



BoK Update

Body of Knowledge (BoK) Committee

Vol. 1 No. 1

Welcome to Our First Issue!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *BoK Update*. Over the past few years, ASSE's Body of Knowledge (BoK) Committee and now taskforce has worked through the hurdles of any new startup program. We have recently started the second wave of effort to move the BoK closer to the vision, which is:

The ASSE BoK is the knowledge solution of choice for SH&E and ancillary professionals from around the globe, providing real-time access to quality SH&E resources and tools 24 hours a day, seven days a week through a knowledge exchange platform.

The BoK Taskforce includes the following dedicated members:

- Jeff Camplin
- Jeremy Chingo-Harris
- Judy Freeman
- Gorgi Popov

If you have not yet had a chance to check out our website, please visit:

<http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties/bok/index.php>.

The website features a presentation, concept papers, common terms and links to knowledge management resources.

Our motto, "think, learn, and grow," refers to the idea that SH&E professionals must continue to think about the knowledge in the SH&E profession, learn more of that knowledge and create new knowledge to grow as a professional. To achieve this, you must know what knowledge exists and conduct research to answer the burning questions about knowledge that are missing.

Our goal is to develop and implement projects that build the current BoK into the preeminent body of the knowledge for SH&E. What we see here today is a natural evolution of BoK from small beginnings to a newsletter providing an "update" as we discover new tools and resources and showcase some resources you may not know are available to you.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, use our website and send us your feedback. Please feel free to call me at (540) 374- 0354 or to e-mail me at fanningf@netscape.com.

[Fred Fanning, MEd, CSP](#)

Team Leader

ASSE Body of Knowledge Taskforce

Welcome from CoPS Vice President

We are excited to bring you this first issue of *BoK Update*. It is ASSE's and the Council on Practices and Standards' (CoPS) vision to focus our efforts on providing members the resources they need. The future trends of knowledge management reflect the need to harness the knowledge of a profession into an accessible knowledge exchange platform while relying on and using evidence-based methods to vet that knowledge.

BoK's role is to provide you with evidence-based information that you can use to do your job better, faster and to a higher-quality standard. I encourage you to take the time to read this inaugural issue, visit the BoK website and share your thoughts or information with us.

George W. Pearson, CSP, ARM
Vice President
Council on Practices & Standards (CoPS)
President
PSM Consulting

ASSE's BoK: You are Probably Already Using It!

*By Fred Fanning, M.Ed., CSP &
Jeff Camplin, CSP*

ASSE has a modest body of knowledge (BoK) currently available on the Society's website. This article familiarizes Society members with the BoK and explains how members can use it to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities to improve their safety, health and environmental (SH&E) career.

Discussion

A BoK is not just a professional reading list, a library, a website or a collection of websites, a description of professional functions or a collection of information.

A BoK is a list of knowledge, skills and abilities (competencies) organized into an integrated structure (taxonomy), with a specific level of accomplishment specified for each competency

(proficiency). It is the sum of knowledge within a profession that includes proven traditional practices that are widely accepted, innovative emerging practices as well as published and unpublished material. It is a living body of information requiring updating and feeding to remain current.

To facilitate an understanding of the BoK, readers must first understand a few basic terms in knowledge management:

- Competencies are a list of knowledge, skills and abilities
- Knowledge is a fact or state of knowing; the perception of fact or truth.
- Knowledge management is a range of practices used by organizations to identify, create, represent and distribute knowledge
- Taxonomy is the organization of information into an integrated structure
- Proficiency is a specific level of accomplishment identified for each competency

A BoK provides and promotes a common lexicon for discussing, writing and applying the profession. It defines the knowledge underlying the profession and describes and points to methods, knowledge and skills. It promotes the advancement, understanding and recognition of the profession among those who interact with it and facilitates professional development for practitioners at any stage in their careers as well as for people who come to the profession from other backgrounds/disciplines.

The BoK provides the basis for curriculum development and maintenance and supports professional development and any current and future certification schemes. Lastly, it promotes integration and connections with related disciplines.

The environment for knowledge use has changed. To be competitive in the global market, we must carefully optimize and manage our knowledge. In addition to the website, the BoK also resides in ASSE and in printed material, video material and audio material. Although this knowledge is



available, some of it is not in a usable or retrievable format. We also must stimulate knowledge exchange and crossover support within our various areas of membership expertise. This demonstrates that the BoK that already exists within ASSE can and should be improved upon.

The knowledge on ASSE's website exists in various formats and locations. A table of contents of this knowledge can be found in the website's sitemap, in the table of contents on the left side of the Publications webpage and in files maintained by ASSE.

This knowledge includes:

- Audio transcripts and recordings of audio conferences
- Board and meeting minutes and reports
- Branch newsletters
- Business of Safety Committee (BoSC) articles
- *BoSC Update*
- *Career Guide to the Profession*
- Chapter newsletters and professional development conference (PDC) material
- Common Interest Group newsletters
- *CoPS SH&E Report*
- *Dictionary of Terms*
- Journal of SH&E Research
- Position papers
- Practice specialty technical publications
- President's speeches and presentations
- PDC proceedings
- *Professional Safety Journal*
- Scope of the SH&E profession
- Standards
- Symposia material
- Technical and professional publications
- White papers

We must become familiar with some terms as we move forward toward our vision of a BoK. These terms include:

Communities of Practice—people with a common goal who interact for social learning and shared sociocultural practices. These are the practice

specialties of the Council on Practices and Standards.

Explicit Knowledge—subconscious, internalized knowledge of which the individual may be unaware.

Information Management—collection and management of information.

Intellectual Capital—knowledge as a form of capital asset with a value.

Knowledge Mapping—creating a map of the relationship of knowledge assets to core business process.

Tacit Knowledge—knowledge that the individual holds explicitly and consciously in mental focus and may communicate to others.

The BoK cannot exist or continue to grow without SH&E professionals' input. Members are encouraged to voluntarily contribute their knowledge and competencies to help build and expand services and products provided by the BoK.

How can you help?

- Write an article for any of ASSE's newsletters or online publications
- Write an article for *Professional Safety Journal*
- Write a white paper
- Write a technical chapter or book
- Present a paper at a future PDC

Energized and motivated ASSE members from around the globe can actively engage in building the BoK. So join us and become part of the knowledge movement.

To learn more about knowledge management, please visit the following website:

- Association of Knowledgework (AOK)
www.kwork.org



- KM World
www.kmworld.com
- Knowledge and Innovation Network
www.ki-network.org/jm/index.php
- The Institute for Knowledge and Innovation,
George Washington University
www.gwu.edu/~iki/

Benefits of the ASSE BoK

By Jeff Camplin, CSP

Knowledge management is an exciting topic, and whenever I think about it, my head is filled with questions about where it could go. I would like to share some of those questions in this article.

These are not approved nor are they officially under consideration at this time. However, members should consider how the BoK can potentially benefit their competencies and showcase their knowledge for the betterment of the profession.

I would like to share some examples benefits of a growing BoK so we can all begin to think about what could be rather than what is. Let's start with three questions:

1. What if there were ways the ASSE could get members, academia, governments, organizations, researchers and other professionals to voluntarily contribute their knowledge and competencies to help build and expand ASSE services and products?
2. What if there were ways ASSE's Body of Knowledge (BoK) could energize and motivate its members and SH&E professionals across the globe and actively engage them in building their competencies through ASSE products and services?
3. What if there were ways to expand ASSE membership by double, triple or even by a factor of ten?

In today's fast-paced world, safety, health, and environmental (SH&E) professionals need access to

vast amounts and varying degrees of knowledge that is easily accessible and searchable, delivered accurately and with speed and that originates from reliable sources. I think ASSE's BoK can draw upon the best knowledge management and competency modeling practices to organize SH&E skills, knowledge and abilities into an easily customized, user-defined retrieval process and delivery format. The BoK should capture training, education, performance, certification and experience metadata to enhance the SH&E profession by measuring and validating their competency.

Building a world-class competency model and ever-expanding BoK can be intimidating, even overwhelming. One advantage that ASSE currently boasts is a massive amount of knowledge, data and resources developed over the course of nearly 100 years. This existing knowledge can be easily integrated into a new competency model what will deliver high-quality products in a variety of formats for retrieval and use by our current members. This is our core knowledge.

We could then compare our core knowledge with a new competency model developed by the BoK to identify gaps that must be filled. We can easily start filling these gaps through new publications, research, symposia, PDC presentations, etc. The knowledge in these existing resources could be captured electronically (audio, video, podcasting, data files) and made available for retrieval through the BoK. Members would then be energized by the BoK vision to engage in knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.

Other organizations and outside individuals may also be enticed to participate by contributing to the expansion of our BoK from a global perspective. ASSE Councils, along with ASSE members, outside SH&E organizations and academia can keep our global BoK current and cutting-edge.

The BoK can be made to service both internal customers and external customers. Our internal customers include our members, chapters, regions and councils. Our external customers could be colleges/universities, government agencies,



countries, SH&E-related organizations and other related professions.

Member Benefits & Value Explored

Let's start with our internal customers. Our members join ASSE and use its resources to do things for them. We call this the benefits and values, which come from being an ASSE member. The BoK can build upon these existing benefits and values by providing members with many other resources that do even more things for them, including:

1. Raises awareness of competency gaps by defining competencies and methods to measure and verify them. The benefit is members know what they need to know. The value is members can specifically target areas to increase their competency through services provided by ASSE.
2. Generates questions and provides answers and knowledge through a safe-t-pedia, listserves, technical calls, professional development conferences, publications, webinars, symposia and other resources. The benefit is a one-stop shop to seek real-time knowledge and to have multiple verified sources provided in a variety of electronic formats within seconds. The value is members can access this data quickly and inexpensively while providing trusted support of areas where their knowledge is currently weak or lacking by the BoK.
3. Measures and tracks competencies through "scorecarding" members' training, education, experience, licensing and certifications. The benefit is recognizing what competencies you have achieved and what competencies you can focus on now and into the future. The value is others can identify members as being competent in a general or specific SH&E area of practice quickly and accurately through a validated process.
4. Promotes networking through online listserves, chapters/regions, events, and projects. The benefit is ASSE members will have many more options available to communicate and network with BoK users. The value is a true global

platform for those in the SH&E profession to exchange knowledge, thoughts, ideas and needs. The synergy will pay dividends by energizing BoK users.

Members Can Easily Share Knowledge

Right now, members can contribute their knowledge of best practices, SH&E skills, abilities and experiences if they take the initiative and dedicate time and effort to do so. The BoK makes this process easier, more efficient and more wide-scale for retrieving member competencies into our knowledge base. The BoK relies on individual members, chapters, regions and councils to voluntarily release their knowledge and resource because they will directly benefit from the process. However, this requires a paradigm shift. These examples will illustrate this shift in our current knowledge management and competency model.

Showcase Your Credentials & Competencies

All SH&E professionals have a resume. The resume captures and freezes an individual's knowledge and experiences at a given place and time. This resume is also tailored to communicate an individual's ability to serve or fill the need of the prospective consumer/end users. Think about your own resume:

- How does it represent your current knowledge, experiences and competencies?
- How have you grown in these areas since the last time you revised it?
- How do you demonstrate that your resume is accurate and valuable?
- How do you know that your resume achieves and demonstrates a certain level of competency?
- What if you could determine where you had gaps in the required competencies sought after by end users, and ASSE provided services to fill these competency gaps?
- Would you be interested in hearing about this?

Help Members Identify Your Expertise

Now put yourself in the shoes of an end user. How do end users verify the accuracy of your stated credentials? How do they even determine what



competencies they seek? Are they using the same set of competencies that you are using to determine if you are qualified? What would be the value to all parties if a service was available that could:

1. Establish standard competencies for the SH&E profession.
2. Measure and verify these competencies.
3. Provide venues to increase competencies by identifying current gaps.
4. Maintain a scorecard to track “real-time” competencies.
5. Allow others to easily find the competent SH&E professionals they seek.

Would both parties benefit from a service that accomplishes these tasks? The answer is yes! The BoK could be made to provide this service and fill these needs.

Tapping into the International Competencies

Now visualize yourself as a non-U.S. based organization. You also seek the top SH&E knowledge, resources and a competency scorecard system. You are offered an opportunity to access ASSE’s BoK for a fee; however, you would receive a significant discount to the annual fee if you agreed to contribute your knowledge to the BoK.

1. The organization or entity would need to share the SH&E knowledge and resources they had access to in English or in the originating language for placement on the BoK.
2. They would help translate their knowledge and resources into English, including validating and categorizing the quality of the knowledge.
3. They would also help translate the existing BoK knowledge into their country’s native language so it is accessible to non-English-speaking BoK users.

Does this sound like a win-win? Does this expand the body of knowledge globally? The answer is yes!

Research Promoted by the BoK

The BoK can be made to define competencies needed for protecting people, property and the environment. The existing body of knowledge will then be compared to this defined competency model to identify and reveal gaps in the knowledge of the SH&E profession. The gaps in our knowledge base can then be targeted by ASSE and others for new research. Academia members of the BoK will benefit from these research opportunities. Academicians’ can become members of ASSE’s BoK by paying an access fee. This fee will provide them with a powerful world-class database that will allow their students, researchers and faculty access to state-of-the-art, peer-reviewed data. A discount will be provided to these academic members and partners if they share their knowledge and resources.

1. Academic members can contribute all papers (master thesis, doctoral research projects), publications and other resources to the BoK. They would now have an immense platform to publish their work, which would be retrievable by millions through the global BoK.
2. These resources will then be integrated into the BoK and retrievable for all other users. These contributions will be continuous, providing new knowledge and research into our competency model.
3. ASSE would work with the ASSE Foundation, researchers, corporate partners and government agencies to develop, fund and/or apply for research grants, which support initiatives in providing good knowledge to fill gaps identified in our competency. This research would then be integrated into the BoK for retrieval and access by all users.
4. Academics could donate faculty and students to help review, validate and categorize the level and quality of knowledge contained in our growing BoK resources.
5. Students could team up to send out “freedom of information requests” and obtain free government research and knowledge for placement on the BoK.



6. Academics would also help integrate the ASSE competency model into curricula, which uses resources found in the BoK.

Academic faculty and researchers would have access to a proven competency model sought after by the public and private sector on a global level. Their future course work could be based upon these competencies and supported by the resources found in ASSE's BoK. Their educational programs would fit into our competency platform, making their students immediately competent in general areas of the SH&E profession upon graduation. Finally, academicians would have access to funding and grant writing support, which identifies research necessary to fill the gaps in the competencies of the SH&E profession.

Sharing Knowledge Improves the Profession

Sir Francis Bacon said, "Knowledge is power." The BoK has the potential to make ASSE more powerful by capturing the global knowledge of the SH&E and related professions, while abolishing ignorance through building competencies. The BoK achieves our Societal vision to be "a global champion of the SH&E professional, a global leader of the profession and a premier resource for those engaged in protecting people, property and the environment."

However, we should never forget that the BoK's purpose is not to "control" knowledge; its purpose is to release knowledge. We are building an SH&E "field of dreams." If you build it, they will come. Will you join us?

