

KM Concepts: Fundamentals of a Knowledge Enabled Organization (4 in a series)



In article 1 we discussed that KM is, among other things, about adopting a “consistent and disciplined framework for capturing and reusing “what you know about what you do” to improve performance.

In article 2 we discussed moving an organization from KM concept to KM strategy to KM implementing practices to (1) leverage knowledge in ongoing operations to immediately improve performance, (2) improve your ability to learn from past challenges and successes in strategic decision making and client solution delivery, (3) create long term value from knowledge, experience, and insight held by employees, and (4) create long term value from knowledge, experience, and insight gained from clients.

KM organizational success, I suggest, depends on several evolved learning points:

1. Knowledge capture and knowledge reuse must work within the context of workflow—“part of the way people work.” When knowledge is captured within the context of a business process, it is more meaningful and easier to integrate. When characterized, organized and accessible in a way that makes sense to the knowledge users, it then adds value. Technology and tools cannot in and of themselves provide effective “context of use” and add this value. The value of knowledge enablement comes from the ability of people to effectively and efficiently reuse knowledge in their own context to continuously improve performance, at the individual, team, and organization level.
2. Knowledge capture and knowledge reuse must work within the context of organizational culture and workforce dynamics. Collaborative cultures provide a better foundation for moving knowledge than highly competitive cultures.
3. Effective knowledge enabled organizations recognize and support the concept that learning and sharing knowledge in and across teams is a routine part of the way work is accomplished, resulting in open behavior and trust, an acceptance of change, and immediate improvements in operational and organizational performance due to the agility that this provides.
4. Technology and information management alone cannot be relied upon for success for two reasons: (1) people typically want to just “get their work done”

and they may not go through the extra steps required to learn how to use what are often claimed as knowledge management (KM) technology or tools, and (2) there must be a well thought out process for defining capturing, and reusing the relevant knowledge in the organization. Knowledge is more often about people and what they know than technology.

5. Continuous improvement in business and operational performance in a consistent and sustainable manner must be tied to enterprise performance measures of success.

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Next: One View of Knowledge