Structuring Teams *Continued*

Instead of having everyone sit through a weekly project meeting, think about what needs to be communicated and how best to do that. Using the Team Nucleus from the last article set up a weekly meeting with the Core Team, consisting of the Leadership Group and a representative from each department, line, or discipline. This meeting is used to discuss major project issues, status from each group, and can be used as a change control board. This group by its nature has equal representation, with people who are empowered to make decisions.

Next, each group, line, or discipline should have their own regularly scheduled meeting to discuss their individual status and issues within their group, and get an update from the lead on the rest of the project. Depending on the timing in the project and what each group is doing, these may be 15 minute stand-up meetings each morning, or they may be one hour every other week. It depends on the needs of the group. Each group can spend time discussing issues that are important to them. The lead from this group can then give them an update from the Core Team and represent any concerns the group has back to the Core Team.

It is also important to get everyone together on a regular basis to build team spirit and to communicate how the team is doing overall. This could be a monthly or quarterly meeting. This is also a good time to celebrate meeting milestones or getting through a tough problem. Demonstrations of individual team work products can be a big morale booster as well.

The key to this working is having good Team Leads who keep the communication channel open between the Core Team and their group. If done correctly this gives each team member a voice and yet makes sure that only the right people are involved in the decision making. Care should be taken to make sure that the Team Leads are empowered by their teams to make decisions or state when they need to get input from the team.

Expand Your Knowledge *Continued*

NPD SIG: How is this different from other information services, associations, and/or portals?

JC: Knowledge Roundtable is far more personal. We offer a very high level of service and facilitation, built on our 25 years of experience and extensive network. We screen all our content and work hard to ensure mutual, quality knowledge exchange (versus the wide-open Internet). We get to know the members and what they care about. We also selected our panel of experts based on knowing their background, openness, and commitment to furthering NPD (including SIG members Jan Wells, Curt Raschke and Ken Delcol). Overall, our main uniqueness is that we have put together the best of what you get from conferences, portals, benchmarking, and consultants - and made it easily accessible.

NPD SIG: Can you give me some examples of the kind of insights I might gain?

JC: In addition to the hundreds of documents which cover all NPD topics in Knowledge Source, this month we have a special focus on co-development. You could have participated in an audio-session on *Co-Development Red Flags* - a panel discussion with *Naser Chowdhury, Air Products & Chemicals*; *Curt Raschke, Texas Instruments; Ralph Schmitt, Kysor Warren; & Jan Wells, GMP Companies.*

Discussion covered signs to look for (both positive and negative), tips for keeping the project on track (including how many managers to have per alliance), knowledge-sharing and trust, performance metrics and more. One example of a "red flag" was:

Assess how honestly and openly a co-development partner discusses the project.

- Is the partner willing to discuss alternative courses of action?
- When co-developing with a supplier, be leery of partners that just want you to hand off your design spec - expect participation, dialog, and input about if/how the design can be improved.
- Does the partner meet schedule expectations and, if not, do they surface problems early?

Another example, from *News & Insights*, is the following chart comparing co-development best practices at three companies.

Company	Best Practices
Texas Instruments	"If a company transfers responsibility for co-development to a partner in order to save resources, it sacrifices control and integration." • *Partner Selection* Look for a partner with business goals that align with yours (i.e., non-competitive) as well as the technical abilities you need. • *Technical Understanding* Invest the resources to understand the technical specifics of what the partner organization will bring the table. • *Business Alignment:* Invest the resources to align each business level and create agreements at each of those levels rather than composing one all-inclusive partnership agreement. • *Decision-Making* Separate technical from organizational decisions.
Air Products & Chemicals	"Partner through the lens of an existing product development strategy and the work processes that support it." • *Drivers* Market differentiation, speed to market, access to knowledge, lower development costs, expanded geographic reach. • *Partner Selection* Ensure partners agree on product expectations, work processes and project scope. Beware of oversold or over-promised capabilities. • *Business Alignment* Anticipate and manage overlap in skill sets between partners. • *Evaluation* Define a partnership's value and monitor the value over time.
Cisco Systems	"Mutual success can only be achieved with the customer's success, [by] creating value for our combined customers". • *Partner Selection* Look for and ensure shared strategic map, effective executive sponsorship, and gated phases. • *Evaluation* Constantly measure the partnership. Particularly assess early field alignment and early customer wins. Overall alliance success is based upon hitting business goals, timelines and sales targets, as well as continued stakeholder engagement and positive industry response.

Another type of insight is more quantitative: "Alliances are growing at a 25-35% annual rate worldwide with ROI from alliances reaching as much as 150% of core business returns." We then describe a range of output- and relationship-based success indicators in categories such as sales and profit, internal processes, technical advancement, market reaction, and collaboration processes. Practices from Cisco, Moen, Eli Lilly, Affymetrix and SCT are cited.

Since insights will be increasingly member-driven as KR grows, they will be increasingly around timely and often controversial issues that others are dealing with.

NPD SIG: What future activities do you have planned?

JC: We currently have monthly audio-sessions which align with the monthly Focus topics covered in *News & Insights*. We'll be having at least two per month beginning in October, with other topics and dialogues to be scheduled on member request. Members can request a custom teleconference any time. All session transcripts and highlights will be posted for members to view. The current theme calendar for the rest of the year is:

September *Voice of the Customer*

You've interviewed the customers, collected the data, analyzed the results, done the affinity diagrams - but still aren't sure what your customers will buy. Now what?

October *Improving R&D Productivity, Leveraging Resources*

How to ensure true productivity versus resource deficiency? Avoiding staff burnout. R vs D - who gets funding? How to get maximum ROI? Experiences with different resource management approaches and tools.

November *Product Development and R&D Metrics*

A discussion of specific metrics companies are using - what objectives are they meeting? How are others using metrics to achieve meaningful results?

December *Communication Across Functions and Borders - Gaining Buy-In, Making Business Cases*

What means of communication are most appropriate for different types of information and knowledge? Different types of groups? Face to face versus remote and email? How do you "sell" concepts, motivate others? Transfer knowledge?

Other topics will include global product development, managing intellectual property, innovation, agility, technology road-mapping, lean product development, six sigma, portfolio management, modular platforms, and more - to be shaped by members.

NPD SIG members are entitled to a 10% discount. There are also volume discounts and a special introductory offer through 9/30/04.

NPD SIG: How does one become a member? Are there any special qualifications?

JC: To join you can either go to the site (www.knowledge-roundtable.com) or call MRT at 800 338 2223 or 781 891 8080. To join, members must be practitioners involved in NPD with some level of management responsibility - there are also several background questions each member must answer. As mentioned, KR staff gets to know its members' individual interests, contact preferences, and information needs. Upon joining, a KR staff person will follow up to make sure each new member is personally welcomed.