



I can see

How a culture of collaboration, learning and replication helps Boeing use know-how of many



By Paul Proctor

For Boeing to become the strongest, best and the best-integrated aerospace company, employees must have the means to collaborate easily and quickly with others enterprise-wide, learn from them and replicate best practices. John Pricco, vice president and leader of the Development Process Excellence initiative, has been tasked by senior Boeing management to lead a companywide team to further advance and embed across Boeing a culture of collaboration, learning and replication—known as CLR. This includes adapting for business use emerging Web 2.0 “social networking” tools such as wikis, blogs, enhanced directories and flash forums.

Boeing Frontiers recently sat down with Pricco and discussed this challenge, which will require significant cultural change but offers leaps in efficiency, product innovation, customer satisfaction and company financial performance.

Q: Why the emphasis on CLR?

A: Advancing a culture of CLR is critical to our company's future success and to creating a sustainable competitive advantage for Boeing in competitive global aerospace markets. Our team's goal is to develop a culture where seeking, replicating and advancing best practices drive productivity, growth and program execution; a culture that harnesses the collective intelligence of diverse cross-enterprise groups; that listens to all ideas of individuals; and a culture that leverages new and emerging next-generation, or “Web 2.0”, technology and communications channels. Simply put, we want to facilitate information sharing and collaboration enterprise-wide, better connecting people to people and people to information.

Q: What are the benefits of a CLR culture?

A: For the employee, a main benefit will be time savings. Industry studies indicate that today, employees spend up to one-third of their time duplicating existing information, and managers spend 25 percent of their time searching for information. By

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evolving our culture of collaboration, learning and replication, we have an opportunity to substantially reduce those time drags and the accompanying frustration.

Other benefits include easier access to the data needed to do your job, improved access to subject matter experts, and the ability to interface and share expertise with people and organizations across the company.

Q: How does Boeing benefit from CLR?

A: The potential for increased productivity is significant. For example, if improved collaboration saves 80 percent of Boeing employees just one hour every quarter, the annual dollar savings to the company is in the tens of millions. There are bottom-line advantages, too, with greater collaboration expected to result in enhanced and more innovative products, greater customer satisfaction, increased contract wins and lower employee turnover, to name a few. There's also the savings in reuse of information and avoiding repeat lessons learned, moving us much closer to "no more reinventing the wheel."

Q: Encouraging Boeing people to collaborate, share and replicate best practices enterprisewide represents a major cultural shift for many. How will you address these challenges?

A: We know further developing our CLR culture will be difficult. After all, we're changing the very DNA of Boeing: We want employees to know that seeking and sharing across the enterprise is encouraged and expected.

The CLR team plans a combined top-down, bottom-up approach to ingraining this culture change at Boeing. Key members of the CLR team and I already are conducting "road show" presentations on CLR to senior executives and leadership teams around the company to introduce them to CLR, get them excited about the benefits and enable them to flow this information down to their teams. We are working on other cultural enablers, as well.

We already are seeing more and more people asking for help with collaboration. In response, we've launched a Web site (<http://clr.web.boeing.com> on the Boeing intranet) to provide "one-stop shopping" for employees looking for information on CLR, with links to related training, resources and success stories. The Web site will focus on leveraging existing tools and introduce emerging Web 2.0 tools as they become available. Already, limited pilots are being conducted on several new Web 2.0 tools,

including the InSite corporate information-sharing network, and a large-scale "flash forum" we call FlyIn. The CLR team is helping evaluate the results of these pilots.

The Web site also will provide information on enterprisewide Communities of Practice. A CoP is a group of people that form around a topic, process, practice, tool or technology to share ideas, insights and information—and to help solve problems. Cross-enterprise CoPs are foundational to creating the networks that drive a collaborative culture.

Q: Are there security concerns with the widespread sharing of proprietary and sensitive information?

A: We are always concerned with protecting our company data. We will approach it carefully and thoughtfully in cooperation with appropriate Boeing- and customer-organizations that address data security. Existing company procedures and policies for data security will still apply. As you know, they are working well today for Boeing on e-mails and digital correspondence and for presentation of papers at conferences. But we must continue awareness campaigns reinforcing that all employees must protect information regardless of the sharing mechanism.

The benefits of wide-scale collaboration to Boeing are important. We will make sure that the proper controls are in place as we deploy this technology.

Q: How can employees help?

A: Work to further develop a CLR culture in your organization by actively collaborating and learning with others across the enterprise. Learn and employ the Seek-Adopt-Improve-Share model in your everyday work activities. Consider joining a Community of Practice in an area aligned with your job or career. For you subject matter experts, if an employee from another organization asks you for help, try to provide it, as appropriate. And finally, spread the word about the value of using standard solutions and leveraging the knowledge of others to increase productivity across the enterprise. ■

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PHOTO: John Pricco is leading an enterprisewide team that's looking further to advance and embed across Boeing a culture of collaboration, learning and replication—also known as CLR.

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