

Lessons Learnt About Lessons Learnt

Key Takeaways

The Models

Let's take a look at the two models that were used:

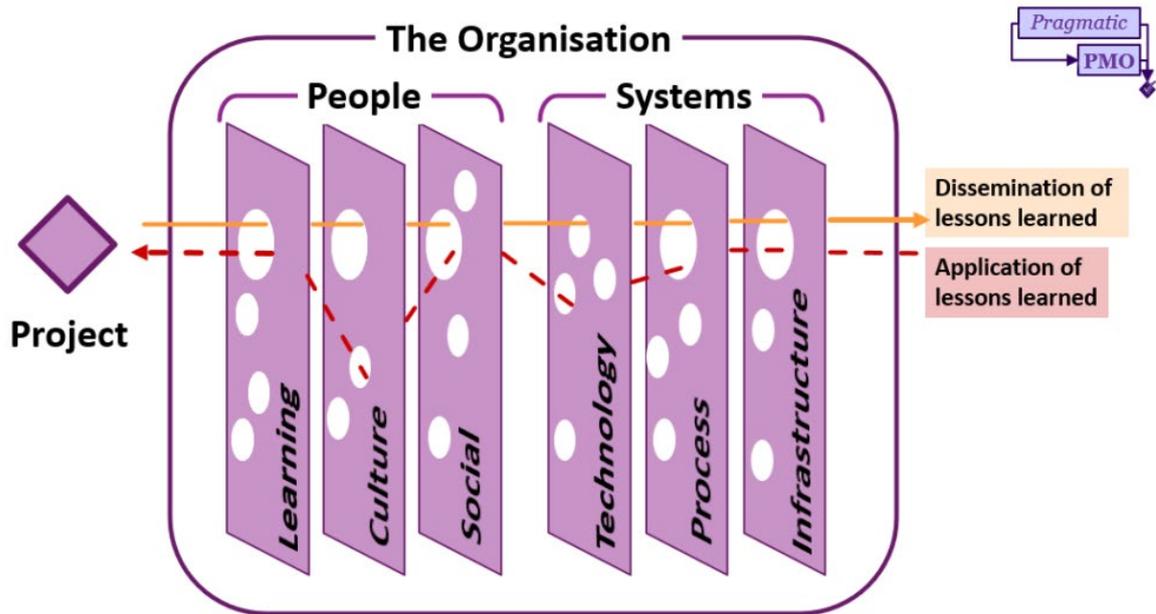
The first - the swiss cheese model - start with the project, then the dissemination of Lessons Learnt (capture and communicate) and then the application of the Lessons Learnt (adopt and implement)

The model shows that there are barriers in the lessons learnt process:

- **Learning:** Churn; Time pressures, Attitude
- **Culture:** Penalty for error; Knowledge is power; Politics
- **Social:** No recognition; Get back to work; Silo working
- **Technology:** No tools; No training; Disconnected software
- **Process:** Too complex/rigid; Inconsistent; Too much analysis
- **Infrastructure:** Slow network; Unreliable systems

The model highlights that holes are needed in the barriers and these could be made with things like knowledge management approaches, facilitation techniques etc

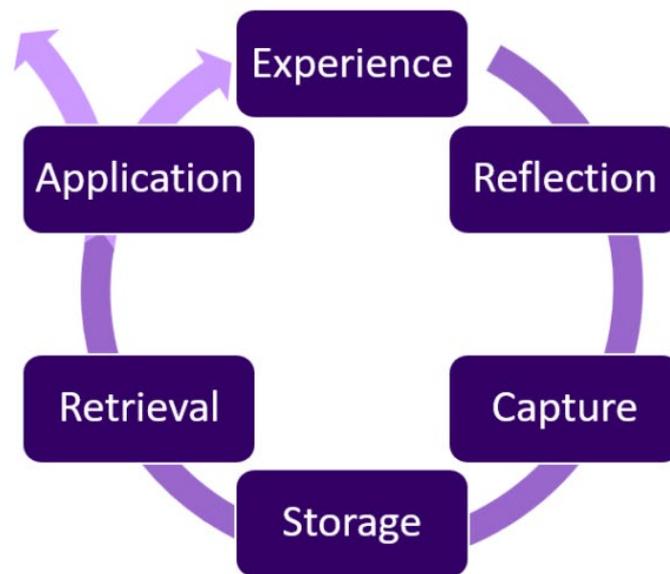
The holes need to line up (inputs and outputs match) so that something makes it through and it's especially important between systems and people - it needs to be joined up.



"Syllk" Model™, Stephen Duffield, PhD Thesis

The second is Ken's model. It starts at the top:

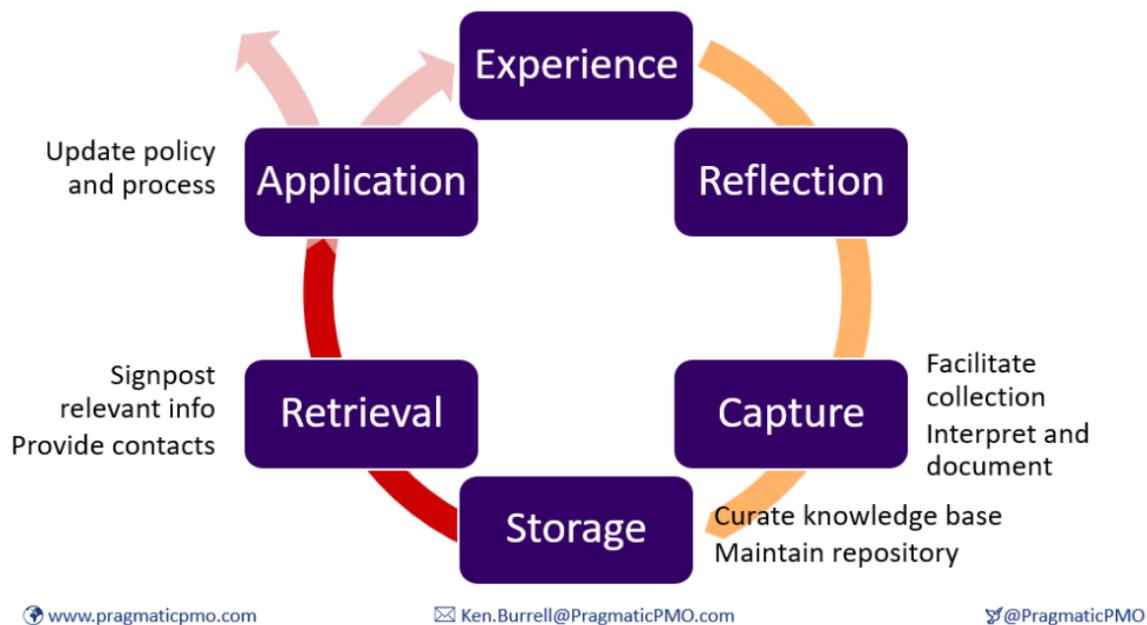
- **Experience** day-to-day events
- **Reflect**, identify learning
- **Capture** the learning, recording it in some persistent form
- **Storage** preserves the lesson for later use
- **Retrieval**, someone running future project searches for and finds lessons in a form that is useful to them in their current situation.
- **Application** - taking action to improve performance. If the same organisation, shape their experience of future projects, closing loop. If a different organisation, lesson and learning transferred out of the loop.



Where the PMO Operates

The PMO tends to get involved in four key areas:

- Capture
- Storage
- Retrieval
- Application



Role of the PMO in the typical process:

- **Capture** – Surveys, Workshops, Analysis, extract transferable learning
- **Storage** – Set up LL repository, keep it updated relevant, indexed, available
- **Retrieval** – Point new PMs to relevant reports, LL database, people
- **Application** – Update framework

The Problems

1. We don't take time to reflect
2. We don't capture the lessons effectively
3. We don't store them in an accessible form
4. We don't review and apply the lessons
5. We like to believe that we and our current project are unique

What We Can Do Better

Looking back to the swiss-cheese model we can improve the efficiency of each step to maximise lessons getting through.

We can make more holes in the swiss cheese, make them line up better or cut out some of the steps between experience and application. Or both of these at the same time.

We can also:

- **Adopt a more reflective approach**
- **Articulate lessons to inspire action**
- **Share our successes and scars**

Two Techniques

Here are two techniques to help you think about improving a reflective approach and how to articulate lessons:

Reflective Approach

What can we learn from this?

Observation <small>• What event did we notice happening? • Was it good or bad? • What were the circumstances? • Were there any early warnings?</small>	Cause <small>• Why did the event happen? • What was the underlying reason? • Could we control this in the future? • Could we react differently next time?</small>	Recommendation <small>• What will we do differently in the future? • Who needs to take action? • When do they need to take action? • Can it be incorporated into a repeatable process?</small>
<p>1 When I loaded the dishwasher, a dirty mug I loaded into the top rack dripped the remains of a hot chocolate all over the clean wine glasses in the bottom rack</p>	<p>I had loaded dirty items into the dishwasher above clean items (probably because we needed clean mugs from the top rack before we needed clean wine glasses from the bottom rack)</p>	<p>Always unload the clean items from the bottom rack first. That way, it is not possible to load dirty items above clean items, and dirty items in the top rack will never drip all over clean items in the bottom rack.</p>
2		
3		
4		

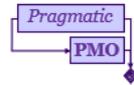
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Curious for ideas and practical suggestions on how to learn more from your projects? Visit bit.ly/KensLIBook or scan this QR code to learn about the book *Learning Lessons from Projects*

Struggling to learn lessons from your projects? We can help! Visit bit.ly/Learn_Lessons, or scan this QR code to learn more

Articulating Lessons

How can you capture lessons learned well?



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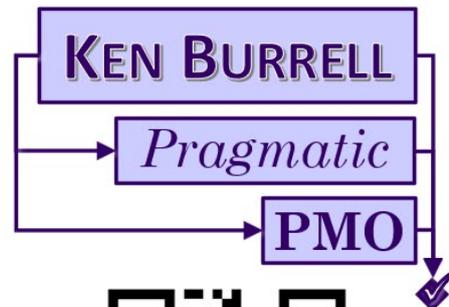
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