

# MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

*Practical Knowledge Management*



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## Topics

- The Knowledge Gap
- What is Organizational Knowledge?
- A Model for Managing Organizational Knowledge
- 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
- Layoffs
- Resignations in an active job market
- Upward mobility
- 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
- Established organizational capabilities are lost or compromised
- Knowledge transfer is left to informal, localized efforts

This “knowledge gap” is threatening the ability of many organizations to provide established products and services.

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## What is Organizational Knowledge?

- What is Knowledge?
- What is Knowledge Management?
- What is Organizational Knowledge?

Knowledge Management is frequently dismissed as an intangible academic exercise.

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## What is Knowledge?

Knowledge is...

*“...the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association.”*

Merriam-Webster Online

- Both tacit and explicit
- Often described using a W-K-I-D model
- General or organizational

The search to understand knowledge is as old as mankind.

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## What is Knowledge?

### Tacit vs. Explicit Knowledge...

*Any discussion of knowledge must include the distinctions between...*

| Tacit Knowledge   | Explicit Knowledge |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Informal          | Formal             |
| Personal          | Based on absolutes |
| Knowing "how"     | Knowing "that"     |
| Not easily shared | May be captured    |
| Hard to document  | Definable          |

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## What is Knowledge?

Many authors explain knowledge using a W-K-I-D model...

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Information
- Data

This model should be view as a progressive result, not a true definition of knowledge.

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## What is Knowledge?

### General vs. Organizational Knowledge...

*An emerging distinction is being made between...*

| General K          | Organizational K |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Globally available | Owned privately  |
| Encyclopedic       | Specific to org. |
| Accessible to all  | Internal control |

Early Knowledge Management work applies library sciences to General Knowledge.

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## What is Knowledge Management?

### Knowledge Management...

- Is a formal, deliberate decision to recognize knowledge as a tangible asset
- Includes processes to discover, define, refine, enhance, retain and use knowledge

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

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## What is OrgK?

### Organizational Knowledge is...

*The data, information and decision-making required to perform processes deemed significant to an enterprise's ability to survive and thrive.*

- Lives in the minds of employees (tacit)
- Documented in formal processes (explicit)
- Captured in automated products (explicit)

OrgK assumes the existence of *general knowledge*.

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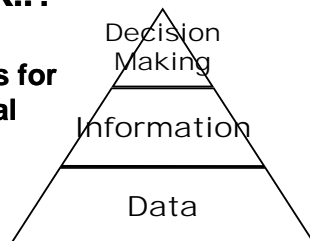
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## What is OrgK..?

### Building blocks for Organizational Knowledge...



Organizations should understand the relationships between these "bottom-up" components.

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## What is OrgK..?

**Data ... Elementary facts about the organization**

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

- Assumes a sender and receiver
- Enables some type of action

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

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

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## OrgK Management Model

**A practical approach to Managing Organizational Knowledge may be constructed using...**

- **Projects Pillar**
- **Processes Pillar**
- **Artifacts Pillar**

A Knowledge Map of the relationships between these *pillars* should be documented.

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## OrgK Management Model...

### The Projects Pillar...

- **Identifies all active projects within an organization**
- **Provides a portal for all Project Management by-products**
- **Should be a natural component of formal Project Management**
- **May be administered by a PMO**

Projects provide a natural source for *when* OrgK will be discovered, defined, refined, enhanced, retained and used.

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## OrgK Management Model...

### The Processes Pillar...

- Defines the best practices used by an organization for...
  - Project management
  - Technical activities
  - Audits, tests and validations
  - Templates and guidelines
- Produces long-term and short-term knowledge artifacts

These repeatable processes explain *how* consistent knowledge artifacts are created.

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## OrgK Management Model...

### The Artifacts Pillar...

- Emphasizes knowledge assets that have long-term value to the organization
- May require multiple repository products
- Should result from proven best practices
- Should be recorded in consistent templates

The Knowledge Artifact Pillar defines *what* is produced during a project.

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## OrgK Management Model...

A knowledge inventory should be created to give structure to the Processes and Artifacts Pillars.

- Declares significant OrgK
- Includes tacit and explicit knowledge
- Identifies current knowledge source
- Examines the state of each asset

*Organizations should declare their knowledge in a formal knowledge map.*

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## OrgK Management Model...

**A Knowledge Retention Policy is...**

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

- Validates current practices
- Provides vision for future efforts
- Creates a centralized view of organizational knowledge
- Is captured in two levels of detail

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

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## Next Steps...

**Formally recognize the importance of Knowledge Management...**

- Establish a formal KM initiative
- Define the components of and relationships between the pillars
- Create and publish a Knowledge Retention Policy
- Implement needed repositories
- Create a governance structure for Knowledge Management

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

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## Next Steps...

**Provide KM-related education...**

- Knowledge Management fundamentals
- Formal Project Management methods
- Engineering methods that define or refine knowledge artifacts
- Invest in quality validation processes
- Repository products

Much of this education has been provided in organizations for many years.

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## Next Steps...

### Focus project activities on Knowledge Management...

- Document *affected knowledge assets* for each project
- Recognize Project Managers as custodians of knowledge assets
- Insure sufficient time is available to create quality knowledge assets

Projects are an organization's most natural source for Knowledge Management.

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## 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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Center of Knowledge Research Public Access Knowledge Management

### BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

By Robert A. Tryon  
Executive Director, Center of Knowledge Research  
Knowledge Management Institute

**THE KNOWLEDGE GAP**  
The knowledge gap is the difference between the knowledge that is available and the knowledge that is used. It is the gap between what we know and what we do. It is the gap between the knowledge that is available and the knowledge that is used. It is the gap between what we know and what we do. It is the gap between the knowledge that is available and the knowledge that is used.

**PROJECT-BASED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**  
Project-based knowledge management is the process of capturing, organizing, and sharing knowledge from projects. It is the process of capturing, organizing, and sharing knowledge from projects. It is the process of capturing, organizing, and sharing knowledge from projects.

**AVAILABLE AT...**  
[www.TryonAssoc.com](http://www.TryonAssoc.com)

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# 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Knowledge/Project Management Symposium

University of Oklahoma –  
Tulsa Campus  
August 12-13, 2009

[www.kipanet.org](http://www.kipanet.org)



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

-Issac 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

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