

## APQC MEMBERSHIP CASE STUDY

### *Retaining Knowledge in Changing Times: Tapping Best Practices to Achieve Next-Level Knowledge Management*

#### MCKESSON CORPORATION

##### COMPANY STATISTICS

- ◆ Industry: Pharmaceutical
- ◆ APQC Member Since: 2010
- ◆ Total Employees: 76,000
- ◆ Headquarters: San Francisco

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*-- Albert Myles, Senior Knowledge Champion, Customer Services and Operations Knowledge Management, McKesson Corp.*

At McKesson Corp. —America’s largest and oldest healthcare company, which provides products, technology, and resources to hospitals, physicians, and health plans—people and knowledge are the greatest assets. Over the last decade, the company has built a formal knowledge management program to capture and disseminate intellectual property within the Fortune 500 company. But times are changing, and McKesson’s dedicated knowledge management (KM) team members are working to be sure that the company’s KM program is keeping pace.

Like most companies, McKesson is witnessing the departure of retiring employees who have been with the company for the majority of their careers. Because retaining their knowledge is critical to the company’s future, Albert Myles, McKesson’s senior knowledge champion, customer services and operations knowledge management, is constantly exploring best practices to harvest and capture knowledge before it can slip away.

“The medical technology industry is at a crossroads, and we have to understand what we know as a company,” Myles says.

##### RELIABLE RESEARCH

Until recently, McKesson’s KM program had been based on a knowledge-centered support methodology, focused on an internal knowledge base where employees can contribute and access information. Employees had come to depend on the knowledge base, yet few understood the work involved in maintaining it and keeping content fresh and up-to-date. Myles was looking for new ways to approach KM and engage employees when he discovered his organization’s APQC membership in 2013.

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Having transitioned into his KM position from a career in marketing and journalism, Myles hadn't heard of APQC until McKesson's membership was introduced to the KM team. Once he logged into [APQC's Knowledge Base](#) and saw the wealth of credible, applicable KM information—and the fact that APQC is led by CEO and renowned KM expert Carla O'Dell, whose books he had read—it became his go-to resource for all things KM.

"APQC has been literally the first place I have seen that really puts everything in one place to give you an idea of what other companies are doing," Myles says. "For me, doing research and finding answers, it has saved a significant amount of time."

Knowledge Base searches for a single topic—for example, ROI of KM programs—often turn up multiple articles and presentation decks to draw from, he says. Such resources have helped Myles develop new frameworks to address tough challenges, such as creating single sources of truth to prevent confusion arising from software updates.

"I trust that the information has been vetted," Myles notes. "I don't need to go through Google and comb through a bunch of information from people who are trying to sell me certifications or who have their own agenda. I'm not seeing someone's term paper. And I can explore all different things, gain diverse perspective, and learn about things outside our comfort zone."

## LIVE LEARNING

Myles and McKesson's other KM team members also attend APQC's monthly KM webinars, which keep them informed about a wide range of topics on the cutting edge of the knowledge management profession.

"The webinars have opened my eyes and shown me that we had been in a little KM bubble," he says. "They have given me the courage to break open the bubble and start saying, 'We need to figure this out.'"

One webinar stands out in Myles' memory as particularly well-timed.

"This webinar was about all the people at Shell who worked out in the ocean and were retiring at the same time," he recalls. "All the knowledge that had been there was going out the window. I said, 'That's happening here, now. We have to be able to capture that stuff.' That was my favorite webinar because it was serendipity; it hit at same time we were starting to realize what was about to happen. I knew what we needed to do."

Other webinars have provided ideas for how other organizations engage employees in KM efforts, encouraging their participation in knowledge-sharing. APQC's Lauren Trees, research program manager, knowledge management, has supported these discussions, attending virtual

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companywide KM team meetings to share information about best practices surrounding employee engagement and other KM topics twice a year.

Through these webinars and live presentations, Myles and the other members of McKesson's KM team have discovered best practices in use within other organizations, which they can then adapt to continuously improve their own KM program. As he has learned more about how other companies are tackling KM, he has gained ideas for how McKesson might benefit from expanding beyond its simple knowledge-centered support (KCS) methodology.

"Now, we are working on a new framework to start using different types of KM models, depending on the type of team," Myles says. "Lauren has given me the courage to really think outside the box that was created here 10 years ago. It is encouraging and motivating. To me, being able to move forward is worth the price of the APQC membership."

Myles is currently digging into past APQC webinars, research, and benchmarking material, studying how to quantify the value of this new, expanded KM framework and build a business case for its continued development.

## MEASURING MATURITY

To measure and evaluate McKesson's KM competencies in the coming year, Myles plans to use APQC's [KM Capability Assessment Tool \(KM CAT\)](#). Based on [APQC's Levels of Knowledge Management Maturity<sup>SM</sup>](#), this assessment will measure every aspect of McKesson's KM program, from strategy and business case development to specific processes and technologies, providing an overall program maturity rating as well as scores for 12 different capabilities.

"I have gone through the questions, and it has opened my eyes to what we're not doing," Myles says. "It's my duty to show what is going to happen if we don't move KM forward in the right direction. Just going through that process has been valuable to me. This maturity model is going to be a big deal for us."

Myles is also working to introduce APQC KM resources to the roughly 20 employees who serve as knowledge champions across the organization, encouraging them to access the organization's APQC membership for their own KM research.

"It's become my mission to really start to educate the entire company," he says. "Status quo isn't a good thing. Every chance I get, I want to tell them to go to the portal, look up white papers, look at slide decks and old webinars. It's all there. There's a lot to learn."

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## ABOUT APQC

APQC helps organizations work smarter, faster, and with greater confidence. It is the world's foremost authority in benchmarking, best practices, process and performance improvement, and knowledge management. APQC's unique structure as a member-based nonprofit makes it a differentiator in the marketplace. APQC partners with more than 500 member organizations worldwide in all industries. With more than 40 years of experience, APQC remains the world's leader in transforming organizations. Visit us at [www.apqc.org](http://www.apqc.org), and learn how you can make best practices your practices.