

# Implementing a Work Study Group Program



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# Report Documentation Page

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# Our Training Dilemma, 1997

- We wanted training in an area not usually offered by the company
- There was no money in the training budget for an additional course
- We wanted to be able to share ideas and discuss how to apply what we were learning to our jobs

- What Is a Work Study Group
- Benefits of a Work Study Group Program
- How to Start a Work Study Group Program
- The Work Study Group Process
- Tools for Managing a Work Study Group Program

# What Is a Work Study Group?

- Group of individuals studying a particular work-related topic
- Subject of their choosing
  - Basis of study is usually a particular book
- Informal, discussion-based study
- Typically meet once a week during lunch

Employees donate their time  
(participation is voluntary)

The company purchases the  
book (the book belongs to the  
employee)

## For the Employee

- An opportunity to study a topic of their own choosing
- Gaining the knowledge contained in the study material
- Insights received from their colleagues
- Many employees view Work Study Groups as a company benefit

## For the Employer

- A low-cost, supplemental alternative to traditional training
- Employees apply what they have learned to their work environments
- Process or technology improvements often result
- Team building



# How to Start a Work Study Group Program

# Identify the Work Study Group Champion

- Serves as the initial coordinator
- Guides the program's growth
- Keeps the program "on the radar screen"



# Start Small, Gradually Get Bigger



This helps put the infrastructure in place that will allow you to increase the scope of the program over time

# Use Low-cost Alternatives as Necessary

- Magazine articles
- On-line content
- Used books
- Books that employees own but haven't thoroughly explored yet



# Show the Benefits

- Hard-to-quantify benefits
  - Employee satisfaction
  - Resultant technology and process improvements
- Cost / benefit analysis



# Example ROI Calculation – Per Semester

**Cost** **\$8,000**

- Study material costs
  - Average cost per book = \$75
  - 100 engineers participate
  - 100 x \$75 = \$7,500
- Administrative costs
  - Leader training – \$100
  - Administrative labor - \$400

**Benefit** **\$120,000**

- Uncharged labor
  - Each group meets an average of 8 weeks
  - Each session lasts an average of 1 hour
  - Each person spends 2 hours in preparation
  - 100 eng x 8 weeks x 3 hrs/wk = 2400 hours
  - 2400 hours x \$50/eng hour = \$120,000 worth of training time

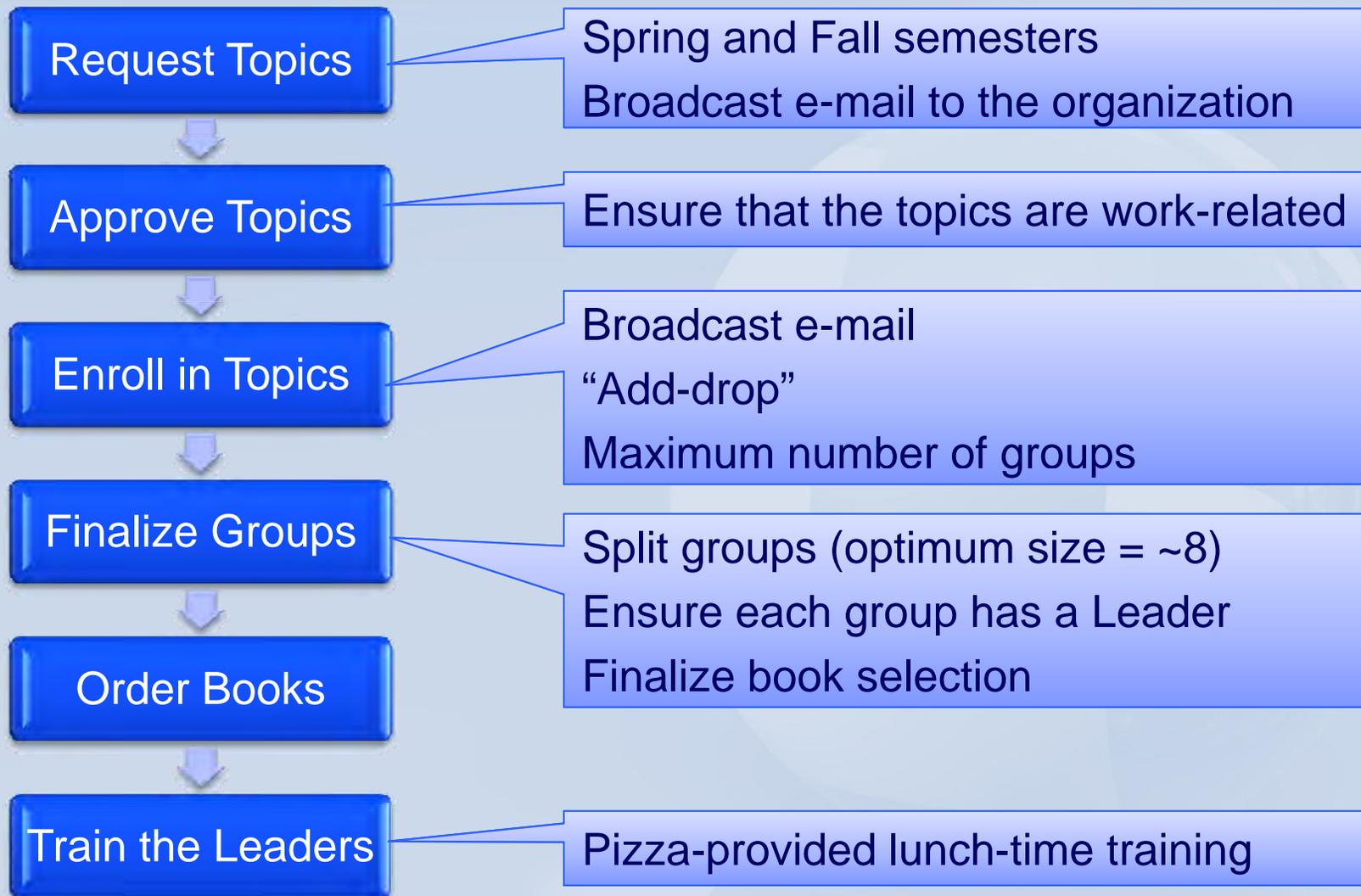
**Return on Investment:**

**\$120,000 (benefit) : \$8,000 (cost)  15:1**



# Work Study Group Process

# Forming the Groups



This phase is managed by the WSG Coordinator

# Conducting a Work Study Group



This phase is managed by each Work Study Group Leader

# Create the Schedule

- Allocate the material to be covered each week
  - Typically about 8 weeks, maximum of 10
    - After too many weeks, members lose interest
  - Possibly leave out certain less-relevant chapters
- Assign Discussion Leader and Recorder
  - Rotating assignments

Date	Discussion Leader	Recorder	Chapters	Pages
Sep 10	Smith	Williams	1-2	30
Sep 17	Miller	Parker	3	18
Sep 24	Jones	Thompson	4-6	38
Oct 1	Williams	Smith	7-9	35
Oct 8	Parker	Miller	10-11	28
Oct 15	Thompson	Jones	12	22
Oct 22	Smith	Williams	13-14	40
Oct 29	Miller	Parker	15	24

# Kick-off Activities

- Pass out the books
- Provide the schedule to everyone
- Decide upon a day and time to meet
  - Reserve the meeting place
- Relay participation expectations
  - Everyone has read the material
  - Everyone contributes to the discussion

## **OPTIONS:**

### Kick-off Meeting

- The first meeting of the group

### Virtual Meeting

- E-mail communication
- Members pick up their book at Leader's desk

# Discussion Options

- Page-by-page discussion
  - Group members highlight important points
- Presentation
  - Discussion Leader presents a summary
  - More appropriate for larger or complex material

## Subject Matter Experts

- Occasionally, you might invite one to provide insight and answer questions
- Some groups have corresponded with the Author and even had him/her in a teleconference at the final session

## ● Compiled by the Recorder

Content	Reason
Attendees	For providing training credit
Application ideas	Will go in the Improvement Suggestion tracking system and the WSG Report
Lessons learned regarding the WSG process	Will go in the WSG Report

## ● Very informal

- Sent via e-mail or placed in a shared drive
- Usually added to a file that contains minutes from all meetings

- Select the potential applications that will be submitted as Improvement Suggestions
- Discuss the usefulness of the source material
- Summarize any Lessons Learned on how to improve the Work Study Group process

*Can be in conjunction with the last regular meeting or held as a separate meeting*

## *Content*

Number of meetings

Rating of Resource Material

5 – You probably won't find better material

4 – Very good coverage of the subject

3 – Fairly useful

2 – Okay, if you can't find anything better

1 – Avoid at all cost

Improvement Suggestion ID numbers

Suggestions for improving the Work Study Group process

General comments

*These are available for general review*



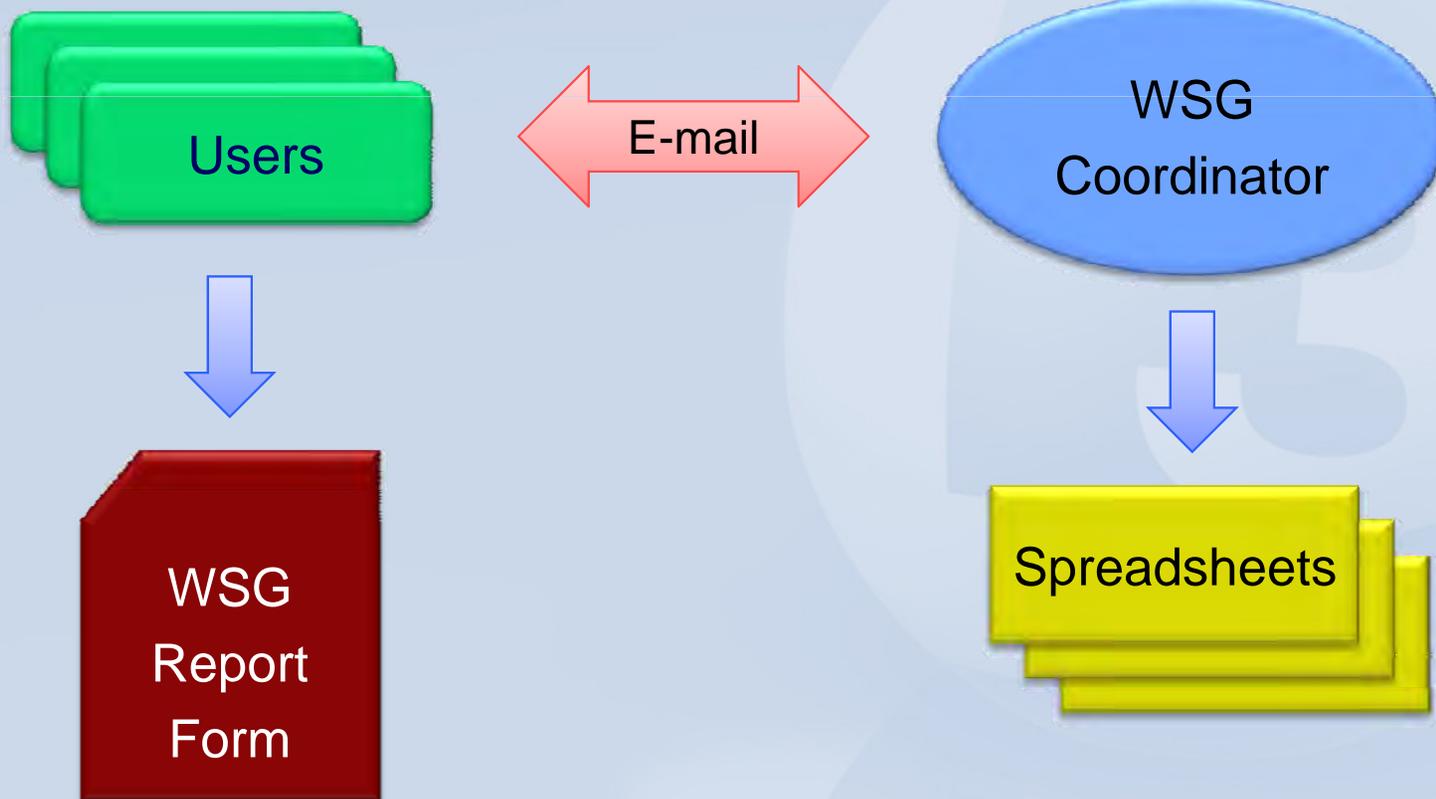
# Tools for Managing a Work Study Group Program

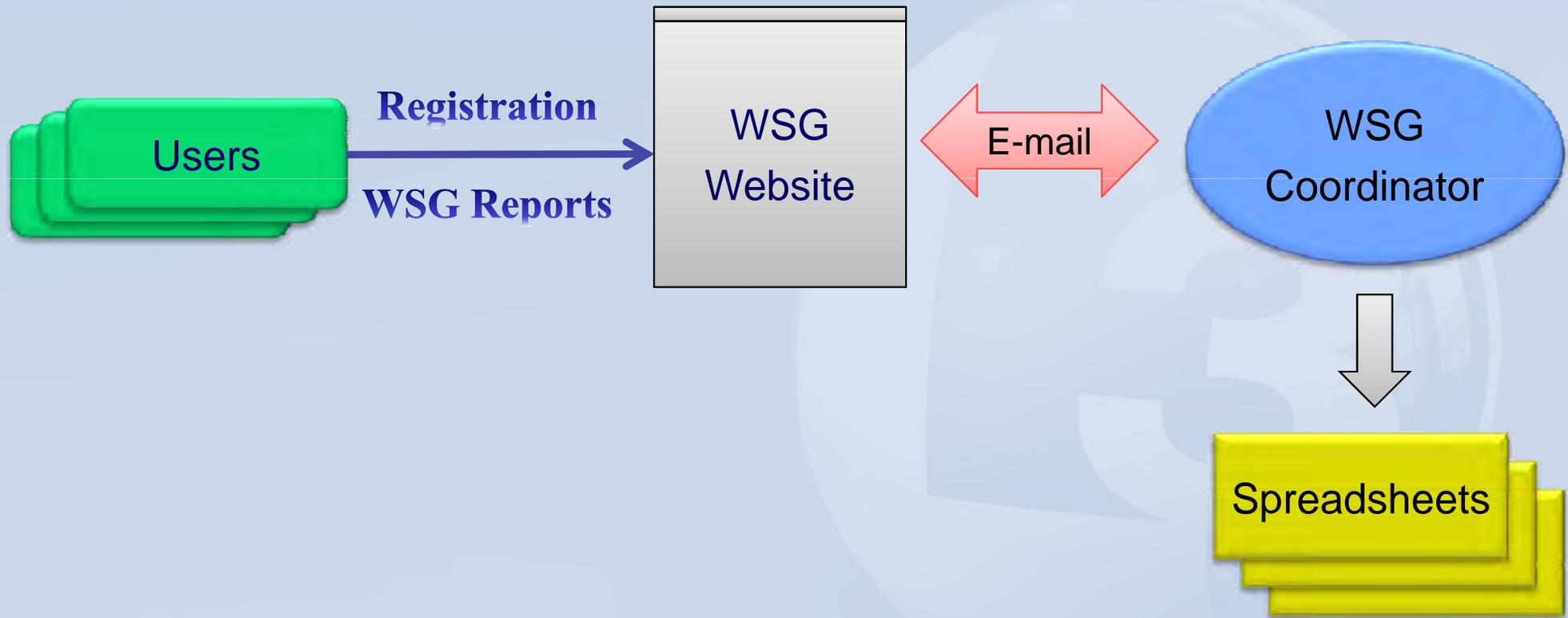
## High-level Procedure

- Defines the policies of Work Study Groups
  - Book purchases
  - Group expectations
- Describes the general flow of the Work Study Group process

## Work Instruction

- Serves as a checklist to the Work Study Group Coordinator for each semester





# WSG Management Spreadsheets

## Proposed Books

Submitter

Site

Topic Name

Description

Comment

Book Title

Sent to the  
Topic Approvers

## General Management

Topic Name

Site

Leader

List of Group Members

Book Title

Author

ISBN

Cost per Book

Reference Book Information

Total Cost

Group Status (need leader, etc.)

Used by WSGC to manage  
the process

## Book Ordering

Leader

Site

Book Title

Author

ISBN

Number of Copies

Notes

For coordination with  
the Book Orderer

# Work Study Group Registration System

**Welcome to the  
Work Study Group Registration System**

Login ID:

Password:

Login

## Users

- Submit topics
- Enroll
- View reports

## Work Study Group Coordinator

- Set roles
- Allow topic submissions and enrollment
- Manage groups

## Leader Support

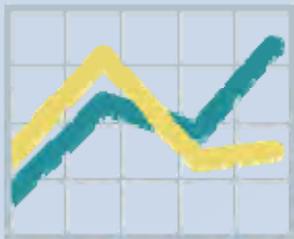
- Document attendance
- Submit reports
- Request reference book

## Other Administrative

- Topic approval
- Book ordering

# Work Study Group Metrics

- Cost
- Participation rates
- Resultant improvement suggestions
- Benefits resulting from the studies



# Frequently Asked Questions

- Who pays for the book that we study in the Work Study Group?
- Can I be a part of more than one Work Study Group at a time?
- What is the order of events in the Work Study Group process?
- My project team would like to study a particular book. May we have our own Work Study Group without going through the normal sign-up process?
- What is the minimum number of people required to form a Work Study Group?
- Do I get training credit for participating in a Work Study Group?

# Summary

- Work Study Groups can provide an effective supplement to your training program
  - They offer low-cost opportunities for employees to explore high-interest subjects
  - They can be a source of process and technology improvements
- When beginning a Work Study Group Program, start small
  - Build your infrastructure and your case
- Following a structured process facilitates a smooth implementation

# Acronyms

<b><i>Acronym</i></b>	<b><i>Meaning</i></b>
ID	Identification
ISBN	International Standard Book Number
ROI	Return on Investment
WSG	Work Study Group
WSGC	Work Study Group Coordinator