


A Practical Approach to...

RETAINING ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Projects Meet Knowledge Management



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Topics

- The Knowledge Gap
- What is Knowledge Management?
- Using projects to support KM
- Create a Knowledge Retention Policy
- Next steps

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The Knowledge Gap...

Organizations face a growing gap between what they *know* and what they *need to know* due to...

- “Boomer” retirements
- Resignations in an active job market
- Radical technology changes
- Market globalization
- Increased business complexity

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The Knowledge Gap...

The loss of vital organizational knowledge is further complicated when...

- New employees lack the business knowledge of their predecessors
- Knowledge transfer is left to informal, localized efforts

This Knowledge Gap threatens an organization's ability to provide established products and services.

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What is KM?

Knowledge Management is...

"... an interdisciplinary field that deals with all aspects of knowledge processes including knowledge creation, discovery, acquisition, sharing, transfer, retention, and organization. It encompasses technology, people, and organizational practices."

-Suliman Hawamdeh
Professor and KM Program Coordinator
University of Oklahoma

Knowledge Management is frequently dismissed as an intangible academic exercise.

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What is KM?

Knowledge Management...

- Is a formal, deliberate organizational decision to recognize organizational knowledge as a tangible asset
- Includes rigorous processes for the discovery, structuring, retention and sharing of organizational knowledge
- Anticipates current and future organizational needs
- Includes all levels and types of organizational knowledge

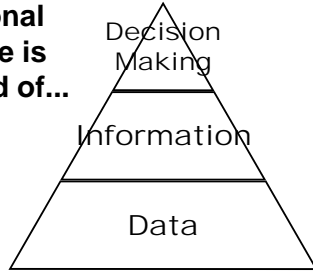
Without a formal KM strategy, corporate databases, wikis and intranets may become dumping grounds for unreliable data.

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What is KM?

Organizational knowledge is composed of...



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Organizational Knowledge...

Data ... *Elementary facts about the organization*

Information ... *A deliberate structuring of data that enables sound decision making*

Decision Making ... *The actions needed to support the organization*

- Policies, rules, regulations, procedures, job responsibilities
- Intuition, judgment, wisdom

Decision making is flawed when organizational data or information are untrustworthy.

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Organizational Knowledge...

Explicit knowledge...

- Governed by absolute rules
- Declarative
- Knowing "that"

Tacit knowledge...

- Wholly or partially inexplicable
- Not easily shared
- Knowing "how"

The ultimate goal of Knowledge Management must be to fully *define explicit knowledge* and *identify tacit knowledge*.

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What is KM?

A practical approach to Knowledge Management includes...

- Using projects to harvest organizational knowledge
- Creating a Knowledge Retention Policy to guide the total effort

These strategies may supplement other organizational KM efforts.

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Using Projects...

Projects, initiatives and special assignments...

- Are the mechanism used to create, change or improve business products and services
- Occur in all modern organizations
- Encounter all forms of organizational knowledge

Project Management and project deliverables provide natural links to Knowledge Management.

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Project Management...

"...the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements."

- A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge 3rd Edition

"...the corporate act of planning, leading, organizing and controlling the work required to accomplish the objectives of a single-time effort."

- Managing Single-Time Efforts
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Organizations are increasingly dependent on projects to create new products and services.

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Project Management...

Project Management provides organizational knowledge about...

- A *Project Life-Cycle*
- Recommended roles and responsibilities
- Useful processes and templates
- Required and suggested fundamental techniques
- Lessons-learned and best practices

A documented *Project Management Framework* identifies a repeatable process that should be used to manage an organization's projects.

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Project Deliverables...

Projects create or use a wide variety of knowledge assets including...

- Engineering drawings and models
- Specifications and requirements
- Testing procedures and results
- Research data
- Audit processes and results
- Physical products
- ?????

These project deliverables should be captured in a Product Repository.

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Project Deliverables...

A Product Repository should collect proven knowledge for...

- Any significant product or service provided to internal or external customers
- Internal functions significant to the operation of the organization
- Policies, procedures and definitions established by the organization

A *Product Repository* retains an organization's explicit knowledge.

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Knowledge Retention Policy...

A *Knowledge Retention Policy* is...

...a formal, written document that **declares** intellectual properties considered to be vital organizational assets.

- Identifies significant organizational knowledge
- Validates current practices
- Provides vision for future efforts
- Creates a centralized view of organizational knowledge

A Knowledge Retention Policy provides a **succession plan** for organizational knowledge.

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Knowledge Retention Policy...

A *KRP* should include...

- An official statement...
 - Explaining the importance of organizational knowledge
 - Documenting management's commitment to collect and use this knowledge as an asset
- An inventory of knowledge assets...
 - Recognizable to the organization
 - Structured around proven information engineering disciplines

A KRP Scope must be set to keep the total effort feasible.

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Knowledge Retention Policy...

Once it has been created, a KRP should be...

- Stored in a repository
- Communicated throughout the organization
- Updated on a regular basis
- Evaluated for weaknesses or opportunities

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Next Steps...

Officially recognize the importance of Knowledge Management...

- Establish a formal KM initiative
- Create and publish a Knowledge Retention Policy
- Implement product and project repositories
- (Create a Knowledge Management Office)

A Knowledge Management initiative should be launched as a formal ... *project!*

Next Steps...

Provide KM-related education...

- Knowledge Management significance
- Formal Project Management methods
- Engineering methods that create or refine project deliverables
- Quality validation techniques

Next Steps...

Focus project activities on Knowledge Management...

- Document *affected knowledge assets* for each project
- Recognize Project Managers as custodians of knowledge assets

Next Steps...

Final Thoughts...

- Knowledge Management demands senior executive attention to survive
- Knowledge Management is an on-going commitment
- Knowledge Management facilitates effective business solutions

Knowledge Management enables individuals and organizations to *thrive* in the Knowledge Age.

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Senior Consultant
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BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

PROJECT-BASED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

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"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."
-Isaac Newton

"Man can know more than their ancestors did if they start with a knowledge of what their ancestors had already learned."
-Walter Lippmann

"The beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand."
-Frank Herbert

Chuck Tryon
ChuckTryon@TryonAssoc.com
www.TryonAssoc.com
918.455.3300



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