

## Contact:

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## Getting the Most from your Internal Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

- Choose your SME carefully.
  - Not just for their knowledge or 'results' but their ability to articulate it.
- Go through the proper channels to secure their support and time commitment.
  - Managers may not be supportive if they are not consulted beforehand.
- Define the SME's effort and time commitment upfront.
  - There is normally more time commitment at the beginning of a project.
  - Afterwards becomes more "review."
  - Identify the places within the process when their input will be needed.
- Allow them time away from their "day job".
  - There should be a dedicated time allotted. Not simply 'fit in.'
  - 'Interrupt' their schedule. Let them work from home. Get them a conference room. Fly them somewhere, etc.
- Clarify roles.
  - They are not being asked to create a class – just share knowledge.
  - They don't have to have ALL the answers.
- Recognize that being labeled an 'expert' comes with responsibility and pressure.
- Coach and coax them through the process.
  - Exemplary performers often have a difficult time describing what they do because they rarely think about what makes them successful.
  - Ask the right questions that will get down to the needed level of detail to train others.
  - This can sometimes cause friction between SME and ID.
  - Offer examples of the type of detail you're looking for and why.
- Publically acknowledge and rewards SME.
  - Announce they have been "chosen."
  - Give them a gift, no matter how small. Something they can remember the project by, feel good about and perhaps show others.
- Have SMEs document wherever possible, rather than just verbally make comments.

- SME's are quick to dismiss something as 'easy'. If it was easy, you would not be building a training program.
- Allow them more than ample time, for their review.