Employee retention (or turnover) impacts organizational performance and knowledge management. This two-year project, conducted with guidance from the VTrans Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and informed by the research literature, examined employee turnover data, staff perspectives on employment, and knowledge management (KM) practices. The findings informed a small pilot project that included: a) the development of an Employee Exit Questionnaire to help determine impacts of recruitment, supervision, and other organizational practices, and b) a process to capture and share tacit knowledge.

**Data Collection**

- **Focus Groups**
  - TAC Members
  - MOB, Rail, IT & Lab Supervisors
  - MOB Employees
- **Employee Turnover Data Analysis**
  - FY 2016
- **Informational Interviews**
  - with 6 other State DOTs
- **Annotated Bibliography**: KM and Transportation
- **KM Litmus Test with Managers**
- **KM Assessment Survey with Tech Services, Structures, DMV**
- **Employee Focus Groups by Age and Years of Service**

**Findings**

- **FY 2016 turnover**
  - 11.2% overall
  - 5.4% voluntary
  - Turnover higher
    - <5 years of service
    - <30 years of age
- **Primary Reasons**:
  - Why people join / stay
    - Benefits
    - Job security
    - Time off
    - Advancement potential
  - Why people leave
    - Supervisory Issues
    - Organizational culture

- **VTrans Employee Exit Questionnaire with 49 voluntarily separated employees (July-December 2017; n=27)**
- **KM tool and process for capturing and sharing tacit knowledge (8 Structures and TSMO employees)**

**Caliber of Supervision Makes a Difference**

"[Retention and turnover] has a lot to do with the bosses. If you’ve got a halfway decent boss, you’re gonna wanna work for them. If they are not halfway decent, you’re not gonna want to work for them."

**Tacit and Historical Knowledge are at Risk of Loss**

"Institutional knowledge and experience – how we overcame obstacles in the past – are typically beyond written procedures, policies, and guidelines. It’s difficult to capture this before it is lost."

**Knowledge Management**

- Resources need to be easily retrievable
- Tacit and historical knowledge is at risk of loss as employees leave
- Employees share knowledge, but could use help with processes, procedures, and templates
- Organizational leadership and resources are needed for success in KM efforts, including organizing knowledge sharing and improving access

**Key Points**

- **WHY IS THIS HIGH VALUE RESEARCH?**
  This project has had a lot of non-quantifiable impact. Parts of the project have been adapted into Agency practice. The project has received high level support from the Secretary, multiple Division Directors, HR, and Civil Rights. The researchers worked with a variety of staff from across the Agency resulting in more attention to our recruitment, retention, and knowledge management efforts. This is valuable because it has led to partial implementation and it has made additional staff aware of Agency-wide issues surrounding recruitment, retention, and knowledge management.