

APQC's 2012 Research Agenda

APQC provides a rich research agenda for member and nonmember organizations. Research is aligned with [APQC's Process Classification Framework \(PCF\) taxonomytm](#).

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (PCF 12.0)

Knowledge Management Advanced Working Group (AWG)

Time Frame: September 2011–February 2012

In September 2011, APQC will launch its fifth knowledge management (KM) AWG. This is an invitation-only group of advanced KM practitioners, led by APQC, who are jointly developing essential KM tools and approaches at a fraction of the cost it would require to develop them on their own. By joining this KM AWG, you and your organization will gain access to all past deliverables and help create innovative KM approaches to meet today's challenges and build capability for the future.

For added benefit to the participants, Chip Heath, author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Switch* and *Made to Stick*, will conduct a half-day workshop as part of the AWG's kick-off meeting. Participants will get a sneak peak at his research on best practices for decision making, find out how KM can help, and have a chance to contribute to his next book.

APQC will work with the participants to pick the specific topic to be covered. Some examples of possible leading-edge topics include:

- providing knowledge to support decision-making;
- using knowledge to enhance situational awareness;
- effectively using social media to leverage knowledge for competitive and business intelligence; and
- growing employees competences, accelerators from hire to retire.

For more information on joining this small advanced group, contact us at 800-776-9676 or apqcinfo@apqc.org.

Putting Knowledge in the Flow of Work for Real Results

Time Frame: December 2011–April 2012

One of the biggest and most persistent challenges faced by KM programs is freeing up busy people's time to engage in knowledge-sharing activities. Employees lament that they do not have to time to stop work to share more or they lack leadership support for spending time in knowledge sharing activities.

This often occurs when KM processes and activities are "above the flow" of people's work, requiring them to move to another mode to reflect, capture, or share. And if people are expected to step out of their regular work to support the flow of knowledge, someone had better be prepared to explain why and what the benefit (or payoff) will be. Although working above the flow is not necessarily a bad thing, it can be highly resource-intensive for employees and for the KM program.

But there is another way: embedding KM activities in the flow of work itself.

During this research project, participants will learn about:

- strategies for integrating knowledge into work flows;
- processes and practices to build collaboration, knowledge capture, and knowledge sharing capabilities into work flows;
- understanding cultural, change management, and behavioral needs; and

- measuring the impact of KM in work flows.

To share your feedback on topics for this project, contact Darcy Lemons via e-mail at dlemons@apqc.org or phone 713-685-7255.

Knowledge Management 2012 Research Project

Time Frame: August 2012–December 2012

2012 will see APQC continue our research into the latest, cutting-edge KM practices. We will launch our second KM project in Q3 2012 upon completion of our *Putting Knowledge in the Flow of Work for Real Results* collaborative project. We are currently working with the participants of that research project and the active KM community within APQC's membership to determine the topic for our August 2012 project. If you have any input on this subject, please contact Darcy Lemons via e-mail at dlemons@apqc.org or phone 713-685-7255.

HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT (PCF 6.o)

HCM 2012 Research Project

Time Frame: October 2012–February 2013

Every indication is that 2012 will be a tough year for human capital professionals. As the economy remains uncertain, challenges will continue to mount as organizations try to adjust and remain flexible. Through our iterative process of gathering member feedback, we have identified the following items as the key challenges facing the HR professional in 2012.

- HR strategies for creating an innovative work force
- Work force planning with a focus on building a flexible work force (the use of contingent staff and other nonstandard employment options)
- Managing talent in emerging markets and global work force management
- Innovative HR organization design and redesign (examining the use of tools and systems such as HR shared services, improving HR processes, and developing key cross-functional HR processes)
- Best practices in the HR function's use of knowledge-sharing tools and technics (determining the latest uses of knowledge sharing tools and systems to develop the organization's human capabilities and further develop its staff)

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT (PCF 8.o)

Building a Best-in-Class Finance Function

Time Frame: April 2012–August 2012

Many organizations must continue their focus on improving operating efficiency and reducing costs just to compete. This is continuing to put pressure on the finance and accounting (F&A) function. To further compound this, many organizations have grown through aggressive merger and acquisition strategies, creating convoluted finance systems, processes, and data models. These dynamics have resulting in a very visible role for the finance organization and a strong need for best-in-class finance performance.

This research project will examine successful approaches to driving excellence in finance. Project participants will learn, firsthand, how successful finance teams made this journey toward best-in-class performance. Specifically, this project will focus on the following scope areas.

- Identifying the need and planning the transformation

- Planning and executing the transformation project(s)
- Sustaining the “post-transformation” state

If you would like to provide input on the scope for this project, please contact Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT (PCF 4.0)

Supply Chain Management 2012 Research Project

Time Frame: July 2012–November 2012

The supply chain continues to be a key source of business value for successful organizations. How quickly and efficiently an organization converts raw materials into products and ships them to the customer is critical. The list below represents the issues nominated by APQC member organizations for our next collaborative research project. We would welcome your input on this list of potential topics.

- Sales and operations planning (S&OP) for improved forecasting
- Succession planning within the supply chain
- Using technology within the supply chain
- Managing supply chain talent
- Supplier scorecarding and measurement
- Global supply chain intelligence
- Supply chain spend analysis

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION (PCF 2.0)

Product Development/Innovation 2012 Research Project

Time Frame: May 2012–September 2012

APQC’s 2011 research project focused on improving the transfer of knowledge in product development (PD) and was very well received. The participants from that project, along with other APQC members, have given us the list of ideas below for our next collaborative research project. We would welcome your input on this list of potential topics.

- Back to basics in PD
- Portfolio management with limited resources (biggest bang for PD \$)
- Decision making in the PD process (strong decision-making models)
- Project management in PD
- PD for engineering Organizations, (Research Development & Engineering—RD&E)
- The Intel "business ecosystem" project

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.

Building and Using a Business Ecosystem

Time Frame: July 2012–November 2012

Organizations are under constant pressure to innovate at a faster and faster pace to keep up with market demands and competition. In addition, this has to be done without sacrificing quality or significantly increasing expenditures. Some of the most world’s most successful companies have been able to meet these demands by harnessing the value created by a business ecosystem. How did they do it, though? What are the real-world factors that have allowed some organizations to become world leaders in their ecosystems and derive maximum benefits? These are the questions that benchmarking will help answer.

The main focus of this benchmarking project is to uncover real-world examples of how organizations are currently using a business ecosystem model to enhance the PD value chain. Specifically, how organizations are thinking outside the traditional enterprise network of suppliers and customers, to using a true ecosystem to promote rapid innovation and delivery that is mutually beneficial to all organizations in the ecosystem. This includes understanding how organizations effectively and successfully use business ecosystems to:

- leverage internal relationships and select external partnerships to get products to market quickly, efficiently, and cost effectively;
- capitalize on strategic strike points in the marketplace—how best to integrate an organization’s product or services within the ecosystem; and
- identify control points in operational processes and measure both risk and success.

If you would like more information on this project, please contact Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Building Strong Process Management Capabilities

Time Frame: November 2011–March 2012

Organizations often struggle in building a process management capability that becomes an integral part of their business, driving performance improvement and value creation. APQC’s previous research into business process management has uncovered seven characteristics within organizations that have stellar process management capabilities. We have developed a model to encompass these capabilities: APQC’s Seven Tenets of Process ManagementSM. They include:

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • strategic alignment, | • performance and maturity, |
| • governance, | • improvement, and |
| • frameworks and models, | • technology. |
| • change management, | |

Although these tenets make a great model for examining process management capabilities, one major question remains: How much of each is necessary to establish a foundation that will enable future process growth and maturity while delivering early value to the business?

APQC proposes a collaborative research project to gain valuable firsthand advice from leading organizations on this topic. This project will focus on uncovering the processes and practices needed to understand how to strike the appropriate balance among these seven tenets. The specific project scope will examine how stellar organizations addressed the following issues.

- Defining the minimum capabilities necessary to establish a process management practice that will be sustainable and enable future growth
- Achieving a balance between functional, operational, and process management

- Establishing process management scope, goals, and success factors that tie to business value

Please share your suggestions with us as we refine the focus and scope of this project by contacting Ron Webb via e-mail at rwebb@apqc.org or phone at 713-685-4634.

Selecting Performance Measures Tied to True Business Value

Time Frame: April 2012–August 2012

Organizations continue to wrestle with selecting their key performance indicators (KPI). There is now a shortage of data and information to track, analyze, and use to try to predict future performance. But many organizations falter in the beginning of their measurement journey by failing to identify and clearly define the right measures across the organization. Without this step, an organization will have little, if any, chance of moving to a more mature level of understanding its performance or of using any business analytics or predictive measures to navigate the marketplace. The research framework for this project will include the following focus areas.

- Identifying actionable measures
- Ensuring staff buy-in for measures
- Analyzing metrics to gain insights for proactive decision making
- Refining measurement to adjust to changing business conditions

As we refine the scope of this project, please share your suggestions with us by contacting Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.

Best Practices in Cross-Functional Process Design and Deployment

Time Frame: May 2012 – September 2012

Most organizations are too tactically focused to realize significant gains from process improvement. APQC's research over the past seven years has consistently identified that organizations seeing the most significant impact from their process improvement activities are focusing at the enterprise level on cross-functional processes. Every organization has cross-functional processes; world-class organizations explicitly define, manage, and control them whereas most other organizations are not even aware of their existence. The research project will focus on the following issues.

- Identify the cultural and political drivers that help or hinder cross-functional process success
- Build governance structures and processes for cross-functional processes that integrate with existing organizational structures
- Develop a tool kit of templates and supporting documentation and information to accelerate cross-functional process design and deployment activities

We will be developing the specific scope of this project during Q2 2012, so please share your suggestions with us by contacting Ron Webb at 713-685-4634 or rwebb@apqc.org.