Vicarious Team Learning, Defined

“the process by which teams learn from the task experiences of others outside the team itself”

Involves multiple...
–Sources
  • Members of past teams, other internal experts, external experts, post mortem reports, etc.
–Kinds of knowledge
  • Information v. know-how, technical v. process, ‘know-who’

Bottom-line: how to get the job done in absence of critical task experience inside the team!
Preliminary Findings
(43 drug development teams in 8 firms)

- **Vicarious team learning** is a real and distinct team level process
- **Vicarious team learning** is positively associated with performance
- Management can proactively help teams to learn vicariously by putting in place *enablers*

→ This study is targeted to identify enablers in LAI context!
“The team before us had developed this check-list of criteria to use when evaluating the proprietary position of a molecule. It was great. We used a copy of that list”

Team Member
Alpha
Examples…

“We were given the instrumentation used by another team, and a guy from that team even took time to show us how to use the equipment. But still it took quite a while before we had learned how to operate it. This is something of an art.”

Team Member
Alpha
“We scientists took expertise from what another team had done and from our lawyers and mixed it all together to come up with something that was better, and better for us”

Team Member
Alpha
Examples…

“It would make an enormous difference if we could go outside for experience. We would if we could.”

Team Member
Beta
• Extend findings in the LAI context
  • Why? Potential performance improvements!

• Data
  • Product development teams or equivalent

• Requirements
  • 1 short briefing with team leader or equivalent (20 min)
  • 3 short questionnaires per team (10 min each)
  • Number of teams: 50

• Output
  • Plenary workshop, mid-March, 2004
  • Benchmark reports