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European Guide to good Practice in Knowledge Management - Part 2: Organizational Culture

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Foreword

This European Guide to Good Practice in Knowledge Management (KM) has been prepared by a Project Team reporting to the CEN Workshop on Knowledge Management in the period September 2002 till September 2003. The decision to produce this Guide in the form of a CEN Workshop Agreement was taken at the Workshop's Kick-Off meeting on 2003-06-24.

Reason for this guide

This guide aims to:

- (a) Provide European readers with a practical introduction to mainstream thinking in KM;
- (b) Give an indication of some of the emerging new thinking in KM;
- (c) Stimulate interested readers to join an ongoing public discussion about KM, which will be facilitated through the European Commission's KM portal at <http://www.knowledgeboard.com/>

The authors have therefore produced:

- (a) A discussion document to help readers develop their plans for getting started in KM;
- (b) A synthesis of good KM practices from around Europe – from the private and public sectors and from academia;
- (c) A reflection of their own experiences in KM;
- (d) An indication of some of the new thinking in this fast evolving field.

A fast track through this guide

The guide comprises five main booklets¹, published each as a CWA part, each of which can be read separately, although we would strongly recommend readers to consider these booklets as one integrated good practice guide, which can perhaps be best read in the following order:

- 1. KM Framework**, which sets the overall context for KM at both the organizational and personal level; (CWA 14924-1)
- 2. Culture and KM**, which explains to readers how to create the right cultural environment for introducing KM; (CWA 14924-2)
- 3. Implementing KM in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)**, which provides a project management methodology to help SMEs (and other organizations) get started in KM; (CWA 14924-3)
- 4. Measuring KM**, which helps organizations assess their progress in KM; (CWA 14924-4)
- 5. KM Terminology**, which summarizes the key KM terms and concepts that readers will find useful when navigating through the guide. (CWA 14924-5)

These documents are therefore intended for employees, managers, directors or anyone else involved in a KM programme, within or between European organizations. The documents combine both desk and primary research and also offer a comparison of different models and case studies.

The document has been approved by a wide range of interests, representing the Knowledge Management community. The list of experts who formally supported the CWA's contents may be obtained from the CEN/ISSS Secretariat.

¹ Please see Annex D for the detailed terms of reference for each Work Item of this project.

Introduction

Why KM?

As organizations strive to improve their business performance and capacity for innovation, their attention is increasingly focused on how they manage knowledge.

Experience has shown that successful KM implementations in business settings prioritize attention on soft issues - including human and cultural aspects, personal motivations, change management methodologies, new and improved business processes enabling multidisciplinary knowledge sharing, communication and collaboration - and see technology as an enabler.

Despite this, most efforts so far at addressing the challenge of KM in business environments have typically taken a "technology-push" approach, concentrating major effort on putting in place IT tools that will "solve the knowledge creation, sharing and reuse problem".

Given this, it has been the objective of this guide to investigate those soft areas related to KM which can be the subject of common approaches, good practice identification or standardization initiatives, and to situate and describe these in the wider organizational context. The overall intention has been to provide meaningful and useful guidelines to companies, and notably SMEs (see below), as to how they might align their organizations culturally and socially to take advantage of the opportunities of knowledge sharing within and beyond their organizational boundaries.

These guidelines therefore take the form of a European Guide to Good Practice in KM which describes how to implement KM successfully within an organization, and lists the benefits awaiting those organizations that are able to do it. Through its soft, culturally focused approach, the guide aims to add value to other more technology-focussed initiatives underway within companies and standardization bodies. The overall result will be a greater complementary benefit for European companies, large and small.

In short we have aimed to identify and develop good practices which can be applied to all types of European businesses, including SMEs, to ensure that these organizations can be assisted as they seek to put in place the cultural, human and environmental ecology necessary to take full advantage of their collective knowledge as they do business in the knowledge economy.

Why KM in SMEs?

Owners and managers of SMEs differ in what they term success. Survival and continuity, profit, return on capital employed, numbers of employees and customers, pride in product, skills and service, employment for family members, and enjoyable work life, are frequently mentioned criteria.

Knowledge will tend to play a more significant role whenever change, innovation and growth are being pursued in a competitive and complex field. Some identified KM routes to success have been through the following:

- Being adaptive to the business environment you are in
- Having a special group of customers; we may learn a lot from leading customers and from companies with a good innovation record
- Sticking to a small niche that others do not want to contest
- Benefiting from local monopolistic circumstances
- Addressing inertia/lack of information among the customer base
- Creating a stable technology infrastructure over a long period of time
- Maximizing the profitability of the activity
- Capable management with a good development process supporting them
- Loyal and capable workforce
- Being responsive to customers' needs and requirements.

For the SME these simple steps can provide substantial benefit:

Although extended knowledge locations and flows are obvious in larger organizations, why is a KM approach especially important in the SME? Reasons are as follows:

- Knowledge in SMEs tends to be tacit/informal/not recorded
- Know-how in SMEs may not be valued as highly as it might be
- Lack of know-how may be hard to talk about in SMEs
- Short-term approaches to knowledge gaps may work sufficiently to make change appear unnecessary
- Know-how in an SME may easily be lost or fragmented when the owner sells the business or retires.

1 Scope

Culture is perhaps the most important factor in successfully managing knowledge. It is a key influence on behaviours. This booklet looks at what culture is, how it develops and how you can work with it to ensure your KM programme is successful. It attempts to give some answers to:

- 1) How to get the support and active involvement of the members of the organization (issues related to human resources: motivation, competencies, etc).
- 2) How to organize for the implementation of KM (issues related to the formal and informal structure of the organization).
- 3) How to get the appropriate climate for KM implementation (issues related to specific activities and tools to be used).

This booklet looks at changes in culture that may be needed to enhance and gain greater value from knowledge; developing a greater understanding of culture and how it is derived from the actions of individuals and groups; ways in which address changes required might be addressed, and some examples from other organizations to illustrate some of the points. The booklet ends with a summary of learning points and a checklist of competencies that may need to be developed.

It introduces a large number of concepts and approaches. These will prove of greater benefit if the sources of further reading cited below are also consulted, and contact taken with experienced practitioners through KM collaboration groups.

This booklet looks at what culture is, how it develops and how you can work with it to ensure your KM programme is successful.

2 The relationship between Knowledge and Culture

2.1 Barriers to KM

Your organization and policies may be highly supportive of KM but a good starting point would be to look for some of the common barriers found and how they might be addressed

Barrier	Remarks	Key Sections
Time and priority	Understanding meaning and implications and capturing and sharing knowledge requires time. Increasingly, formal management permissions and expectations, for knowledge sharing, are becoming part of job specifications (and appraisals).	3, 5.4
Difference between management statements and actions	A knowledge aware culture will persist if given appropriate support, but managers who introduce programme then rapidly move emphasis to other areas lose the efficiencies and effectiveness that good KM brings. Top management failure to signal the importance of KM has been found to be a major impediment.	5.2; 5.3; 7.3
An enduring notion that "knowledge is power":	The competitive internal environment in many organizations fosters knowledge hoarding; unique possession of knowledge is seen as power and job security.	4.1; 5.1; 7.2; Also W14 French study
Apathy about sharing knowledge	The values and behaviour of senior management can have a huge effect on employees' propensity to share.	5.3; 6.1
"Not Invented Here" syndrome	Humans often get more satisfaction from inventing something rather than building on someone else's idea, even when aware that it could save time or costs. For organizations, functional silos often present an obstacle to sharing knowledge.	4.1; 5.3; 5.4; 7.4
Reward systems that mitigate against knowledge sharing	Some reward and appraisal systems inadvertently encourage the withholding or knowledge. Even if set up to encourage sharing they can restrict changes in culture, so beware of the disincentive side of any reward system.	5.4
Different cultures and subcultures	There are considerable differences between social and national cultures, that can lead to differing interpretations and behaviours. Trust and communication can be adversely affected if not managed well.	3
Knowledge travels via language	Without a common organizational language to describe experience, one cannot communicate what one knows.	3
Considering the organization to be "machine-like"	Some people believe that an organization is best understood as a machine and that simply changing process will create desired change. People, by contrast, cannot learn much without inclusion and without reflection.	2.2; 6.3
Organizational "amnesia"	Organizations often fail to retain knowledge acquired and lessons learned in the past. The people who had the knowledge leave and no retrievable record remains.	6.2
Growth in "virtual" working can hinder as well as help	Whilst collaborative tools can be hugely beneficial for a KM programme, there is much evidence that people still learn best from other people face-to-face.	7.6
An over-emphasis on technology or inadequate supporting technology:	Some managers seem to believe that the very act of offering employees access to information will assure value for their organization. The value of knowledge is not in the access channel alone, but in the human interactions that the channel facilitates.	7.2; 7.3; 7.6
Knowledge doesn't grow forever	Unlearning and letting go of old ways of thinking, even retiring whole blocks of knowledge, contribute to the vitality and evolution of knowledge.	6.3

Modified from Knowledge Management: A Guide to Good Practice (British Standards Institution, 2001)

2.2 Comparison of Traditional and Knowledge-aware organizations

When looking at organizational culture that favours the creation, sharing and application of knowledge, one can find some differences from the culture that was (and is) predominant in the industrial or traditional type of organization:

Organizations with low awareness of knowledge	Knowledge-aware Culture
Limited information distribution	Wide information distribution
Many management levels	Few management levels
Uneven responsibility	Shared responsibility
Rules based	Principles based
Formal structure	Informal structure
Risk adverse	Able to take some risks
Occasional training policy	Continuous learning policy
More financial focus	Multifunctional focus
Political	Open
Knowledge retention	Knowledge sharing & utilization
Low emotional intelligence and cultural awareness	Welcomes influences on organizational culture from the networks in which an organization participates

3 A Description of Culture

There are a huge number of definitions of culture, which depend upon different perspectives, but a useful definition in the context of KM would be:

“Organizational culture can be defined as the learned way of perceiving, thinking and feeling, shared and transmitted among organizational members.” (Schein, 1984)

It can be seen as ‘the way we do things around here’ and is a social/behavioural manifestation comprising such features as:

- the values and beliefs of staff
- how people are and feel rewarded, organized and controlled
- the work orientation of staff, the way work is organized and experienced
- the degree of formalization, standardization and control through systems
- how authority is exercised and distributed
- the value placed on various functions within the organization
- how much scope for individuality and creative expression, risk-taking and initiative is given
- notions and concepts on the importance and use of time and space
- the organizational rites, rituals and stories
- organizational ‘language’ (phrases and words that have a special meaning or significance to that organization).

But organizations, even small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), rarely involve a single culture; there will be subcultures (groups which exhibit cultural characteristics, i.e. values, norms and practices that differ from the main organizational culture and from other subcultures). One common manifestation is “departmental differences”, which can lead to the phenomenon of departmentalization or so-called “silo thinking”.

In an electronics company the values and practices of the engineering department created a large number of tests and informal interactions. They believed the exchange of knowledge and personal relationships to be profoundly intertwined, and that every attempt to manage the knowledge would require these types of interactions. The people responsible for information management were much more oriented towards the application of established procedures; they put greater value in the structured knowledge integrated in procedures, computer programmes and documents. It is therefore important to keep in mind that different subcultures exist and this needs to be taken into account when initiating a KM programme.

The effect of many layers of culture upon individuals

Individuals are born into or join cultural groupings, such as their family culture, professional culture, corporate culture, team culture and national culture. Even their individual traits and competences affect their behaviours. Different events and circumstances trigger these various cultural influences to differing degrees, just like the brain uses its different areas to react to different external events. These different cultural influences shape the values and importance of knowledge and relationships. This leads to a complex set of outcomes. There are personal, team and organizational ‘agendas’ containing conflicting aspirations. This gives rise to the complexity of human relationships in organizations and organizations’ behaviour as so-called “complex adaptive systems”.

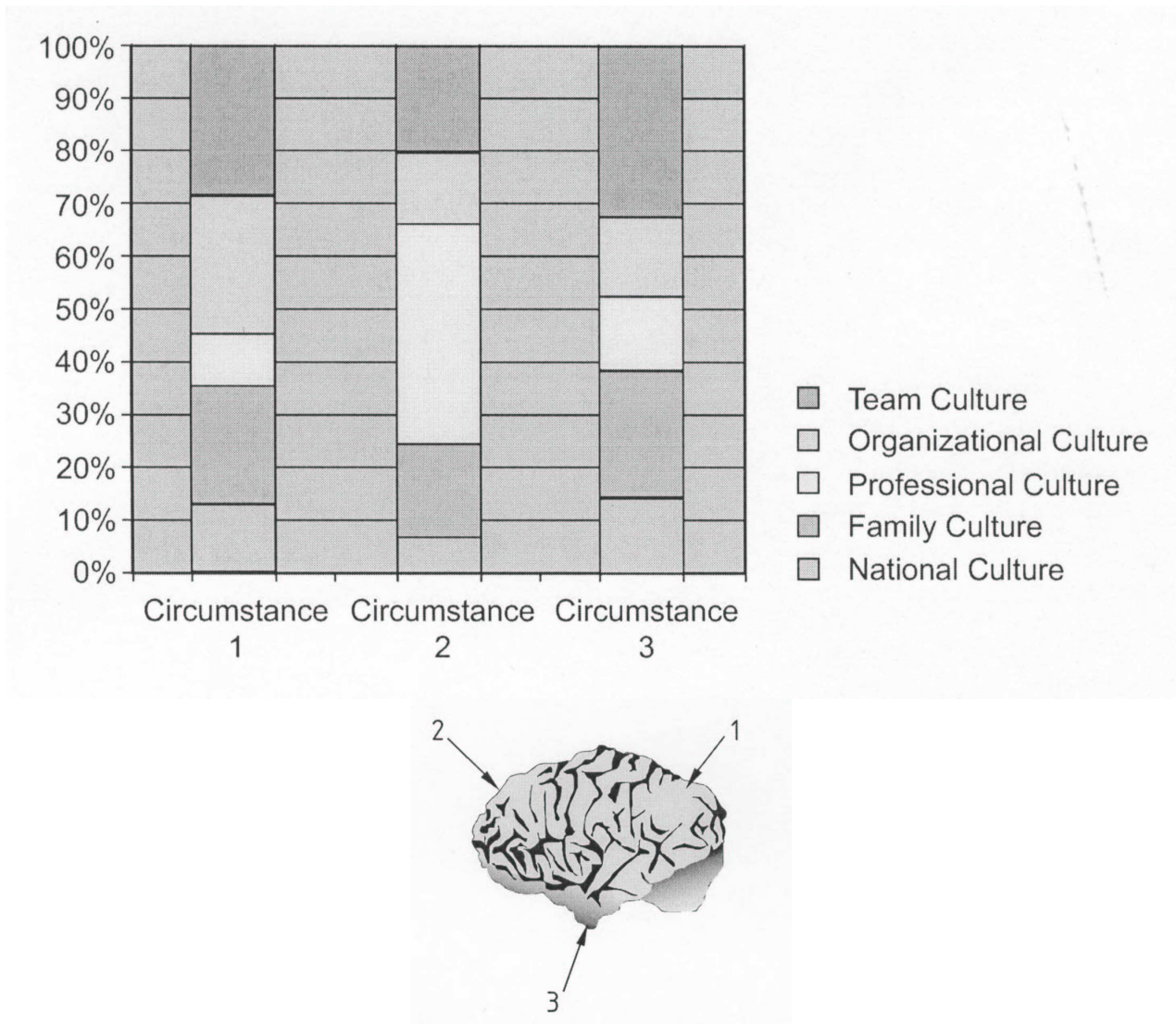


Figure & Graph 1 — Cultural layers have different impacts which depend on circumstances

Varying impact of cultural layers

When dealing with individuals, look out for the potential obstacles or benefits to communications that arise from these cultural influences. Values, protocols and behaviours can benefit or obstruct your aims.

In the weekly meetings of a team in a small organization, X did not participate actively as she could not handle the interruption culture at the meetings. It seemed that whoever shouted the loudest got their ideas across. It was not X’s style. On a more one-to-one basis however, X was happy to contribute with very good ideas. Y and Z, well known as the organization’s loudest shouters, were asked to attend a communication skills course, where the concept of non-violent communication was fleshed out. Meetings as a result became much more collaborative. By referring to the new learnings from time to time, it was also possible to create a fun environment at the weekly meetings.

As cultural diversity carries with it differences in the importance given to differing types of knowledge, to differences in the use of language and symbols and many other features, then if the organization’s products and services have a wide cross-cultural span, carrying out a so-called “cultural audit” could be valuable. **Even in a small organization, differences between subcultures are important, so some kind of cultural auditing to identify these can be beneficial.** (Please see references section 5 below.)

4 Individuals, groups and organizations

In booklet 1 - KM Framework - in this CEN Good Practice Guide, the importance of the relationship between the individual and the organization and the relationships between individuals that underpin knowledge processes is emphasized. This section develops that theme further.

4.1 Individuals

Organizational culture is created by the cumulative effect of individuals. It is the cumulative effect of contributions and negotiations from those individuals (past and present). They do this in order to develop relationships for themselves, their team/department and their organization.

Their employment puts them in a contractual relationship in which there are expectations and responsibilities. Individuals' "psychological contract" (i.e. their beliefs about what they owe the organization and what the organization owes them) drives them to seek, to find and to modify the culture to better serve their psychological contract. This does not necessarily imply a selfish or self-seeking motive. Public service, duty, or care for others may well be a strong value within the individual, group, or organization. The more supportive the culture the more productivity, trusting and sharing will be exhibited by individuals.

Individuals seek to create an identity for themselves that is related to their psychological contract. Working requires the formation of a community in which identity is acknowledged and preferably which allows expression of each individual's identity. In this sense, the formation of a community of practice (CoP) is also the negotiation of identities. Various types of identity can be pinpointed:

- Identity as negotiated experience. We define who we are by the ways we experience our selves through participation with other people.
- Identity as community membership. We define who we are by the familiar and the unfamiliar.
- Identity as learning path. We define who we are by where we have been and where we are going.
- Identity as multi-membership. We define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of membership into one identity.
- Identity as relating local to global. We define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader groups, styles and discourses.

People's identity is fundamental to their motivation and commitment. It drives what they feel is important knowledge, what, how and with whom they will share that knowledge and how they value their contribution to colleagues and the organization. It is important when mapping knowledge to identify those people whose self-worth is related to being perceived as key personnel in knowledge flows.

A Danish company, developing information, communication and entertainment systems, started its KM programme with a pre-analysis, aimed at discovering knowledge gaps and needs. The conclusion was that the knowledge was spread throughout the entire organization and mostly embodied in individuals (for a more detailed description of this case see booklet 3 of this guide, which focuses on KM in Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)).

Think broadly before acting

Many staff in a small sheet metal pressing company had more than 20 years service each. They were used to working together and asking advice of each other to get jobs completed. The operations director decided greater efficiency could be gained by developing a process manual, an intervention found useful in many organizations. After six weeks an extensive document was created. On enquiry it became clear that:

- the team felt their “tacit-tacit” exchanges were more effective at managing the workload (the credibility gained from enquiry by workmates reinforced positive aspects of their identity)
- they felt threatened by the notion that their knowledge would be available to others without adaptation to specific circumstances that arose from face-to-face questioning. (they saw this action as a negative move in the psychological contract)
- it diminished the value of their personal expertise (more negatives in the psychological contract and a threat to their professional identity at the individual and group levels)
- three long service employees decided to leave the company because they saw it as the first sign of the company moving away from the company they admired and in which they worked conscientiously (a severe weakening of the psychological contract).

Managing the boundaries between individual and corporate knowledge requires negotiation and high emotional intelligence, particularly if tacit knowledge is to be exchanged, and for KM tools such as expertise directories or “lessons learned” to be comprehensive. The employment contract and management values should support the concept that the knowledge remains with individuals, whilst the product of that knowledge – innovative ideas, actions, decisions, products generated within the organization during the paid pursuit of organizational goals becomes corporate, or organizational knowledge (see booklet 5 on KM Terminology for definitions of personal and organizational knowledge).

4.2 Groups and Communities

Working groups create a culture and the phenomenon of so-called “groupthink” can arise. Strong group beliefs give rise to restrictive behaviours. This creates many obstacles to the changes needed to create a knowledge-aware organization.

Some obstructive properties of groupthink include the following:

- **Illusion of invulnerability:** members believe that past successes guarantee future successes and so take extreme risks.
- **Collective rationalization:** members collectively rationalize away information that contradicts their assumptions.
- **Illusion of morality:** members believe that they are all moral and so could not make a bad decision.
- **Shared stereotypes:** members dismiss evidence that is contradictory by discrediting the source of that information.
- **Direct pressure:** sanctions are placed on members who dissent from the majority opinion by, for example, using assertive language to enforce compliance.
- **Self-censorship:** members keep quiet about any misgivings they have so that they do not voice concerns.
- **“Mind guards”:** members screen out information from outsiders where this might challenge the group's assumptions and beliefs.

- **Illusion of unanimity:** given these other symptoms, it appears that there is consensus within the group, even though there may be many of those involved who do not agree with the group decision.

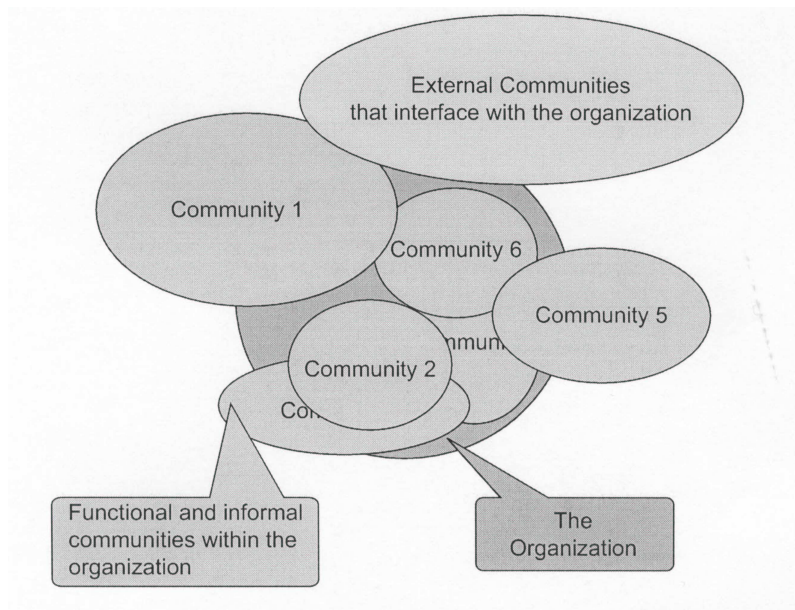


Figure 2 — Communities interact within the organization and with individuals and communities outside

Communities are a natural feature of most working environments. They take many forms, but their main defining characteristic is that they cross organizational boundaries. In some organizations, the existence of self-organizing communities is now being deliberately fostered to encourage people to work more effectively across functional and geographic boundaries. These organizations are providing support and tools to facilitate them. SME networks provide a good example of cross-boundary communities that can be of great benefit to their members. Support for cross-boundary communities is a hallmark of organizations that depend on the experience and expertise of their staff for their success.

A group of eight small accountancy firms in Amsterdam decided to cooperate and share the costs for acquiring information about national and international regulations. After some meetings, they discovered various other topics to discuss and they concluded that it would be worthwhile to meet on a regular basis and share new ideas and experiences. After two years, they have developed into a genuine Community of Practice (CoP). On an annual basis they have a collective social event, they help each other in case of difficult circumstances and they are setting up a shared website, which they will use for information and knowledge sharing.

There are three common types of community, which can be found both within an organization and across organizations:

- **Communities of interest** are groups with a mutual interest in a particular topic whose members wish to learn more and further develop their interest in the subject.
- **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** bring together people to share insights, develop expertise and to foster good practice through the exchange and creation of knowledge in a specific area. They are often a focus for building specific capability in their organization and ensuring that this is protected and retained in the organization as people move on. Formal functions (e.g. Finance, Marketing, Human Resources) often offer excellent potential for inter-organizational CoPs. For instance, in the UK, there is a strong community of government lawyers across virtually all government departments and CoPs are also fostered by professional institutes.
- **Communities of purpose** have a shorter time horizon and are accountable for delivering a specific business goal. These could include project teams, steering groups and task forces.

In the late 1980s an automotive company moved to “car-platforms”, which are cross-functional, product-based structures. This allowed them to reduce product-development cycle time and to reduce R&D costs. But **the move to the platforms did not come without costs, and even worse, it caused new problems like the development of multiple versions of the same part with slight variations, uncoordinated relationships with suppliers and lessons learned that were not shared. The company had gained the advantage of product focus, but lost the ability to learn from its own experience.** What was needed was a channel for communication across platforms. Former colleagues from functional areas started to meet informally. Managers recognized the value of these relationships, but rather than formalize these groups into a new matrix structure, they decided to support these informal meetings. The “Tech Clubs” were born.

Many communities evolve naturally, starting with a small group of enthusiasts and building from there; requiring little or no organizational support. Where organizations decide to encourage and legitimize communities, they will need to develop a visible process to do so.

New CoPs should probably not be started with an email from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (“top-down” communication) if the potential members of that community view the CEO with some distrust. A person, e.g. a senior engineer, who is trusted to be an expert on the “real” challenges being tackled by the CoP, should be asked to take the role as a “bottom-up” sponsor, and as a mediator between the team and top management.

4.3 The Whole Organization

The culture of an organization acts as a mediator of the relationship between personal and organizational knowledge (see figure 3), and determines which knowledge belongs to the organization and which remains under the control of individuals and groups. When individuals are asked to introduce their knowledge into an organizational system, e.g. a client database, they often tend to think that they have lost the ownership of know-how that until then remained exclusive to them. The objectives set for KM in the organization therefore need to take into account the rules and habits concerning the ownership and control of specific knowledge, in order to encourage the transition from personal to organizational knowledge.

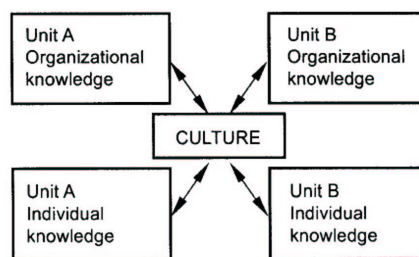


Figure 3 — Culture as a mediator between individual and organization

The internal management of information and “know-how” has been a concern that the founding associates of a small consulting firm had in mind since the beginning. The experience they gained in the companies that they worked for before always re-appeared. A small company which starts to expand as its business volume grows and which, one day, discovers that it has become so large that people can no longer efficiently share their experiences and knowledge can inadvertently hold back the main asset in a consulting business: the potential of its human resources. Therefore even in the first few months after it was founded, the will to share and exchange impressions led to the implementation of a series of tools designed *ad hoc* in order to guarantee a constant flow of information and communication. In this way the “Lessons Learned” sessions in which each worker talked about the details of the projects he/she’d been working on were born. In these sessions he/she would emphasise the most positive and successful aspects as well as those in which there were implementation or execution errors, so that the concrete experiences could serve for future projects. Then the “Customer Immersions”, with which anyone who knew of an organization that had developed a certain project, was introduced. This idea involved talking to the other workers about the specific characteristics of what working with this customer meant.

Management attitudes towards risk will alter the type of knowledge and creativity that is exhibited, e.g. when imagination produces new understanding from incoming information and relates it to existing experience. If past experience does not provide the brain with satisfactory categorization the imagination suggests its own possibilities. Less relevant ideas are filtered out. Risk-averse organizations keep that band of relevance narrow and therefore lose the benefit of some profitable creativity.

The case study on the French high tech firm, described in booklet 3 – SME Implementation - is a clear example of an open-minded culture (placing a high value on human resources, creating attractive working conditions, friendly working environment) but at the same time expects high levels of commitment and capability, as knowledge protection is ensured by the employees' attachment to the company.

4.4 Formal and informal organizational structures

Any organization will have both a formal structure, i.e. how it describes the parts of the organization, their functions and their responsibilities, and more importantly an informal structure, which really makes it productive (or causes disruption). By informal structure we mean, for example, the self-forming communities – e.g. smoking groups and interest groups - or “networking personalities” - ‘go and ask Fred, he always knows’ - that spring up on a sociable or as needed basis.

A substantial proportion of productive output arises from the informal structure; so many companies are encouraging its growth.

Successful cultures come in many forms

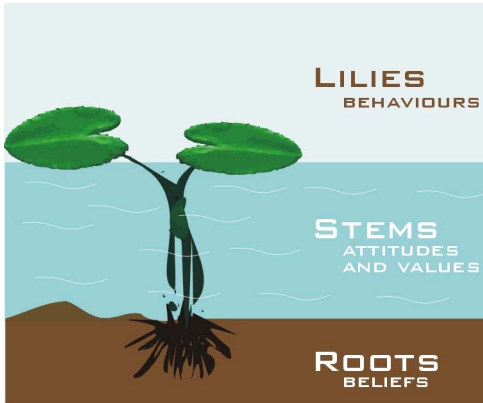
The CEO of a firm inherited from his father has transformed it into a business employing 3,000 staff across three countries. Conventional business practices are thrown out of the window. No strategy, no five-year plans, no formal budgeting, no monitoring or control of the workforce. He avoids this by having a large number of independently run enterprises where the decision-makers are close to the action: democracy in the workplace, with shop-floor workers making investment and hiring decisions. Expansion and growth is not channeled in any particular direction, but is encouraged to emerge from existing business activities. Executives can follow hunches, develop offshoots in similar areas of business or use existing skills to develop new businesses. People want to know why they are being asked to do things, and they appreciate the opportunity to raise suggestions and be involved in decision-making. This does not mean that those at the top must relinquish control of major decisions. He believes If you employ good people, they should have space to use their skills and find their own solutions to problems. But some solutions developed within the business become a way of doing things and it is not necessary to keep reinventing them.

5 Trust and motivation

5.1 Values, beliefs and trust

Alan William, Paul Dobson, Mike Walters created a model of the foundations of behaviours.

Lilies (above water) = behaviours (observable)
 Stems (through water) = attitudes and values (reportable)
 Roots (bottom of pond) = beliefs (unconscious)



Our beliefs and values are built from early childhood experiences and generally mature with our experiences as adults. These beliefs give rise to our attitudes and, coupled with our previous experience, give rise to the feelings that drive our behaviour. Our behaviour affects our experiences and our experiences are judged against our values and beliefs (either reinforcing or modifying those beliefs).

Our experience of knowledge processing – identifying, creating, storing, sharing, and using (see also booklet 1 - KM Framework) - will therefore shape our beliefs and attitudes. If the experiences have been positive, we will be likely to act positively by participating actively in these processes; or negatively if our experience has been negative. **A positive experience normally means that there has been a positive and important gain for the individual; it might be increased credibility, recognition, monetary or promotional reward etc.**

In many situations, negative experiences have made people wary of releasing or using their knowledge fully and many KM programmes involve creating experiences and insights that lead to positive experiences and modify ongoing behaviours positively (some of these tools are explained in section 6 below).

Serious malpractice in a hospital laboratory led to dangerously wrong information being given to doctors. Being courageous, a junior member of staff went to her supervisor and was told she was exaggerating and didn't know enough to make that judgment. Her conscience continued to plague her and after two weeks she went to the Senior Hospital Administrator. An independent investigation proved her to be correct. Nonetheless she had to leave because of the pressures of her peers and managers.

A theoretical high-level permission (organizational cultural value) was countermanded by 'local' expectations by her colleagues and managers (subculture value), that acts of this sort were 'disloyal'.

Shared values therefore give a sound basis for developing common understanding and KM projects benefit greatly from developing agreed and accepted values and beliefs through a process of dialogue (see also 6.5). This dialogue can also enhance trust between the participants.

Trust is based on perceived behaviours. "Trust is a huge issue... crucial because trust determines the level of knowledge sharing" (Sveiby). There are two main categories of trust, personal trust and competence (or identity) based trust. For effective KM it does not need to be at the level of personal trust, but can be competence-based. So it can take a number of forms:

- Identity based – I trust you because of your role or position - e.g. a doctor.

- Reciprocity based – I engage in trust behaviour because I believe you will too.
- Elicitative Trust – By engaging in acts of trust I will elicit trust from the other person.
- Compensatory trust – Some, but not all, will fail to engage in the needed behaviour and therefore I must take a lead.
- Moralistic Trust – I will act in a trustworthy way irrespective of what others do.

Respectful treatment over long periods of time leads to high levels of trust in the organization.

There are some beliefs that are shared by people who undertake successful KM:

- Time spent networking is worthwhile.
- There is a “boomerang” that comes round. You've got to give, in order to get.
- 'Knowledge is power' is a misleading, old-fashioned idea.
- There is a need for vision and an overall perspective, as well as for detail.
- Changes are accepted as the norm.
- Information overload can sometimes be mitigated with a combination of filtering technology and people networks.

Two organizations decide to cooperate in the form of a “Concurrent Enterprise” (CE). Until the moment this cooperation starts, they have been competitors trying to gain advantage by hiding important information about their products from one another. Now the game changes: in this cooperation, the two organizations have to act as if they were one organization. The people integrated in this special organization will have to build up their own organizational culture with its own values and trust among the members. This CE-culture will necessarily differ from the culture of each individual organization.

Radical new forms of working, necessary to survive in today's working environment, will increasingly call upon organizations to enhance their culture management competences.

(Please see also the case history in Annex A which illustrates the effects of a change in underlying corporate values.)

Knowledge and risk are frequently associated and the example below shows how difficult it often is for an owner-manager of an SME to delegate that risk-taking to employees.

A commercial writer had developed a strong client base and through client pressure expanded services to offer graphic design and web management by employing four staff. The order book and customer base was steadily growing, but delivery was unreliable. She found that she was working 16 hours a days. **Coaching revealed that she found delegation difficult, as she was used to working to extremely high standards and found her employees less committed and able. The coaching also created a clear view of her own life-work balance.**

An assessment was undertaken of knowledge, obstacles and of her own competencies, skills that she needed to develop, ways to use existing skills that related more closely to employee expectations. Changing her view of risk and developing her emotional intelligence so that employees were willing to fully commit their talents, particularly in areas where their expertise exceeded hers, gave higher satisfaction and reduced the number of working hours by creating increased efficiency, higher levels of trust and lower levels of control. More deadlines were met and the scope and quality of work improved, as did the bottom line.

5.2 Leadership

The leadership style applied to a specific work situation or job creates the climate in which people work. This climate has a direct impact on bottom-line performance, affecting growth, sales, productivity, efficiency and customer service.

A proposal was made to the directors that some time be set aside to develop informal 'anything goes' sessions where all sorts of possibilities could be developed. A proposal was put to the directors that 10% of everybody's time should be given over to new ideas and that people would be encouraged to form groups they thought appropriate. The proviso from the directors was that once a month a spokesman would talk for a maximum of 10 minutes on progress. (For further information on this case story please see booklet 3 – SME Implementation.)

There is a clear difference in the role managers and leaders play (although the role may be integrated in one person). Leaders should provide purpose, direction and behavioural role models. They share ideas with, walk among and listen to members of the enterprise, customizing the message and sensing employees' understanding of the enterprise's direction. These qualities are important at all levels in the organization, but have more impact the higher the position held. Management involves interpreting the enterprise vision and mission in a way that makes sense and resonates with employees. Managers guide performance and offer suggestions for corrective action. KM frequently involves guiding people's actions rather than directing; managers therefore need the skills and competences to create a climate that fosters the creation, sharing, and application of knowledge; i.e. a broader basis of leadership skills.

5.3 Credibility

The credibility of individuals (particularly 'experts') within communities has been found to have a major impact on who respond and the quality of response.

Credibility is strongly related to trust and qualities of leadership, both already recognized as fundamental to a knowledge-enabled organization

- High credibility and reliability means that when you give advice or make a judgment on your area of credible expertise it is based on sound knowledge or wisdom;
- People in the organization know that when you say something will happen, it will;
- People in the organization know that when you say something will not happen, it will not;
- People accept that you have the necessary judgment, skill and insight to be able to choose correctly between what should and should not happen;
- People accept that you have the necessary backing, levers of influence, resources and if necessary weapons at your disposal to ensure certainty of chosen outcome, once determined;
- When you obtain agreement or commitment from them to deliver something, they know they have to deliver it.

Bear in mind that developing this culture of credibility and trust does not happen overnight. Consistency of action cannot be demonstrated until a range of incidents and activities have presented themselves and have been resolved consistently. Also, bear in mind that, in order for this culture to become embedded across the range of people and units involved in your KM programmes, then your actions have to be visible.

Practice what you preach

An example of incentives to stimulate knowledge sharing can be found in a European consulting organization, where the partners are evaluated on a variety of dimensions, including how much direct help they have given colleagues. The degree of high quality person-to-person dialogue a partner has with other members of the organization can account for as much as one quarter of his/her annual compensation.

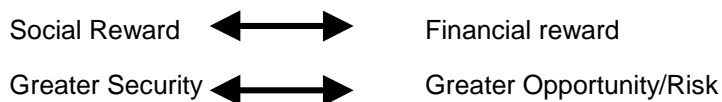
5.4 Motivation

All KM programmes involve change and in order to provoke change individuals must be motivated sufficiently to be willing to suffer the stress of the change process to find benefit and subsequent commitment. Even those who are altruistic are trying to see *'What's in it for me'*.

Things that motivate individuals include:

- Matching not only to the individual's traits and preferences, but also to their competence profiles and performance histories.
- Fear and greed (these are two of the most fundamental drivers and though you may not wish to use them, they are important to remember).
- Attractive choice of action (compared with others).
- Improved power (associated with a perceived improvement in personal or positional power or promotional opportunity).
- Recognition (good opinion with respected individuals, managers, subordinates, and dependent on traits, perhaps also special awards/rewards. Recognition is the most powerful motivator after the event).

Due to this wide spectrum of traits and preferences, different things motivate different individuals - any given individual might be stimulated more by one end of these alternatives or by the other;



Tasks that the individual feels they can perform better than others, and which enhance their identity, provide strong motivation.

We all judge the situation on permissions and expectations from our assessment of those around us. Most of this involves what we assess intuitively as valid; what our peers, superiors and subordinates and others expect and what they will allow and not allow. These may differ considerably from official lines of communication and authority, but they nevertheless form the basis of our view on the importance of acting or not acting. For a KM intervention to succeed, those involved must feel it is important enough that they must participate, that mistakes made in learning will be accepted and that time for change will be allowed.

A manager of a KM project aiming to implement CoPs and a lessons learned database presents himself as a very innovative person. Paradoxically, he is leading a change management project that will lead to structural changes in the organization, but he is showing a strong resistance towards his colleagues' ideas concerning real structural changes, such as bypassing or changing the established hierarchical communication and decision patterns, and he constantly states that within this organization such activities are not allowed.

Look for suitable motivation - matched to individuals - before, during and after a KM intervention.

In a consulting company, where the members of the organization viewed knowledge as their personal possession, and therefore refused to share, the management team encouraged knowledge sharing by changing the new project allocation process. Rather than giving projects to individual consultants, they were given to a group of consultants with the necessary expertise, forcing the consultants to network and market their expertise internally to participate on projects. Only by getting invited to join new projects could they be rewarded, thus giving them a built-in incentive to advertise their expertise internally. As a result the competition for status drove knowledge sharing rather than hoarding.

6 Competencies, learning and reflection

6.1 Learning through action/learning by doing

Competencies within individuals are important:

- As competencies are the engines for gaining benefit from your organizational knowledge
- As competencies encompass skills, knowledge and attitude. The skills allow the knowledge to be converted to practical ends and the attitude affects the willingness and motivation of people to convert the knowledge into benefits.
- For conducting the KM programme.

The iterative process for knowledge creation involves:

Empathizing - sharing and developing ideas together through social exchange

Articulating - into explicit form

Connecting - using different explicit forms to help the idea move forward

Embodying- incorporating into a product/process/service that has value.

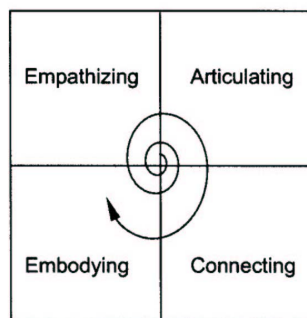


Figure 4 — The iterative nature of the knowledge creation cycle

Competencies are also an organizational asset. Attributes of a core competence for the organization include the following:

- It delivers a clear and valued customer benefit.
- It is largely tacit and hence hard to emulate by competitors.
- It is organization-wide and thus can be applied across an organization's entire service/product offering.
- Unlike physical assets it appreciates with use.

Part of your KM programme should therefore involve mapping existing competencies, e.g. by means of "knowledge skill tests" and deciding what to do about those that are missing, by offering training or including learning by doing programmes in the organization.

Competencies, which are embodied in the people in the organization, are the foundation of the human capital (HC) that an organization possesses as an intangible asset (see also booklet 4 – Measuring KM).

A very important element of the KM strategy of a venture capital company, that also offers support services for new business venture, is its “Academy”, which is responsible for the education and development of its key stakeholders. It is built on the handicraft model, where we first have the apprentice who learns the basics, then the journeyman who learns through practice, and finally the master who learns by helping others to learn. The content and the process are driven by the needs and expectations of the participants’ needs and expectations.

6.2 Sharing and creating

Successful companies create knowledge “pull”, i.e. they create the desire among the employees to tap into their company’s intellectual resources and they reward employees for sharing and creating knowledge.

Sharing is a key requirement of KM. The flow of knowledge required to consistently produce benefit and added value from utilization in turn requires an iterative process. Going round and round the four quadrants increases creation and use is thereby developed.

Empathizing and articulating are strongly dependent upon communication and therefore upon cultures that function on a basis of trust and which recognize the benefits of sharing. **For sharing knowledge to become a cultural norm, the benefits of sharing must exceed the benefits of retention in the eyes of the individuals concerned. This may mean that they are better known and get invited to do more interesting work, or are more visible (e.g. leading to promotion), or enjoy being helpful to others, or receive rewards etc. Individual preferences will suggest what sort of benefits will be important for any one individual.**

It follows that efficient sharing is achieved through group expectations that come from sufficient consensus of individuals’ beliefs in the benefit of sharing for them.

To remain vital, companies need new knowledge, or ways or re-using their knowledge in new ways - e.g. ways of making administration run more smoothly, or developing new products or services. In short, knowledge creation is a key source of innovation in any company. However it is difficult to manage creativity, as it is usually cultivated, rather than ordained. **Creativity can be encouraged by programmes such as ideas contests and opportunities to work on diverse projects.**

One electronics company developed a so-called “virtual Hollywood” and asked “directors” (employees) to present “scripts” (improvement ideas) to “investors” (general managers) who would choose the ones to “produce” (implement). The project promoted out-of-the-box thinking and in the first year generated over 200 submissions, addressing process improvement and product development.

6.3 The learning organization

The idea of a “learning organization” is seen by many as a response to an increasingly unpredictable and dynamic business environment.

A learning organization is an organization creating, acquiring and transferring competence and being able to change its behaviour according to new knowledge and views. (Garvin, 1993)

What does a learning organization learn?

- To use learning to reach its goals.
- To help people value the effects of their learning upon their organization.
- To avoid making the same mistakes again.
- To share information in ways that prompt appropriate action.
- To link individual performance with organizational performance.

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- To tie rewards to key measures of performance.
- To take in a lot of environmental information at all times.
- To create structures and procedures that support the learning process.
- To foster ongoing and orderly dialogues.
- To make it safe for people to share openly and take risks.

What does a learning organization look like?

- Learns collaboratively, open and across boundaries.
- Values how it learns as well as what it learns.
- Invests in staying ahead of the learning curve in its industry.
- Gains a competitive edge by learning faster and smarter than competitors.
- Turns data into useful knowledge quickly and at the right time and place.
- Enables every employee to feel that every experience provides him/her a chance to learn something potentially useful, even if only for leveraging future learning.
- Exhibits little fear and defensiveness.
- Takes risks but avoids jeopardizing the basic security of the organization.
- Invests in experimental and seemingly tangential learning (related but not conforming to existing learning patterns) and in serendipity.
- Supports people and teams who want to pursue action-learning projects.
- Depoliticizes learning by not penalizing individuals and groups for sharing information and conclusions.

How does a learning organization evolve? By...

- Questioning current assumptions about learning.
- Getting an outside perspective.
- Tying the goal of becoming a learning company to organizational vision.
- Funding or creating a champion in top management.
- Looking for the 'pain' in the organization - the place(s) where more effective learning could help.
- Articulating learning organization ideas plainly.
- Rewarding group as well as individual learning success and failure.
- Finding an external competitor or other focus point to spur greater co-operative learning.
- Finding ways to collaborate internally, unhampered by boundaries.

The concepts of the learning organization and KM are increasingly seen as two sides of the same coin - as you learn you gain knowledge, which you apply and thereby learn more.

The Danish organization mentioned in 4.2 above and included as a case study in booklet 3 – KM in SMEs - wishes that its employees would perceive the company as being a learning environment. It decided to include in the pre-analysis of its KM programme a high level of employee participation with, as a main goal, the delineation of individuals' competencies and development requirements, as well as the department's collective competencies and requirements.

7 Tools to manage relationships that drive knowledge processes

This section offers some guidance to areas that will help build effective knowledge through people in the organization. The application of some of the tools described in this section can be found in booklet 3 – SME Implementation.

7.1 Community building

Communities are at work in both large and small organizations. Making better use of both the formal communities (functional groups, project teams etc.) and the informal communities (smoking groups, coffee machine meetings, organizational socializing etc.) can be a key to success.

Knowledge that people hold in their heads – their experience and skills - is frequently transferred between people who recognize each other as peers and speak a common language.

Intangible benefits can include an increased sense of belonging and partnership; stronger motivation as isolation lessens; improved communication and creativity. People find it rewarding and easy to bounce ideas around a trusted group of colleagues. Many organizations can point to increased consistency of advice and action, to time saved through more rapid surfacing of expertise and to improved employee retention as well as a stronger competitive base. Communities are often the most cost-effective routes to using the intelligence and know-how in and available to an organization.

Setting up physical and virtual collaborative areas for discussion allows individuals to voice opinions. Concerns, ideas and lessons learned could provide a good source of understanding about how well a KM initiative is performing. Concerns raised here need to be addressed by the KM team, in order for individuals to feel part have, and contribute, to the KM initiative.

Knowledge Market- How an agricultural metaphor was used for community building

The challenge was to make scientific personnel understand the greater context of KM and the benefits of a new IT tool for their daily work. Employees were divided into small (cross-department) groups for 2½ hours, during which time they had to visit several “market stands”. These groups had to complete little exercises, like finding experts in the newly developed knowledge structure, discussing best practices for knowledge exchange, and solving little information retrieval problems with the new tool in a playful manner. The benefit of the KM tool was made clear in concrete working contexts (sensitivity); the staff learned how to handle the main functions of the tool (ability); the top management took part in the event and ensured the affected process models be changed (liability); the small groups competing against each other increased the individual’s involvement and the informal communication within the group (commitment).

To initiate a community one should consider:

- What is the business need for this community?
- Who is a potential sponsor and is there an energetic steering group who will obtain approval and build resources for the community?
- Pilot test the need for the community with a sample of its potential members.
- Plan the membership criteria, the way the community will operate, the reward and recognition system, and the way the community will assess its outcomes.
- Gain firm management commitment for its launch.

In order to drive the community forward one should consider:

- Identifying or electing a coordinator.
- Establishing the community infrastructure – tools available to support interaction between community members – such as e-mail, discussion groups, an intranet, other tools to build/share knowledge resources.
- A launch aimed at attracting potential members, securing commitment, agreeing initial priorities and actions and consolidating the active members.
- Move into ongoing community operation, ensuring that the steering group, the sponsor and the community coordinator work with members to deliver the community's goals.
- Evaluate outcomes, celebrate and communicate success within and outside the community, in order to keep interest and energy levels high.

The process of creating a community cannot be rushed because some self-adjusting mechanisms first need to be put in place, in order to make the community robust. The general stages that communities go through are:

- Excitement when forming – something new
- Confusion – about the purpose
- Clarification – who is to do what
- Growing – trust and respect building up
- Arrival – the community is self-directing.

CoPs should build on the existing networks that people use in their daily work. Organizations that are successful in their KM implementation will legitimize networks that already exist and try to enhance their ability to operate with tools and resources to maintain/develop expertise about topics important to the company. Tools such as social network analysis and analysis of trust networks provide a good knowledge basis upon which to extend communities

A Greek software company, specialized in customer relationship management (CRM) solutions, has offices in the UK, Greece and Cyprus. The importance of communications and knowledge sharing between the various offices meant that a pilot project was set up to formalize the knowledge sharing between the offices. Cross-team communications already existed but in an informal manner - the pilot project recognized these existing links, and gave these the support needed. (For more details, please see booklet 3 – SME Implementation.)

7.2 Observation and questioning

Observation and enquiry are an important part of the auditing and discovery process, since they help to assess the current situation, progress during implementation, and successes. In order to develop a suitable knowledge strategy – i.e. one that will encourage efficient and effective adoption of knowledge enhancing processes - an understanding of the existing organizational culture and subcultures is essential.

Manufacturer and installer of windows (company employed 45 people plus 60 subcontractors).
A new aggressive supplier had come into the area, and through an intense television advertising programme was rapidly taking market share and undercutting prices. Good relations with the bank had deteriorated. Interviews with the joint owners gave their perception of the problem. A process of appreciative enquiry (a motivating form of questioning that often reveals important observations difficult to surface in other ways because of their sensitivity) followed. These enquiries were conducted with a cross-section of staff and subcontractors to gain their views about the impact that the new competitor was having, and what knowledge was available to combat the threat. Not only were several areas of improvement in interdepartmental relationships uncovered, but also, surprisingly, concerns about poor management of cash and poor understanding of the importance of cash flow surfaced as a high priority concern. Several changes to process and database utilization were implemented with good effect, but more importantly, a programme to create greater recognition of each individual's role in cash management was launched. This programme caught the imagination of the whole staff and proved to be the driver behind further moves.
A quote from one of the manufacturing staff was "I've seen plenty of my mates lose their jobs. I didn't know how important my role in managing cash is to the business and to pay my wages. I'd always thought of it as something the bosses did".

When observing any situation, one should remember that it is almost impossible for the observer to be isolated from the situation they are observing, so he/she will therefore be influenced, (although over the long term this effect often diminishes). It is often difficult for 'insiders' to view a situation without it being coloured by their own circumstances and position in the organization, but it can nevertheless lead to levels of knowledge about situations that are not necessarily available to the 'outsider'.

The key issue is to observe what really happens to knowledge objects, flows, communities, behaviours etc. and not to make assumptions, otherwise the strategies and tactics chosen will not be well matched. It is a good idea to keep a log of experiences, risks, and actions taken as they arise. It will also provide a useful source of stories, as narrative is a strong way of communicating complex messages.

A law firm carried out a knowledge audit as a first step towards the introduction of KM into its organization. Although this was a time-consuming task, it was essential to get an idea and feel of what the issues were. Each person was asked about their job, responsibilities, the information they used and needed, how they gained their knowledge, and what they did with new knowledge. The audit was conducted through personal interviews, rather than questionnaires or e-mail, and allowed the auditors not only to detect the knowledge and information flows in the organization, but also to identify at an early stage those persons that might be uncooperative, and those that would support strongly the KM project.

7.3 Coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring have become very popular methods for enhancing knowledge transfer in recent years.

Coaching challenges the understanding of the recipient. It involves the coach suspending his/her own opinions and attitudes, as the aim is to develop the competences of the recipient. Based on the recipient's own experiences, it helps the person being coached to review and overcome existing barriers and through better use of imagination, reach a broader level of understanding, which in turn leads to improved competence. Coaching can be effective both on a one-to-one basis with key individuals, and through group coaching.

Mentoring involves matching new or inexperienced employees with more experienced senior personnel, so that the intangible, tacit knowledge of an industry or organization can be passed on effectively. It allows the newer employees to grow without necessarily just learning the hard way and should create a bond between mentor and protégé. This technique can be particularly useful for organizations with a substantial proportion of employees approaching retirement age, or where there are steep learning curves, or high turnover rates.

Mentoring and coaching also allow the more experienced personnel to "give back" to the organization.

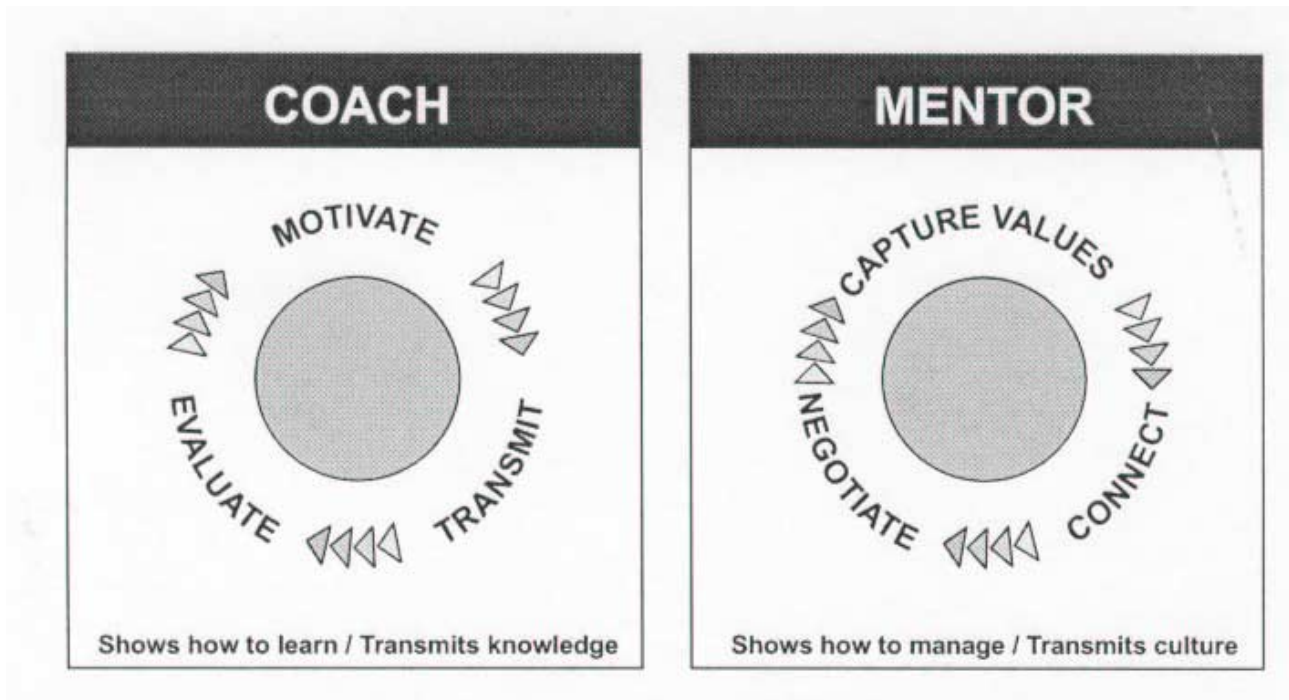


Figure 5 — The differences between coaching and mentoring in organizations

An automotive factory created a programme that had as an objective to improve the communication in a specific area of the organization. The creation of Information and Documentation Centres, the generation of informative products and “5 minute” meetings are part of the set of initiatives adopted, but the most important aspect is the coaching undertaken with the unit managers. The first part of the coaching was realized by an outside consulting firm, and aimed to give support to the managers as a group throughout the change process, while the second part consisted in one-to-one coaching between the managers themselves. The results of the programme were extraordinary, with significant improvement in all aspects. The most important result, though, has been the understanding of internal communication at the service of improvement and progress in the work of all members of the unit.

See also the role of coaching in the public relations (PR) and graphics company example in 5.1.

7.4 Narrative

Narrative encompasses oral, written and graphic forms that contextualize and communicate an experience vividly.

Storytelling is a very powerful tool in the knowledge armory. In some form it is found in all organizations. It has been used extensively for years, but in many organizations, not as much as it perhaps could or should have been. **Good storytelling has the power:**

- to convey not only the specifics, but also to uncover underlying values,
- to develop understanding of complex relationships,
- by using metaphor and archetypes, to handle truths that would be unpleasant or unlikely to be expressed in any other way.

Here are some particular uses of narrative that readers could consider trying:

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- Lessons learned programmes – in which members of the organization tell the “stories” of what they have learned from their mistakes and successes.
- Oral histories, key incidents in an organization’s history – e.g. histories of the founders of the organization that reflect the culture of the organization and key incidents. These stories can be used to promote “out of the box” thinking. such as the invention of the Post-it (which is a story told throughout 3M).
- Knowledge repositories.
- Enhancing document repositories with stories to illustrate their use.
- Creating environments in which story can be used to facilitate the exchange of information.
- Advanced decision support systems, where fast briefing of complex material is required for decision makers with little time.
- At project induction sharing good practice about what works or does not work from previous experiences; then sharing stories to enable richer project review sessions. Finally, when the project closes, reflecting and pinpointing the team’s defining moments from the experience.

Along with the invitation to the final session, KM pilot participants were given a homework exercise in which they were asked to bring along an object which could represent the most important thing they learned so far as a result of the KM pilot. They were also asked to come prepared to tell the story attached to the object to the group. As people filed in one after the other, it was intriguing to see that they had each brought something different, smiling as they produced things like conkers , chewing gum, weighty documents, a toy car and a plastic ear from their pockets and placed them on the table at which they were seated.

Seated cabaret-style, the groups of no more than eight were asked to go around the circle and tell each other the stories behind their objects. The exercise was a huge success. Lively and animated storytelling began. One man in particular spoke of his transformation from a sceptic to a convert about KM.

“ I’ve brought along a conker today. Why? Well as you all might know, I was the most outspoken at the initial kick-off session. I was resistant to the idea of KM, believing things like lessons learned, best practice and storytelling were like this conker – just a childish game. We have seen many initiatives come and go, been fired up by new ideas until the time comes to get back to work. Momentum is soon lost when we realize it will add to our work burden. We’re already stretched to the limit. The most important thing I’ve learned during this pilot programme is that KM is not like a game of conkers. Just like a conker, it’s a seed. What I have seen is the value in capturing the potential locked inside each individual/team and organization and translating it into a new way of working that makes us more efficient, more integrated and less over-burdened through ensuring we learn from our mistakes and repeat the things we do well.”

*The nut of the horse chestnut tree threaded on a string and used in children’s games

Here are some story forms that will arise naturally and which are worth considering:

- Who are the heroes in your organization and what are the stories people tell about them?
- What kinds of traumas have people "survived"? What tough experiences make them proud of the fact that they survived?
- What are the funny or entertaining stories they tell about these times?
- What stories about organizational achievement are told with pride?
- Who is respected for their knowledge about the particular ways to get things done in your organization? What behaviour or experiences demonstrate that?

- What are some of the controversial stories where someone inside the company got people to sit up and take notice of something that needed attention?

One of the best ways of converting skeptics is to get them involved in stories that have significance and worth for them. Storytelling is also good at developing relationships and understanding across departments, to broaden the cultural norms and to foster the flow of knowledge between them.

When researching, designing, implementing or evaluating any KM programme, consider using story, since it can:

- Enable organizations to value, capture and translate individual experiences into a shared resource (lessons learned).
- Develop a culture that values rich, effective and meaningful dialogue both in conversation and in records.
- Develop tools and techniques to capitalize on project team experiences.
- Explore roles and relationships.
- Tangible objects provide meaningful 'hooks', thereby stimulating the creation of new meanings, communities and memories.
- Provide the 'cultural glue' for communities and networks.
- Help explore the risks and opportunities presented by any KM experience.

This optical lens manufacturer with 60 staff has won a number of awards for innovative management and business excellence. There are two main groups in the company: one involved in assembly of the products and the other of the optical components. Skills ratings in both halves are similar. Both parts of the organization are equally important to the client. It is a rather informal organization of specialist designers and craftsmen. At a management meeting, concern was expressed about communication within the company. The CEO decided to use drama to help employees understand their own feelings and experiences better and tackle the communication issues. A small group of actors undertook roles in a commercial manufacturing setting and by developing easily recognized archetypes, they played out a short drama. Employees were split into random groups so they were not able to choose workmates. These groups then had to comment on their reactions to the drama, and to react interactively with the actors, who maintained their roles and reacted accordingly. The event allowed people who had not voiced opinions to speak and in fact one or two reacted in a very atypical manner. Interviews with participants several months after the event produced these findings

- It allowed difficult issues and criticism to be raised, as this was directed at the actors in the management roles rather than needing to confront the manager/director and risk tarnishing that relationship.
- Several people were very cynical at first; but even those who claimed that it was a waste of time were still talking about the meaning and understanding long after the event.
- All interviewed had gained some new insights, and thought that it had been good and some kind of follow-up would be useful.
- It gave insight into the culture – i.e. how people thought about what they were doing
- One person thought this approach to practical manufacturing was simplistic, nonetheless it did provoke comments and experiences of reactions from others, which led to a greater understanding of them.

In some organizations drama and storytelling are methods that have a profound effect by allowing difficult issues to be tackled and allowing indirect criticism, covering complex messages, thereby improving the speed and depth of understanding.

7.5 Conversation and dialogue

Conversation can be highly unstructured and wide ranging, Discussion and argument arise from unstructured conversation.

In a company from the steel sector, the filing cabinets of the employees are deliberately situated close to the office of the vice-president of the company, so as to facilitate informal interaction between the employees and the vice-president.

Dialogue is a structured approach often used to address difficult situations, as it requires objective assessment, and removes criticism, thus allowing more openness.

Knowledge Café is a forum in which employees from all over the organization discuss strategic and management issues, as they sit in small groups enjoying a cup of coffee. This forum serves as a knowledge sharing "junction", which enables a wide-ranging discussion, but at the same time allows an intimate level of dialogue. Such a session usually begins with a presentation of one or more management dilemmas that start the conversation around the tables. After all the groups have discussed the topic – a representative from each table will present to the wider audience the outputs of his/her group's conversation.

Dialogue, rather than discussion, usually provides the best environment for surfacing true experiences safely and dealing with them. Therefore an environment that encourages dialogue must establish ground rules for behaviour. It requires those involved to be willing to work towards co-creating an outcome and a willingness to listen without provoking justification or defensiveness.

Outlined below is a method of facilitation that helps dialogue:

- Try and arrange seating to diminish cliques or hierarchies, e.g. by asking everyone to form a circle.
- Explain the purpose of the dialogue.
- Start the conversation by having the members introduce who they are (if they don't know each other) and what goals they have for the meeting.
- The facilitator should launch a very general question, and invite everyone in the circle, in turn, to answer the question with the ground rule that there be no interruptions or questions until everyone has given an answer.
- Encourage an open conversation on what everyone has just heard, only constraining those who wish to dominate and encouraging those who are not speaking to speak when they are ready. Facilitate the conversation so that members don't feel they have to withhold questions and comments.
- If the topic runs dry or the group loses energy, introduce another question, for example, "How are decisions made in this organization?" Again, have everyone in turn give an answer before general conversation begins.
- The purpose is mutual understanding, not necessarily clear description. Let the differences emerge naturally; don't try to make general statements.
- After a couple of hours, ask the group to poll itself by asking each person in turn to share one or two insights about his or her own culture, its impacts on the purpose, and useful things they have learnt about other members

After Action Reviews (a method originally derived from reviewing lessons learned from military action – a case in which surfacing issues is likely to save lives in future combat situations) are now widely used to good effect in many organizations.

The way space is designed in the organization also affects the likelihood and ease of contact and conversation.

A medium-sized German company producing scales built a new factory site. The factory layout was explicitly designed in order to enhance the direct communication between the assembly and the development department. Therefore the unique access to the development area on the first floor was through the assembly area on the ground floor. So each engineer from the R&D department passed at least four times a day (when he was entering in the morning and leaving in the evening as well at lunch time) the place where 'his' scale was assembled. This factory design improved the direct interaction between the two departments

7.6 Technology as an enabler

Information technology (IT) can draw people together or push people apart. Knowledge tools for "white-boarding", brainstorming, community workspaces, tacit capture etc. can encourage new ideas and participants. However, e-mail can sometime replace phone calls or meetings and thereby reduce the richness of the relationship.

Each community is a subculture within an organization which has developed its own cultural norms. These norms encourage or limit the acceptance of processes, technology or trust-based relationships. The experience of using technology can affect the norms of the community. The implementation of technology provides experiences for the individuals within the community and their experiences thereby modify the cultural norms. If the experience is beneficial the move towards a knowledge sharing culture is enhanced. If the experience is frustrating, more difficult than existing methods, or in other ways unrewarding, it will be seen as detrimental.

Sometimes IT implementations are not given sufficient cultural support at group and individual level to ensure success. When given the support they can generate good returns.

The Greek software company (mentioned in 7.1 Community Building and described in more detail in booklet 3 – SME Implementation) is a good example of how technology can support the implementation of a KM programme. While sharing of knowledge became good practice that was widely accepted in the company, there were still instances in which knowledge is not necessarily made available. A formalized means of collecting and sharing knowledge was of high importance, so the Knowledgebase included in the acquired software and integrated into the KnowNet method², which allowed web-based access, helping to overcome the problem.

² Know-Net is a European Commission initiative which aims to popularize and facilitate knowledge networking in developing countries for overall human development through the amalgamation of Information and Communication Technology and remote volunteering - see <http://www.knownet.org/>

8 Summary of key learning points

For knowledge to be used effectively it must be shared and that depends upon the relationships between individuals and groups. Moving to a knowledge-aware culture requires both macro-management (programmes and policies across the organization) and micro-management (steps taking into account sub-cultural and individual differences). **Higher levels of trust and credibility help accelerate knowledge flows. Competencies required for the management of knowledge also need to be built.**

In a broad sense, the whole organizational framework can be seen as an incentive system, which either motivates or demotivates the employee to look for new, reasonable ways of behaviour, meeting the KM demands. The quality of the KM programme can only be assured if the specific business processes, tools and the learned way of acting and thinking in the different cultural sub-systems of the organization are taken into account. All of these aspects can affect what kind of KM measure should be chosen, and how it should be undertaken. If the employees concerned are used to exchanging their information face-to-face, for example in a context-sensitive setting within a product development process, a structured database might not be the best solution to increase effectiveness in exchanging that specific sort of knowledge. Setting up topic-related CoPs might be the much better choice.

The effectiveness is dependent on cultural aspects such as staff's view of their identity, their experiences with former communication campaigns, process re-engineering projects, quality programmes and other change initiatives. Those experiences may have led to barriers and drivers of change, understood as individual and collective dispositions to react in a certain way to a certain kind of perceived change. If the members of the team do not believe top management mailings, containing strategic announcements, to have any impact on the organization's product policy, then KM interventions need to be started by enthusiasts elsewhere in the organization, who can establish that credibility through their own actions.

The table below describes, for each of the issues and points raised throughout the booklet, what can be considered a low competence or high competence for the implementation of a KM programme.

	Point	Low Competence	High Competence
2	Knowledge barriers	Barriers are not recognized and therefore few competencies or processes are being used to address them	Barriers have been investigated and addressed with appropriate strategies competencies and processes
3	The meaning of culture	That cultural considerations are of minor significance and that individuals can be forced to volunteer their knowledge	Understands and can respond appropriately to the cultural dynamics within the organization
4.1	Individual diversity	Low level of understanding of individual difference and its impact on cultural dynamics	High emotional intelligence. Recognizes and can predict with some degree of accuracy and manage the dynamics of the culture that emerge from this diversity
4	Individuals groups and organization	Thinks and acts in a strong 'command and control' style, without sufficient recognition of the benefit gained from informal structure	Actions show recognition of the importance of the relationship between individuals, working groups and the organization and also inter-organizational relationships. Space and location in the organization are used to stimulate interactions
4.1	Identity and the psychological contract	Low understanding and appreciation of identity and the psychological contracts that exist	Policies and behaviours indicate an awareness of and ability to support and develop knowledge aware individual and group identities. Ensures that the psychological contract is developed in an inclusive and supportive manner
4.2	Groups and Communities	Seeks to use only the formal structures and fails to encourage the informal organization	Encourages the use of time to develop and gain benefit from the informal as well as the formal organization

	Point	Low Competence	High Competence
4.3	The organization	Treating the organization as a single entity run from the top	Uses the organization as a dynamic entity with key points of expertise and influence throughout the organization
4.4	Formal and informal organizations	Fails to create and dispose of formal organizational structure at appropriate times. Makes poor use of informal structures	Appoints and restructures in line with a knowledge strategy developed from analysis of needs. Encourages informal structures and uses risk policies that will promote sharing, creation and application
5.1	Values and trust	Either creates an environment where values are unclear or worse stated but not enacted. Where trust and respect are not thought to be important to foster	Where behaviours support the values stated and behaviours that contravene values are discouraged and individuals are coached into more appropriate behaviours. Where respect for the diversity of individuals is evident and trust is fostered and demonstrably important
5.2	Leadership	Where there is little leadership demonstrated, poor judgment and reliability, thus creating low levels of trust and credibility and poor response to change	Where leadership qualities are valued and developed. Found at all levels of the organization thus improving judgment and response to situations arising and good interpersonal skills that foster sustainable change. Also creates more credibility and responsiveness in self-organizing groups
5.3	Credibility	Credibility is undermined or devalued. Little attention is given to the competencies that give credibility	Credibility is seen as important and steps are taken to sustain and build credibility as an important part of individual and group identity. Recognition and credibility building are key social benefits gained from effective CoPs.
5.4	Motivation	Little consideration is given to motivation and staff become demoralized. Or motivation is by fear and staff will limit their actions to low risk decisions thus limiting the use of relevant knowledge	Motivation is strongly linked to personal recognition and matches individual's profiles. Positive action is taken frequently with varied methods for giving small and larger forms of recognition but not biased towards financial rewards
6.1	Competencies	Poor understanding of the structure of competencies and incomplete training and appraisals systems	The importance of knowledge in developing competencies and its relationship to skills and attitude are understood and competencies are continually being developed in individuals. Competence growth is rewarded. Competencies required for KM form part of the strategy
6.2	Knowledge sharing and creating	Little attention is paid to the way knowledge assets are being used in the organization	The importance of sharing and creating knowledge is made clear to staff and supported by resources, expectations, and recognition. The continual drive through the knowledge process cycle is recognized and voiced as important
6.3	The Learning Organization	The significance of learning as a whole organization is not recognized	The concept and practices of a learning organization are understood and implemented, both as policy and as supported behaviours within the organization

	Point	Low Competence	High Competence
7.1	Community building	There is a strong reliance on formal structures and little or no resources are used for building communities	Policies and management support encourages time and other resources to be used developing communities. Skills for facilitating, administering, developing participation and outcomes, designing suitable work space, collaboration space etc. are important competencies in managers
7.2	Observation and Questioning	Assumptions are made without adequate investigation. Poor questioning skills produces resistance, misunderstanding or incorrect data	Good judgment about the choice between using external resources or internal personnel to undertake objective observation of real work practices. Non participative observation skills combined with good questioning and listening skills
7.3	Coaching and Mentoring	Telling people what to do and how to do it without building commitment and understanding in them	Coaching draws competence from the recipient. Coaching good performance and understanding requires the coach to suppress his/her views and concentrate on using open questioning to challenge existing beliefs and develop new approaches by getting the recipients to analyze themselves. Good mentoring requires the mentor to guide by using their experience as a basis for the protégés to practice those areas of experience and receive feedback on their performance
7.4	Narrative	Undervaluing the role that stories play in organizations and not developing any skills on where to use story or develop stories.	Encouragement in the use of story and development of good storytelling abilities in staff. Able to construct stories around archetypes and to use metaphor to convey important messages about values. Story used in a wide range of circumstances. Narrative databases and reconstructed story used to develop new levels of appreciation
7.5	Dialogue	Thinking that conversation, discussion and dialogue are all the same thing	Dialogue requires good meeting control skills to ensure that even most difficult things to reveal are expressed and reviewed objectively and without blame
7.6	IT enabler	Does not consider IT knowledge tools worth considering and does not evaluate IT possibilities	Will use collaboration, knowledge capture and distribution tools to good effect ensuring that users buy-in to the systems and that the systems have appropriate levels of relevance and usability to ensure long-term use.

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Annex A: Managing Change

A core competence in KM is the management of change. Often that change is substantial and will involve a change in the psychological contract on both the employer and employee side and a re-evaluation of individual and group identities. It will involve learning and using new processes; establishing new permissions and managing new expectations and new types of commitment from staff.

Change brings with it a roller coaster of emotions. If the reward is clear and relevant to the individual, the process may be quickly managed with little stress. If there is doubt, disagreement and uncertainty, then coaching people through the emotional low points will be a necessity. Recognizing where they are in the cycle and helping them to explore the benefits - to them - of sharing and using knowledge more fruitfully is the challenge that management faces.

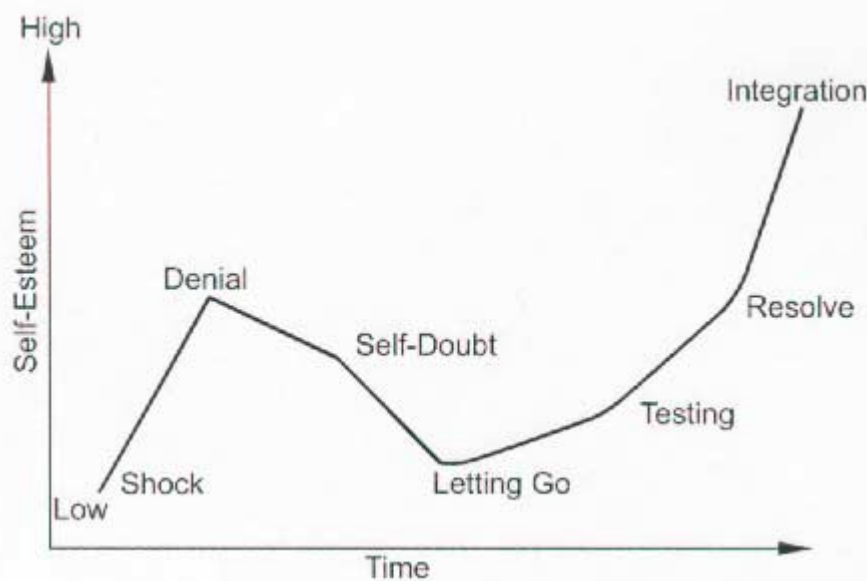


Figure 6 — Managing through the change cycle to achieve commitment

Employees will alter their mind-sets only if they see the point of the change and agree with it — at least enough to give it a try. The surrounding structures (reward and recognition systems, for example) must be in tune with the new behaviour. Employees must have the skills to do what it requires. Finally, they must see people they respect modeling it actively. Each of these conditions is realized independently; together they add up to a way of changing the behaviour of people in organizations by changing attitudes about what can and should happen at work.

A purpose to believe in

The implication of the findings concerning the theory of cognitive dissonance (addressing the issue when people's beliefs are inconsistent with their actions), for an organization is that if its people believe in its overall purpose, they will be happy to change their individual behaviour to serve that purpose — in fact they will suffer from the distress related to cognitive dissonance if they don't. To be able to undertake this necessary change people need to understand the role they and their actions play in the success or failure of the organization, and believe it is worthwhile to do things in a different way. Therefore, managing change is about explaining the reasons why the change is worth the effort to all involved, so that their contributions make sense to them as individuals.

Reinforcement systems

The theories conditioning and positive reinforcement, developed by B.F. Skinner during the twenties and thirties, and were the basis for the thinking of organizational designers. It is agreed by them that the structures and procedures of the organization, i.e. concerning reporting, management, operational processes and measurement, need to be in line with the behaviour that is being asked of the members of the organization. When the required change in behaviour is not being reinforced by these structures and procedures, the members of the organization will not be urged to adopt the required behaviour, e.g. if managers are urged to share knowledge with their team, but their appreciation or reward scheme does not include aspects related to knowledge sharing, they are likely not to bother.

The skills required for change

When managing change or introducing change programmes, it is necessary for the people in the organization to learn how to adapt the instructions of the programme to their own situation, in other words they need to be equipped with the skills they need to make relevant changes in their behaviour. During the 1980s, David Kolb, a specialist in adult learning, developed a four-phase adult-learning cycle, addressing the issue that it is not sufficient to only listen to instructions (phase 1), but they also need to absorb them (phase 2) and use it experimentally (phase 3) and finally integrate it with their existing knowledge (phase 4). It is clear that this process takes time, and that it is necessary to break down the formal teaching in parts, in order to give the participants time to reflect, experiment, and apply the new principles.

Consistent role models

Most clinical work confirms the idea that consistent role models are as important in changing the behaviour of adults as the three other conditions combined. In organizations people use the behaviour of those that they consider to be in influence positions as models or references for their own behaviour. They will choose different models according to their function or hierarchical level, therefore to establish a consistent change of behaviour throughout the whole organization it is not enough to ensure that top level management is in line with the change proposed, they also need to give the example and "practice what they preach".

Behaviour in organizations is not only determined by role models but also by the groups with which people identify, therefore role modeling by individuals must therefore be confirmed by the groups that surround them if it is to have a permanent or deep influence. For example, a well-respected senior leader is explaining about making the culture less bureaucratic and even conforming to the new regime by making fewer requests for information. If the sales representatives in the company canteen spend every lunchtime complaining that "we've heard this a thousand times before and nothing happened," individuals will feel less pressure to change their behaviour. Change must be meaningful to key groups at each level of the organization.

This font supply company of seven people was subject to a change of ownership and the sales manager promoted to the role of general manager. The company had a strong position with its clients and was making a much higher percentage profit than its competitors, because of these strong client relationships and some of the specialist help and guidance they were able to give. (The marketplace is becoming increasingly a commodity marketplace based on low cost web based e-commerce.) The new general manager decided to commission some executive coaching as she was uncertain of her own abilities despite her excellent track record in sales. During these sessions a number of areas of competence were investigated with the knowledge, skills and attitude elements of each competence investigated and then similar analysis undertaken by the general manager in sessions with her staff. Next the key knowledge assets were determined, and not surprisingly much of the knowledge differentiating the company from its competitors was in the heads of three of the staff. This gave the company vulnerability in a marketplace where poaching good staff by competitors is commonplace. The recent changes in ownership and management could also have a destabilizing effect on the staff and overturn long service records (average period of service is approximately five years). The general manager started a programme to change the culture from one where there was a lot of independent working and individual bonuses (which was supporting a 'knowledge is power' syndrome) to one where benefits were maintained, but were dependent on cooperation. A personality profile of all staff was developed in a workshop with the objective of valuing the difference between people, using not only their technical capabilities and experience but also perspectives arising from their personality profiles more fruitfully. Understanding their own personalities and learning how to recognise traits in other people was extended to the client and supplier base and there were even little competitions between staff on successes gained from matching customers' traits and language. This also extended to looking for indicators of the corporate culture and tailoring proposals to suit that culture. Increasingly cooperative working slowly increased despite setbacks arising from the strong introvert personalities of two members of the company.

Valuing the difference in colleagues and increased competencies in using that knowledge effectively both within and outside the company gave them resistance against falling prices and enduring relationships with customers.

Annex B: Example – A Code of Ethics that underpins KM

Buckman Laboratories is an organization that has grown to become a worldwide business, with a highly open knowledge sharing culture underpinned by its Code of Ethics. Exceptional levels of cooperation and problem solving have been developed.

Buckman Laboratories Code of Ethics

Because we are by separated by many miles, diversity of cultures and languages - we at Buckman need a clear understanding of the basic principles by which we will operate our company. These are:

- That the company is made up of individuals - each of whom has different capabilities and potentials - all of which are necessary to the success of the company.
- That we acknowledge that individuality by treating each other with dignity and respect - striving to maintain continuous and positive communications among all of us.
- That we will recognise and reward the contributions and accomplishments of each individual.
- That we will continually plan for the future so that we can control our destiny instead of letting events overtake us.
- That we maintain our policy of providing work for all individuals, no matter what the prevailing business conditions may be.
- That we make all decisions in the light of what is right for the good of the whole company, rather than what is expedient in a given situation.
- That our customers are the only reason for the existence of our company. To serve them properly, we must supply products and services, which provide economic benefit over and above their cost.
- That to provide high quality products and services, we must make "Creativity for our Customers" a reality in everything we do.
- That we must use the highest ethics to guide our business dealings to ensure that we are always proud to be a part of Buckman Laboratories. That we will discharge the responsibilities of corporate and individual citizenship to earn and maintain the respect of the community.

Annex C: Terminology encountered in this booklet

No	Term	Definition in Booklet 5 "Terminology"	Explained in this Booklet	General understanding – no explanation required
1	Organizational Culture	X	3	
2	SME			X
3	Subculture		3	
4	Knowledge aware		3	
5	Identity		4.1	
6	Psychological contract		4.1	
7	Groupthink		4.2	
8	SME networks		4.2	
9	Cross-boundary communities		4.2	
10	Communities of Practice	X	4.2 & Booklet 3	
11	Communities of Purpose		4.2	
12	Communities of Interest		4.2	
13	The organization			X
14	Values			X
15	Informal structure		4.3	
16	Beliefs			X
17	Behaviours			X
18	Trust		5.1	X
19	Leadership		5.2	X
20	Credibility			X
21	Reliability			X
22	Motivation			X
23	Competencies		6.1	
24	Core competencies	X	6.1	
25	Embodying		6.2	
26	The Learning Organization	X	6.3	

No	Term	Definition in Booklet 5 "Terminology"	Explained in this Booklet	General understanding – no explanation required
27	Observation		7.2	X
28	Questioning			X
29	Coaching		7.3	
30	Mentoring		7.3	
31	Narrative		7.4	
32	Storytelling	X	7.4	
33	Heroes		7.4	
34	Conversation			X
35	Dialogue		7.5	
36	Change Management		Annex A	

Annex D: Work Items as described in the CEN/ISSS Workshop Business Plan

Work Item I - Terminology

Scope: One of the main challenges in KM is to define clearly the terms and concepts involved. Organizations throughout Europe, and notably SMEs, would benefit greatly from a commonly accepted set of terms and definitions for KM.

Approach: Numerous definitions of key terms already exist in the published literature. This work item will therefore not choose to reinvent the wheel but rather to simply repackage those existing terms and definitions that are considered most relevant to the objectives of the Workshop. The result will be a European KM Glossary comprising 30 core terms and definitions in KM, along with their related translations into other European languages. This glossary will include terms relating to all areas covered by the Workshop – from framework, through metrics and measurement, to implementation and organizational culture. The glossary will be of significant practical relevance to SMEs as they exchange views and know-how in the domain of KM.

Deliverables: A European KM Glossary of 30 terms and definitions in KM, with translations into official languages of the European Union and EFTA.

Work Item II - Framework

Scope: Successful KM is a balancing act. While experience has shown that socio-cultural issues are often the most difficult to tackle, it is equally important to keep in mind the “bigger picture” – the wider economic, technological and structural issues facing the company as it strives to innovate faster and within which any corporate KM initiative inevitably takes place. The aim of this work item is to provide a holistic framework, capable of future evolution and adaptation, for KM implementation within and amongst organizations throughout Europe, and notably in SMEs, by referring to diverse viewpoints – for example economic, socio-technical, techno-structural and socio-organizational. The work will address issues relating to organizational performance, added value, economic and financial criteria, interactions between information systems and individuals and between information systems and the organization (missions, structure, processes and relationship networks). It will also address socio-organizational issues including legal issues, leadership, power distribution, management styles, knowledge sharing, incentive and reward systems, professional culture, ethics and values. One would hope that through consideration of such a framework, socio-culturally-driven KM efforts could be sure to achieve balanced results anchored in a rigorous and holistic analysis of the organizational context.

Approach: Many interesting and applicable frameworks exist in Europe and elsewhere. The focus of this work will be on identifying a framework (or set of frameworks), which is meaningful and practical to European business organizations, and notably to SMEs. This framework will provide a reference basis for decisions about the application of KM in a variety of business settings.

Deliverables: A European KM Framework which acts as a meaningful and practical guide to the context of KM initiatives - economic, technical, structural, socio-cultural - within the enterprise, and the interplay between these elements.

Work Item III - Measurement and Metrics

Scope: As companies focus on knowledge as a core organizational asset, a number of critical questions are raised concerning how best to measure and track organizational performance in this new knowledge paradigm, and how best to measure the impact of KM initiatives on business. These are not trivial questions. In order to start on the KM journey, business leaders need to know how applying KM might improve company performance, and how it might lead to faster and better innovation. Once a KM initiative has been launched, it is equally important to track the impact of this initiative and to find ways to measure results.

Approach: Many existing KM measurement and metrics guidelines exist in Europe and elsewhere. This work item will identify a commonly agreed set of key metrics and measurements which have demonstrated their ability to assist knowledge managers and business leaders in assessing improvements in organizational performance as a result of KM. Consideration will be given to describing what to measure, and how, why and when to measure it. Emphasis will be given to measuring results but also to measuring the process by which the results are achieved. Consideration will also be given to assisting managers (notably from SMEs) in deciding what is important to measure in their specific business settings.

Deliverables: A Guide to KM Measurement and Metrics, comprising a set of measurements and metrics which can be considered as good practices and can be applied in European organizations both strategically and operationally. The deliverable will include a Measurement Top 10 section, which will allow knowledge managers and business leaders, notably in SMEs, to kick start their measurement activities with a subset of the most widely used and generically applicable measures. The outcome of this work item should also provide assistance to help knowledge managers and business leaders to decide what is important to their business and how to measure it.

Work Item IV - Implementation in European SMEs

Scope: Throughout Europe, SMEs and SME communities are refocusing their activities to collaborate and compete through knowledge. This work item will assist SMEs and SME communities in identifying their readiness for KM, building the business case for KM, identifying and motivating key players, implementing KM successfully within and across their organizational boundaries and networks, and measuring the results of their efforts. The work proposed is considered vital in stimulating take-up and broad adoption of KM practices in European SMEs.

Approach: At a generic level, the work will identify and/or develop guidelines, checklists, questions and answers, models, methodologies and tools based on common needs. It will also attempt to identify items that are partly customisable to meet specific business requirements and needs, particularly of fast-growing companies. Work will build on currently available guides to good practice, lessons learned, problem solving histories and experiences, and input provided by SME representatives. The result will be a sound, validated, easy to understand, easy to use and step-by-step guide to successful KM implementation in diverse SME environments.

Deliverables: A Guide to Successful KM Implementation in SMEs comprising (but not necessarily limited to) sections on:

- European maturity grid(s) which can be used by SMEs and SME communities to position themselves with respect to their AS IS status and TO BE targets as "knowledge-based organizations"
- Generic principles, methodologies, good practices, awareness raising and training materials designed to enable SMEs to progress on their journey to successful KM
- Measurement guidelines which will enable SME managers to assess the impact of their KM journey on the organizational competitiveness, and to understand the true impact of their KM activities on their business (taking due account of the activities in work item 3)

- A technology section addressing the specific needs of SMEs in the design of the information and communication technology infrastructure of their organizations, supply chains and communities as they move forward to implement new knowledge sharing and creation opportunities for their businesses
- A set of case studies and stories reflecting experiences and lessons learned by SMEs on the KM journey.

Work Item V - Organizational Culture

Scope: The success of any KM initiative is dependant upon an environment which motivates people to communicate, collaborate, innovate, take risks, and share and re-use knowledge. Equally important are appropriate skills, competences and behaviours. The aim of this work item is to guide people at all levels, and in all types of organizations, on how best to use themselves, and their relationships with other people, to manage knowledge well. Fundamentals like values, trust, beliefs and organizational politics dictate success or failure of KM interventions, so to add real value the KM initiative must address appropriately the existing corporate culture and sub-cultures. This means using social processes and organizational structures (including self-forming groups) that facilitate the conversion of information to knowledge, and the sharing, distribution and creation of knowledge. Other social processes like change management, managing complexity and “slow management”, communities of practice/interest, organizational learning, narrative, visioning etc. that are important in KM interventions, will also be included in the work. Finally, technology impacts on culture change and can promote or frustrate KM interventions. Therefore it is proposed to address the issue of how to use technology to drive KM effectively.

Approach: Organizational Culture has already been addressed in a number of fora in European and elsewhere. The work will build on existing work to identify a set of practical guidelines to help knowledge managers and business leaders to tackle the difficult organizational and cultural issues around KM. The work will, where appropriate, be populated with short case studies, stories, lessons learned and experiences that illustrate in simple language the points being made.

Deliverables: A Guide to Organizational Culture & KM comprising (but not necessarily limited to) sections on: Achieving buy-in by Top Management, Selling KM to the Organization, KM and Organizational Learning, Change Management in Practice, Motivating Knowledge Workers and the Organization to achieve its Objectives, Relating KM Interventions to Existing Cultures, Using Communities Effectively, Using Technology to Drive KM, Effectively, identifying and developing and improving appropriate skills, competences and behaviours.

Annex E: Bibliography

Booklet 2: Culture

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<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/>
<http://www.vaic-on.net>

www.technowledge.com

Booklet 5: Glossary

Readers who wish to find out more about the terms in this booklet and further KM terms are recommended to visit the following websites:

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<http://www.knowledgeboard.com/community/zones/fs.html>
http://www.kit.nl/specials/html/km_glossary.asp#Top
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Annex F: Acknowledgements

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