

## The Knowledge Sharing Hierarchy

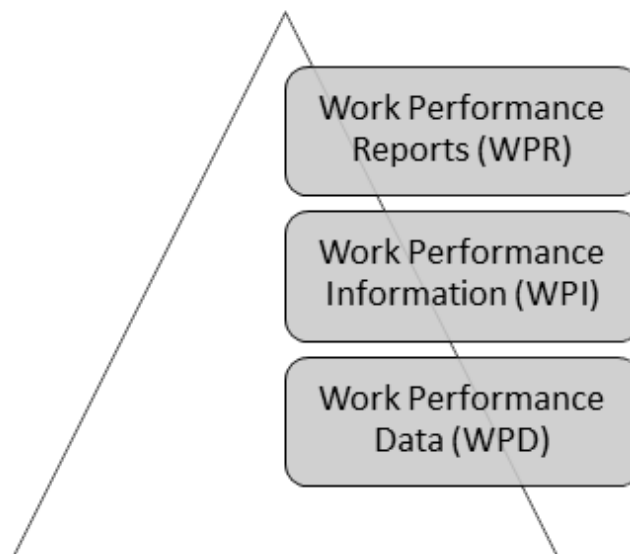
A key project management responsibility is effective knowledge management. Knowledge management can ensure critical information is distributed to all stakeholders promptly and also facilitate efficient and effective project planning and execution.

### Objective

- Define work performance data (WPD), work performance information (WPI), and work performance reports (WPR)
- Apply the knowledge-sharing hierarchy to project management leadership
- Revisit the importance of Lessons Learned

### Introduction to Knowledge Sharing Hierarchy

The Project Management Institute (PMI) categorizes data and information into three categories. The illustration shares the knowledge-sharing hierarchy.



**Work performance data (WPD)** is "raw" observations and measurements identified during activities to carry out the project work. WPD is commonly acquired from conversations, emails, or routine project correspondence. Typically, WPD has limited value. However, WPD needs to be received, acknowledged and understood. Occasionally, WPD contains information critical to project success. WPD is received during the **executing** process group. WPD can take the form of an e-mail from a team member expressing reservations about a milestone. It may be a customer conversation where they share ideas to save

resource dollars. Or as simple as a user stating they want to ensure instructions on how to use a new product are easy to understand.

**Work performance information (WPI)** is derived from WPD. WPI is performance data collected during the **monitoring and controlling** process group. WPI usually is more consequential than WPD. Examples include the status of deliverables, implementation status, and forecast estimates to complete. WPI is analyzed to develop **work performance reports (WPR)**.

WPRs are distributed during the **monitoring and controlling** process groups. WPR extracts critical WPI data and shares information to generate decisions, raise issues, report status, request assistance, or address problems and solutions.

### **Applying the Knowledge-Sharing Hierarchy to Project Management Leadership**

The effective use of WPRs can aid the team and stakeholders in two areas essential to leadership success. The team's readiness to perform at a high level is tied to their understanding, abilities, confidence, and motivation.

Actively listening to the team and processing WPD presents an impression that the project manager is concerned and receptive to the team's inputs, which builds trust and increases motivation and commitment.

Working closely with the team to identify WPI required to share and distribute details in the WPR provides critical task-related details that can increase team effectiveness. In addition, the knowledge-sharing hierarchy can be used to share essential project benefits and values to increase commitment, confidence, and willingness to support the project.

### **Importance of Lessons Learned in Knowledge Sharing**

Lessons learned are one of the greatest sources of knowledge for a project manager. Optimally lessons learned are accomplished at the completion of each project phase and at the end of the project. Discussions during lessons learned provide a wealth of WPD that, in many cases, can be used to identify consequential WPI. This new WPI can then be used to provide critical knowledge in WPR.

Lessons learned address three key questions. What went well in a project, what could have gone better, and what can be improved the next time?

Lessons learned address vital skills and task-related information that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the team on the next project. In addition, lessons learned share key risks, issues that were addressed and overcome, and discovered opportunities.

Lessons learned have little impact on the current project. However, they can assist all organization project managers by providing information to help better lead future projects.