Operation Capture - an online organisational learning platform

An online platform to record, monitor, evaluate and share good practice and lessons learnt across the organisation.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Organisational
Topic	Digital, data and analytics Leadership, development and learning Productivity
Organisation	West Yorkshire Police
Contact	Ralph Sillitoe
Email address	ralph.sillitoe@westyorkshire.police.uk
Region	North East
Partners	Police
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	December 2023
Scale of initiative	Local

Key details

Target group	Adults
	Children and young people
	Communities
	Families
	General public
	Offenders
	Victims
	Workforce

Aim

The aims of Operation Capture are to:

- help make West Yorkshire Police a better learning organisation
- help make West Yorkshire Police more efficient and effective in service delivery
- share what works well, promising practice and lessons learnt

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of Operation Capture are to:

- enhance sharing of best practice and lessons learnt
- improve problem-solving
- reduce replication of previously unsuccessful projects
- prevent duplication of effort by joining people together to tackle problems
- improve and expedited identification and sharing of promising ongoing work
- provide a consistent level of service to the public and across the organisation

Description

The five districts in West Yorkshire Police (WYP) were sometimes tackling similar challenges in different ways. This led the force to identify the need for a platform to capture and share organisational learning.

Alongside a colleague from the force Business Readiness department (who had a strong knowledge of Microsoft 365), an inspector developed and implemented an online system. The system asks for new ideas, projects, initiatives, innovation, lessons learnt, conference feedback, academic research and de-briefs.

The platform was built using existing Microsoft 365 software and operates exclusively through the use of MS Forms, MS Lists and automated Outlook reminders. The platform launched in December 2022, nine months after the idea originated. It provides a single place for all organisational learning to be held and accessed.

Users are guided to input submissions on the platform through the pneumonic of CAPTURE (Category, About, Policing Purpose, Team, Unforeseen Challenges, Result, Evaluation). Working through these categories enables users to input information regarding:

- the topic area
- the specific problem being tackled
- the methods being used
- the reason for the chosen methods
- the key stakeholders involved
- any outputs and outcomes
- plans for evaluation
- any lessons learnt

A 'CAPTURE Bank' hosted on MS Lists holds and displays all the inputted submissions. The CAPTURE Bank has 100 entries as of February 2024. These range from projects, lessons learnt and ideas for future initiatives. The CAPTURE Bank is searchable by key words and filterable by sections to help users find relevant material. Importantly, the CAPTURE Bank welcomes submissions from (and is accessible to) the entire organisation to ensure it is as joined up and inclusive as possible.

For the evaluation section of CAPTURE Bank submissions, if a project has not yet been evaluated, users can input the number of future days such as 30, 60, 90, up to the next 18 months for when an evaluation will start. Users can also return to the system to delay/update the planned evaluation date up to three times. After the 18 month point or three deferrals, users are expected to provide information about results from their project.

The CAPTURE Bank offers several benefits to the force. Firstly, it provides one platform for organisational learning. Secondly, the requirement to include information about planned evaluations assists the force with quality assurance – it helps ensure that any projects being considered at a strategic level have some results and evaluation to support their potential force wide adoption. Thirdly, it allows for the cost/benefit analysis of submissions, preventing wasting time or resources on something which does not have the desired impact. Finally,

it provides a governance structure which ensures transparency to the support and monitoring a project receives. This governance structure operates through a bi-weekly projects panel who meet to discuss, quality assure and progress CAPTURE Bank submissions. The twelve members of the projects panel come from different central teams across the force – predominantly at Chief Inspector level. If a submission has been evaluated and is supported by the projects panel, it will then be taken to a tactical meeting for consideration of escalation to strategic board or for testing in another force area.

All submissions to the CAPTURE Bank will soon be given a unique reference number which can be quoted in performance development reviews or promotion applications. The link between the CAPTURE Bank, promotional and performance processes has helped the CAPTURE Bank gain buy-in and usage across the force.

In terms of costs, as the system is fully online and built within existing Microsoft 365 software, financially it has not cost the force anything outside of staff time to build and maintain. The system is fully automated and does not require permanent staff involvement, meaning no additional costs for the organisation. Currently, one inspector and one administrator monitor the platform.

Overall impact

- This project was only launched in December 2023, but so far has been well received with positive anecdotal feedback.
- There has been 100 submissions and over 1000 hits to the site.
- The project has been shared with other forces who are actively looking to implement CAPTURE into their systems to improve their organisational learning capability.

Learning

- To implement this project and build the IT infrastructure, detailed understanding of Microsoft 365 and its various functions is essential.
- Both Senior Leadership Team and wider force buy-in is essential. This can be achieved through rigorous testing of the product before launch, linking the platform to promotion and performance processes and regular communications. In WYP, communications included promotional videos and highlighting the CAPTURE Bank in tactical and strategic meetings.
- The force recommend ensuring that any online learning platforms have a 'back up' feature. This means that all submissions will have an audit and record, regardless of whether they are progressed by the force or not.
- The force recommend creating a feedback box for CAPTURE Bank submissions. This can be used as a record for why a certain idea or project hasn't been taken forward.
- Finally, the force also recommend creating as many 'drop down' boxes as possible over open text for online learning platforms. This helps with creating easily searchable terms, and also minimises large volumes of text which need to be checked.
- The force plans to share implemented initiatives with the College of Policing practice bank.

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