

SIEMENS ICN ShareNet

SIEMENS AG

Information & Communication Networks,
Business Transformation Partners

Abstract: ShareNet is a community of approximately 7000 Sales, Marketing, and Business Development people of SIEMENS ICN, active in more than 50 countries. ShareNet networks these experts globally and lets them share and develop their knowledge in order to create better customer solutions. While the backbone of ShareNet is the community of experts, an intranet website stores codified and non-codified knowledge and managerial and incentive systems ensure quality and reusability.

SIEMENS' Information and Communication Networks Division is a global provider of telecommunication solutions, active in more than 100 countries. SIEMENS sells integrated products to other national telecoms around the world. Since the mid-1990s the market environment was changing. Deregulation and the the introduction of new technology such as IP networks led to new types of players in the telecom market.

The CEO of SIEMENS ICN, Dr. Roland Koch, foresaw early how this would change the way of doing business: New kinds of customers would be focused on complete solutions fitting their specific business needs including consulting, financing, systems integration and other services. This increased the complexity and knowledge intensity of SIEMENS' business: Solution selling became an important value-adding activity. Doing this right meant identifying best practices quickly, sharing them on a global scale and making sure that they were reused for profit in similar settings.

This foresight led Dr. Koch to the decision to implement a best practice sharing network which is operative in all inhabited timezones of the globe. He established a special department, Business Transformation Partners, in order to transform the company and create ShareNet as a „global knowledge sharing network“.

Today, ShareNet is a community of approximately 7000 Sales, Marketing, and Business Development people, active in more than 50 countries on all continents.

ShareNet covers both explicit and tacit , but always experience-based, knowledge of the Sales value creation process including project know-how, technical and functional solution components, and the business environment (e.g. customer, competitor, market, and partner knowledge). In addition, ShareNet provides less structured spaces such as chats, community news, discussion groups on special issues, and so called "urgent requests". As ShareNet works independent of time zones and organizational boundaries, members usually get answers to "urgent requests" within a few hours.

Whenever a member reuses knowledge, he or she gives a so called „Re-use feedback“ on the website, indicating how they used e.g. the solution together with comments and suggestions, own experiences and a subjective rating of the value of this contribution, which is a basis of an incentive system.

Although ShareNet is integrated in the daily work, this does not mean that no additional support is required. Every local company has at least one „ShareNet Manager“, a multiplier responsible for supporting the members in his organization. A „Global Editor“ is the main contact partner for the ShareNet Managers, coaching them for success, triggering a content quality review process and serving as a community manager with regular news and updates, and also attracting more knowledge sources.

ShareNet has been operational since almost one year. With its 11000th member, ShareNet has reached a critical mass to drive the fundamental culture change further. New communities are developing ShareNet into a knowledge portal that will eventually integrate the expertise of the whole enterprise in virtual workspaces. In SIEMENS' recently established global e-business transformation program ShareNet was the first step to evolve the division into a fully webbased company.