’s pages use the same color scheme, design and fonts, but each can customize the centre name and the types of information they want to share.”

Implementation strategy

The Barrick Knowledge Centre was launched in November 2010 with pilots in two departments: Maintenance and IMT. The pilots enabled the company to assess the capabilities and best practices before building additional communities for other departments.

“We selected Maintenance because they already had significant content on our Barrick intranet site using SharePoint, but they were missing some of the functionality offered by OpenText, like the search capabilities. They wanted to try Content Server to see how it compared with their existing site. Since their information was well organized, it was going to be an easy implementation,” says Santillan. “For IMT, we had numerous repositories on our intranet site. We gathered the information together to publish the standards and other information in a central place.”

The pilots ended in February 2011 and were a huge success. As a result, Barrick launched pages for the Business Improvement, Supply Chain, and Capital Projects departments. “By the end of 2011, 10 departments had their own Knowledge Centres. From a technology point of view, it took about a month and a half to implement the pilots, but now we’ve got it down to a science and can implement a new Knowledge Centre site within two weeks, as long as the departments have their content organized and ready to post,” says Santillan.

All Knowledge Centres will have a section called Most Visited that allows users to access the documents that have been viewed the most.

Some departments are interested in using collaborative forums. “This is a place where people can collaborate or where we can store good practices or ideas,” explains Krawchyk. “We’ve also built an interactive dashboard where you can click on the different business functions to see the standard applications that support them.”

Of the 10 departments currently implemented, eight have replicated their English site into Spanish, including translating all critical documents. About 30 per cent of Barrick employees speak Spanish.

Wikis ensure easy site maintenance

When IMT first started creating the Knowledge Centre, most of the information was updated and maintained using HTML. Unfortunately, most people are not familiar with HTML. Working with OpenText Consulting Services, they investigated using wikis inside Content Server to enable easier maintenance. “I like to refer to it as a rich text editor,” says Santillan. “When you update the document or the wiki, your content gets updated automatically. The Knowledge Centre applies the skin on top of the wiki.”



Custom reports measure usage

Barrick has also built custom reports that allow the departments to measure usability.

"Administrators want to know who is accessing their site and which documents they are viewing," says Krawchyk. "The custom reports allow them to monitor who is and who is not accessing the content. If appropriate, they can contact the non-users and explain what the Knowledge Centre is for and the information they'd be able to find. Seeing what documents are being accessed allows the administrators to promote those specific documents."

Barrick built the reports using the Communities of Practice module, OpenText Live Reports and Web Reports. "We used wiki appearances and custom views to re-skin some of the Knowledge Centres; we used HTML for the main landing page and we used cascading style sheets," says Santillan. "But in the background, we're storing all the information in Communities of Practice, so this is where you would find your document store."

Content area champions key to success

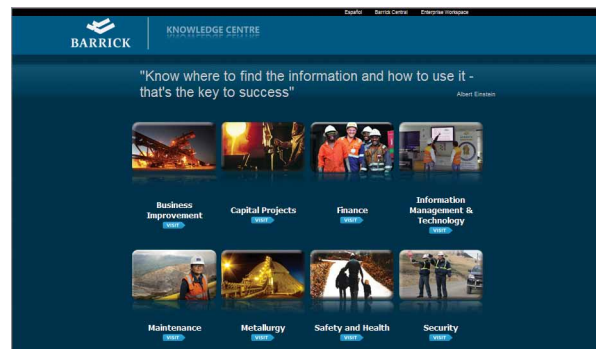
Designated content area champions are responsible for the maintenance of their particular community, which, as Krawchyk acknowledges, is an important reason for the success of the Barrick Knowledge Centre. "Talking to other companies that have won awards in these areas showed us that it's all about accountability," he says. "So we said to each group, 'Who's going to be your area champion?' Nine times out of ten, it's the director of that area that's ultimately accountable."

Each department has a site lead that is responsible for working with the Business Improvement group to go through the planning and process steps for building the community of practice and then sustaining it.

"The area champions and site leaders are aligned to the progress. We send a biweekly status report that goes to all the area champions and site leads and it's kind of like a peer review where they can see how other areas are progressing towards launch. There's more accountability with area champions, which will make it more sustainable. Someone needs to be held responsible for maintaining and updating it and the business champion needs to endorse it."

Positive user feedback

It wasn't long after the Business Improvement Group had their Knowledge Centre up and running that encouraging feedback started rolling in, says Krawchyk. "For example, one user told us about needing to create a role profile for a job opening. Instead of re-creating one, he pulled the role profile example off of our Business Improvement Knowledge Centre and said it took him five minutes to change the titles and headings, and a few words here and there when typically, he would have started from scratch and spent an hour or so drafting up a role profile. Stories like that show people are finding the application easy to use and beneficial to their work."



Krawchyk says the Maintenance group has done a good job of measuring effectiveness of its Knowledge Centre by monitoring the documents viewed. "They monitor different regions and documents viewed and make improvements that way. The number of viewed documents has steadily climbed, demonstrating the usefulness and effectiveness of their content."

Based on the success of the Barrick Knowledge Centre, Santillan is looking at enabling additional Content Server functionality. "One of the things that I'm looking at enabling is Subscriptions," he says. "This will give users the ability to subscribe to a Knowledge Centre and they will be notified when additional content has been added. We're also looking at adding Task Lists, and some groups want to start using Forums. There are a lot of features in Content Server that we want to take advantage of."

Conclusion

With the help of the Barrick Knowledge Centre, knowledge as an asset is staying within the company. Employees with similar challenges can reach out to one another, weaving new social networks to share news, ideas, and opportunities.

"We relied on personal contacts in the past, but having a knowledge centre will help to improve relationships and personal contacts moving forward," says Krawchyk.

From the technology side, Santillan notes, "Largely due to this project, we decided to upgrade the intranet and make it more of a portal or a gateway to different applications, including the Knowledge Centre. By introducing the Knowledge Centre and using the version controls within Content Server, we're able to eliminate a lot of that duplicate work. The Knowledge Centre has become Barrick's official library for institutional memory."

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