



Definition

Data, Information, Knowledge

What's the difference?

Before we are able to manage knowledge, we need to define it. *This is especially important for organisations who are faced with vendors packaging it under data management or information management systems.* In 'Working Knowledge', Thomas Davenport and Laurence Prusak (1998), note that the confusion surrounding data, information and knowledge means that some firms have invested significant funds on inappropriate technology initiatives.

Knowledge is not data. Davenport and Prusak, define data as a "set of discrete, objective facts about events" (transactions without associated meaning).

Knowledge is not information. Information is data that *has relevance and purpose.* Information can be thought of as a message from a sender to a receiver where the receiver decides whether the message contains real information (ie is of use) or is just inconsequential text.

Knowledge is, according to Davenport & Prusak, "a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information". Knowledge is explicit (codified, recorded and stored) and tacit (residing in people's heads). These added dimensions that give knowledge meaning, also make it more difficult to manage.

There are as many different definitions of Knowledge Management (KM) as there are models. Superior definitions incorporate the wide variety of KM components.

Adept KM use following definition of KM - *"the systematic process by which knowledge needed for an organisation to succeed is created, captured, shared and leveraged."* (Melissie Clemmons Rumizen)

Why implement KM?

KM can help:

- Foster innovation
- Improve customer service
- Increase revenue
- Retain corporate expertise
- Streamline operations and reduce costs by eliminating redundant processes.

Essential messages

KM is *not* just about data or information, though the management of these are also important in an organisation and both are components of a holistic KM strategy. KM is *not* a technology system, though technology software and hardware are KM enablers. The best approach includes knowledge sharing and collaboration and a phased approach to implementation

Tools & Techniques

Steps

Once the project scope has been agreed and KM resources assigned, the next step is to help develop the organisation's KM strategy. Importantly, the KM strategy:

- a) links KM goals to the organisation's goals;
(Note that experience has shown that any KM initiative not linked to the organisational aims and objectives will fail)
- b) provides KM measurements to determine the return on implementation investment; and
- c) provides a blueprint for further KM action.

The next steps *may* involve conducting a **KM Audit**, an **Ethnographic Analysis** and **Needs Analysis**. It is *essential* at this stage to help members find ways that KM can improve their daily work, thereby engendering support for the initiative. *The best designed KM system will be of no value unless it is actually used. A top-down approach will not result in increased usage by staff as they need to 'own' the initiative for it to work.* A document covering **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing** (including incentives) is also required.

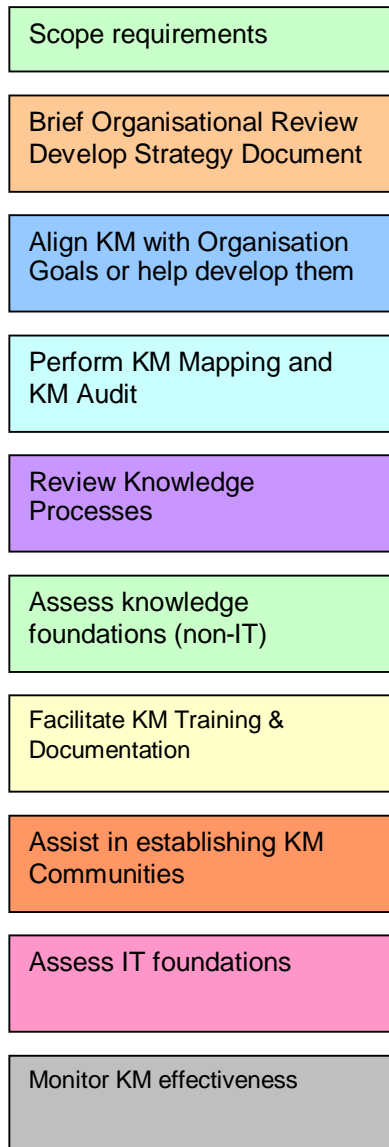
After a brief review, a report recommending KM options can be provided. This may identify what problems exist, whether they can be addressed by KM, and what possible KM solutions could be used. A business case may need to be prepared to gain endorsement for the proposed changes. Depending on the extent of the changes, a Change Management Plan may be required. A Communication and Marketing document may also be needed to raise the profile of KM within the organisation.

Common steps in the KM process are outlined on the following page.

Please turn the page for more information

Essential Knowledge Management cont.

Common Steps at-a-glance



Software

KM tools available to clients include those associated with services such as **Training, Learning and Support, Information Design Standards and Analysis, Reports and Documents, Testing & Business Process Improvement** as well as assistance with **Risk and Return** decision-making.

Some recommendations are also likely to involve technology – whether this involves enhancements to existing systems or possible purchase of KM software. It is important to clarify what the proposed software will provide in terms of services, functionality and addressing the stated needs. A **Software Evaluation** can assess how the software can meet your organisation's needs in the best and most cost effective way.

KM-related software that may be appropriate includes:

- KM Software (eg **EyeDotEm**)
- Comprehensive solutions (**SAP – BI, EP**)
- Search, & Retrieval (**Autonomy**)
- Content Management (**TRIM Context**)

Additional Information is available on each of these systems upon request. For example, a specific SAP Client Package may suit clients who already have SAP in place, who may be looking to upgrade, or who may be interested in SAP stand-alone features such as SAP Enterprise Portals (EP). In every case, our trained KM consultants can assist with the KM tools appropriate for your organisation.

Adept KM Value Add

Adept KM provides a component-based total KM service suitable for any size organisation at a competitive cost and delivered by trained Knowledge Management personnel. We can provide any KM component from training and documentation, to implementing a portal for a small sized organisation to a large government department.

Our trained personnel know how to: -

- ✓ Implement strategies to manage Data, Information, Records and Knowledge;
- ✓ Link KM goals to organisational objectives and performance measures;
- ✓ Perform ethnographic analyses, facilitate knowledge audits, perform knowledge mapping and needs assessments;
- ✓ Incorporate evolving technology solutions including portals and collaborative and distributed learning techniques;
- ✓ Train staff in all aspects of KM including specialised software training;
- ✓ Facilitate knowledge sharing and reuse and design, develop and sustain communities of practice;
- ✓ Manage change and complex knowledge initiatives and projects and provide a coaching and mentoring service; and
- ✓ Capture, evaluate and use best practices and use KM to transfer this knowledge.

Other Service Links

Other services may be useful including:

- **Content Management, Websites/Portals**
- **SAP-related KM Services**