

Knowledge Management Consulting Method

Part 4 – KM Development Plan

Module 4.7 – Applying the 9 Steps of the KM Process

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Introduction

An Overview of the KM Consulting Methodology

The KM Consultancy Methodology enables structured thinking and planning for a knowledge management project. The KM Consultancy Methodology is designed to be modular so that an organisation can choose to start at different levels depending on its readiness, needs and requirements.

The KM Consultancy Methodology is divided into 6 parts of learning and activity. Part 1 concentrates on KM Education, understanding what KM is, the terminology used and why it is important. Part 2 introduces the individual to the importance of KM frameworks, and more importantly, the framework used for the KM Consulting Methodology.

Parts 3, 4 and 5 focuses on the planning, developing and implementing KM within and organisation. This involves looking at the initial or the planning stage of the strategic planning for knowledge management, in Part 3. Part 4 looks at developing the knowledge organisation, looking at how to KM enable the organisation and the need to iteratively develop the KM initiative. Part 5 looks at implementing the KM initiative, from a small pilot project, to a organisation wide KM roll-out and then to an inter-organisation wide KM roll out.

Part 6 focuses on the knowledge and skills required to successfully conduct KM on a daily basis. This involves fundamental skills, such as utilising the KM system and working effectively as virtual teams through to understanding the new roles and responsibilities of the Chief Knowledge Officer, Knowledge Manager, Knowledge Administrator and the Knowledge Workers.

Part 7 introduces the 9 steps of the KM Process. The KM process enables organisations to introduce, implement and assess how an organisation can become KM enabled. This part will introduce the 9 Steps and describe their purpose and importance. A KM Maturity Model is introduced to allow users to start assessing how effectively they are KM enabling their organisation/process/project.

Part 4 - Develop the KM Organisation

Part 4 of KM Consulting Method concentrates on developing the KM organisation. There are six different modules as follows:

- Modules 4.1 are an audit-leverage pair that focuses on business processes.
- Modules 4.2 are an audit- leverage pair that focuses on organisational structures and networks of people.
- Modules 4.3 are an audit- leverage pair that focuses on technology issues.
- Module 4.4 focuses on the development of the underlying model for knowledge asset organisation and is essential for the customisation of KM System tool, such as Knowledger.
- Module 4.5 focuses on the knowledge assets measurements
- Module 4.6 is a module that synthesises and documents the changes that the organisation is implementing as a result of the knowledge management initiative.

The purpose of this Part 4 is that it is iterative in nature, where an organisation will constantly analyse and leverage the knowledge for continuous further improvements. Modules can run in parallel and can be repeated several times throughout the knowledge management initiative. Three simple steps underlie the proposed iterative approach. First, diagnose the most critical problems and opportunities facing the organisation with respect to knowledge management and sketch out a possible solution. Second, quickly, over a few months, translate the sketch of a solution into new work processes and systems; include new ways of working as well as new computer systems, and begin using both for real. If, for example, the problem at hand is customer knowledge management, use the new process to manage some important customers at several offices (or business areas). Given this real-world experience, determine where these new processes and systems succeed or fail, and quickly fix the failures. In other words: do it, then fix it. Third, scale up systems for rollout across the whole organization. Communicate the proven success of the trials in order to build momentum for change.

The essence of the iterative prototyping approach is rapid learning from doing. Speed ensures that change is always relevant, it forces trade-offs so that limited resources are devoted to pursuing goals of real value, it allows top people to participate in change, and it builds unstoppable momentum. Trying out new ideas in the real world allows their shortcomings to be rooted out by the harshest of tests - real-world experience - and their successes to be proven beyond challenge from the most cynical critics. By stressing speed of change and using the real world as a laboratory to learn from, the iterative prototyping approach makes change and improvement a constant fact of corporate life.

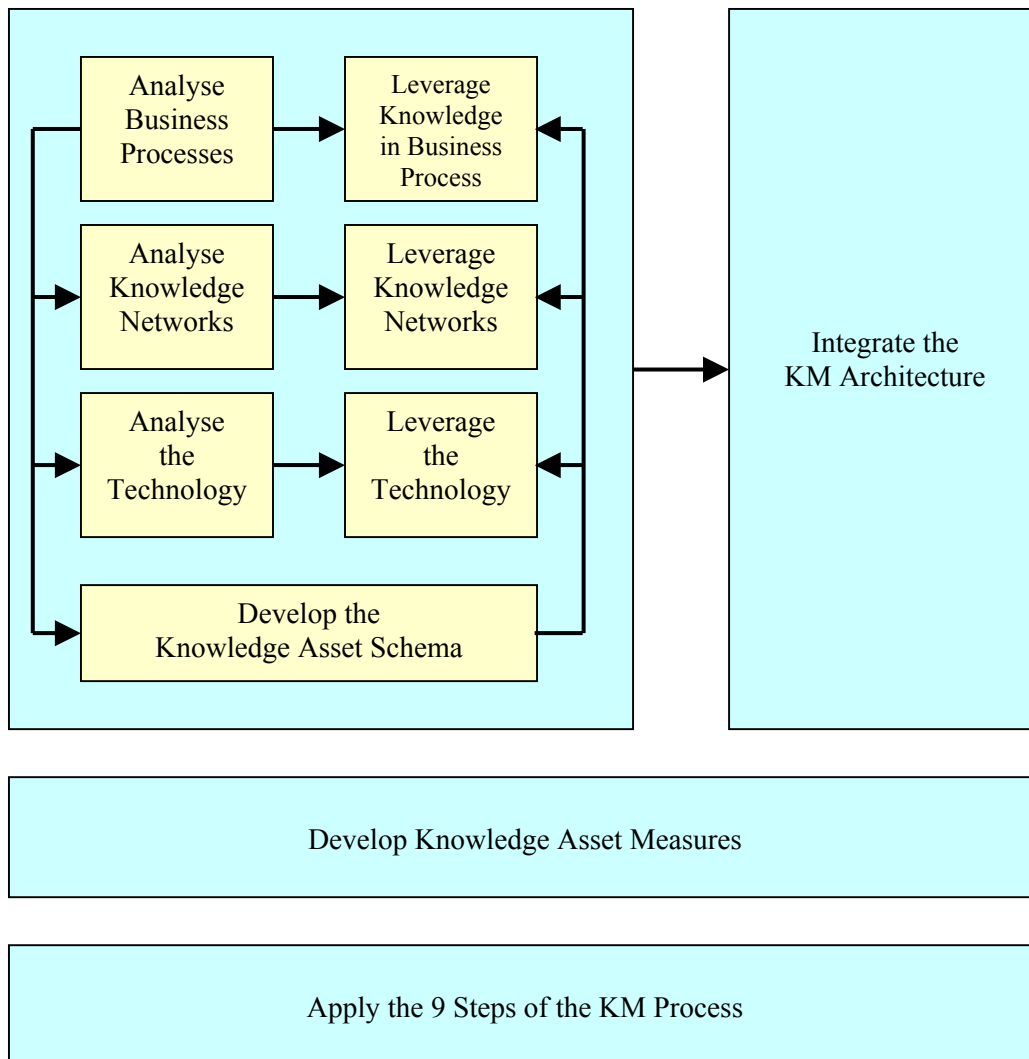


Figure 1 – Develop the KM Organisation

Summary of Activities per Module

Module		What is it used for?	Who is involved?	What are its prerequisites?	Comment
4.1	Analyse Business Processes	This module helps you audit the knowledge requirements of business processes.	Consultant and employee that 'governs' BUSINESS process. Additional interviews with employees involved in process.	High-level identification of key knowledge assets and key business areas of the organisation.	This module is useful: in relatively structured environments when there is a need to better manage knowledge in specific business processes
	Leverage Knowledge in Business Processes	To design and implement additions / modifications in business processes to improve knowledge management within process	Consultant and employee that 'governs' business process. Additional interviews with employees involved in process.	An analysis of the existing process; Knowledge Asset Schema	
4.2	Analyse Knowledge Networks	This part of the module helps you understand the informal flow of knowledge within networks of people in the organisation.	Consultant and Change Agent. Additional interviews with people in knowledge networks.	High-level identification of key knowledge assets and key business areas of the organisation.	This module is to be used only in environments that there already exist informal networks of people that focus on a specific knowledge asset or business area
	Leverage Knowledge Networks	This part of the module helps you design and moderate Knowledge Networks within the organisation.	Consultant and Change Agent. Additional interviews with people in knowledge networks.	Knowledge Asset Schema	This module is used by organisations that wish to build communities that will be collecting, storing and advancing key knowledge assets of the organisation. Particularly important for dispersed organisations.

Module		What is it used for?	Who is involved?	What are its prerequisites?	Comment
4.3	Analyse the technology	Asses the current state of IT in the organisation and identify existing information sources	Consultant, Change Agent, CIO, IT director or similar		This module supports the integration with existing enterprise systems.
	Leverage the technology	Present the technology element in knowledge management	Consultant, Change Agent, CIO, IT director or similar	Ideally Modules 4.2 and 4.3	
4.4	Develop the Knowledge Asset Schema	Design the knowledge asset schema, knowledge objects and attributes, and ontology	Consultant with Change Agent		This module provides essential input for the design of the knowledge repository.
4.5	Develop the knowledge asset Measures	To measure, track and report on the organisations knowledge assets	Consultant with Change Agent	Knowledge Asset schema	This module is essential for knowledge accounting
4.6	Implement the KM architecture	Helps integrate people, process and technology changes into one holistic solution	Consultant with Change Agent		Practical tips on integrating the people, process and technology changes. Addresses cultural issues.
4.7	Applying the 9 Steps of the KM Process	To KM enable the organisation/process/project. To monitor and measure the progress of KM enabling your organisation.	Consultant with Change Agent	A clearly defined area to be KM enabled	This module supports integration of the KM process within an organisation.

Module 4.7 Applying the 9 Steps of the KM Process

1.0 Purpose of module

- To introduce the 9 Steps of the KM Process
- To introduce how to begin implementing the 9 Steps of the KM Process
- To introduce the KM Maturity Model
- To monitor and assess the effectiveness of implementing the 9 Steps of the KM Process.

2.0 Introduction

The 9 Steps of the KM process are key steps that must be considered and applied in order to KM enable any process or projects. By applying the 9 steps of the KM process organisations are able to dramatically and continually improve the best explicit (codified) knowledge of a process or project, which can then be far more quickly shared and applied by all team members. Secondly, as a direct benefit of this knowledge sharing process, and as each team member applies the Best eKnowledge, immediately it becomes available, you will see how it can dramatically improve the knowledge and competencies of each of the team members (tacit knowledge) and more rapidly develop their knowledge worker productivity and performance. Thirdly, you will see how the knowledge sharing process contributes to effective collaboration and team synergy, and how the knowledge quickly amplifies in the team, as a direct result. Finally, you will see how this new knowledge can be quickly made available to other teams throughout the organisation.

Figure 1.0 shows the 9 Steps of the KM Process. We will take each of the steps in turn and explain in further detail the activity involved.

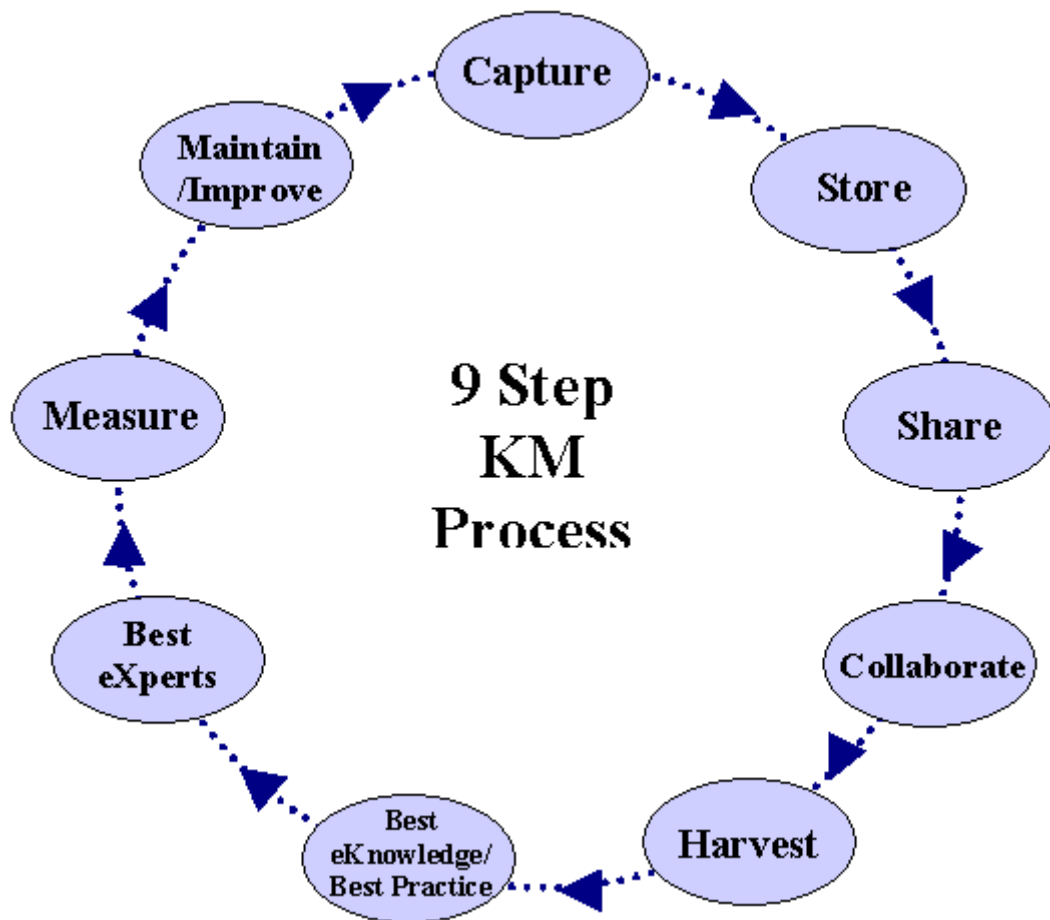


Figure 1.0 – 9 Steps of the KM Process

Step 1 – Capture

This is considered the first step of any KM initiative. The objective of this step is to identify and capture both the explicit and tacit knowledge within the process and project that you are KM enabling. If you have taken Module 4.1 – Analyse and Leverage your business process, this is the starting point of identifying the explicit and tacit knowledge that needs to be captured. If you are KM enabling a project, then the project team needs to identify and agree the knowledge that needs to be captured.

Step 2 – Store

There are 2 aspects involved the ‘Store’ step. The first aspect of this step is that there must be some sort of ‘storage facility’ to store the captured knowledge. This usually takes the form of technology, such as databases and more appropriately is a KM Systems which caters for not only storing knowledge but enables all 9 steps of the KM process.

The second aspect is to ensure that there is a structured way to store the knowledge. Module 4.4 – Developing the Knowledge Asset Schema, is one way to help start logically categorising knowledge, into a formal taxonomy/ontology. As much as possible, the Knowledge Manager should set up these categories within the databases, so that users are enforced to categorise knowledge according to predefined categories.

Step 3 – Share

Share is naturally the step that follows Capture and Store. As part of practicing knowledge management sharing and reusing information and knowledge is as equally as important as a capturing it.

If step 2 (and/or Module 4.4) has been properly undertaken, then the sharing of knowledge will be made easier amongst the people involved. By understanding how knowledge is stored, users have a better means of retrieving it and reusing it.

Another critical aspect of sharing knowledge is to ensure that what should be shared is shared and any confidential knowledge is made available to only those who should have access to it. If you have taken Module 3.4, you will have conducted a knowledge sharing risk exercise, which identifies the knowledge within the organisation, who owns the knowledge and whether the knowledge should be shared or not and to what level.

All these 3 steps – Capture, Store and Share are the pre-requisites for any KM initiatives and essentially all these are good information management. The next steps of the KM process more specifically KM.

Step 4 - Collaboration

This step starts identifying how best to facilitate and capitalise on individual knowledge, through collaborating in team environments, both virtually and face-to-face. Team collaboration is key method of generating new knowledge within the organisation.

A KM initiative must have the facilities to allow for team collaboration both virtually and face to face. Virtual collaboration will require technology, such as conference calls,

Net Meeting, and virtual project spaces.

Step 5 – Knowledge Harvesting

Knowledge harvesting allows the organisation to literally 'harvest' any new and useful knowledge that has been developed through collaborative teamwork and through the capture of new ideas and new learnings. The aim is to constantly improve the best explicit knowledge within the organisation, to ensure that individuals have access to the best and most current knowledge available.

Step 6 – Best eKnowledge

The purpose of defining the Best eKnowledge is to ensure that all users have access to the best available codified knowledge for a process or project, which they can apply to similar projects or processes that they become involved in. This reduces the need to reinvent the wheel every time and at the same time, users will be able to apply the best knowledge to their projects or processes. As a standard practice, the Best eKnowledge should be the first point of reference, each time a project or process is conducted. This ensures consistency, quality and also reduces the need for Subject Experts to be contacted to answer queries.

There is a process for developing and maintaining Best eKnowledge, which will be described in further detail in section 4.0.

Step 7 – Best eXperts

Subject matter experts (Best experts) need to be identified within the organisation, as this will allow members of an organisation to approach them for their tacit knowledge on a particular subject. It is impossible for every piece of tacit knowledge to be codified, in Best eKnowledge, therefore to ensure tacit knowledge is shared within an organisation, Best eXperts needs to be identified. At the same time, it is not realistic for these Best eXperts to be contacted for all queries and questions, therefore, the first point of contact should be for users to refer to Best eKnowledge and if the user still requires further knowledge, then they should search for the appropriate Best eXpert.

Like Best eKnowledge, Best eXperts should be constantly improved upon and key skills and experiences should be harvested to ensure that Best eXperts information is current.

A Best eXperts knowledge base should not be limited to holding internal experts only, but should also capture external experts.

Step 8 - Measure

Measurements are important to KM. There are 3 types of measures that concern a KM initiative, as follows:

- Business Measures¹
- Knowledge Asset Measures²
- KM measures – KM Maturity Model

In this module, we will focus on the KM measures, although all 3 measures must be frequently measured and reported on, as part of the 9 Step KM process. The KM Maturity Model, devised by Knowledge Associates, allow you to monitor how successfully and effectively KM is being implemented, in terms of the 9 steps of the KM process.

In section 5.0, we will look at the KM Maturity Model in more detail.

Step 9 - Maintain

In order to ensure that the most current knowledge is available there is a need to maintain the knowledge. Any knowledge that is entered into the KM system should be assigned a lifespan, if applicable, so that team members are subjected to knowledge that is current and relevant at that time.

This 9 Step KM process is a continuous and dynamic process that needs to constantly and consistently applied to processes and projects. Although, initially, the 9 steps may be conducted in sequence, to start the process off, all these steps should be happening continuously and simultaneously in a formal manner.

¹ Further details can be found in Part 1 of the KM Consulting Method

² Further details can be found in Part 2 of the KM Consulting Method

3.0 Knowledge Harvesting

There are many sources and techniques that can be used to harvest knowledge. Harvesting knowledge should be a regular activity, usually conducted by the Knowledge Manager, to ensure that new knowledge is being proposed forward to improving the Best eKnowledge and Best eXperts.

Sources of knowledge

There are also many other sources that can be harvested for useful knowledge:

- Books, articles, papers
- Websites
- Conferences and seminars
- Emails
- Formal and informal discussions, both face-to-face and virtual
- Review Meeting
- Ideas
- Learnings

There should be a formal process in place to ensure that these sources are harvested on a regular basis. The process, frequency and who is responsible for the proposing new knowledge must be defined. For example, each time a person attends a conference, the person is required to write a review of the interesting topics of the conference and share this in the KM System. The Knowledge Manager should also trawl through the Discussion forums and emails to identify any new knowledge on a regular basis.

Knowledge Harvesting Techniques

There are various techniques that can be used to facilitate the knowledge harvesting process. Through experience, it has been recognised that knowledge creation is not an automatic process and individuals have yet to adjust their daily knowledge working practice to accommodate for this. Therefore, techniques need to be used to force new knowledge, learnings and ideas are regularly captured and put forward as knowledge nominations to improve the Best eKnowledge.

Following are 2 techniques that can be used to capture new knowledge.

After Action Reviews (AAR)

The purpose of an AAR is to capture any learnings from conducting a project. The Project Manager/Knowledge Manager should ask the team, the following a series of questions:

After Action Review Questions.

1. What were the objectives of the Project?
2. What did we actually achieve?
3. Why were there differences?
4. What can we learn from this?
5. What can we do better next time?
6. What actions could we take?
7. Can we celebrate progress & successes?

The responses to these questions should be captured and reviewed for possible new knowledge, and submitted as nominations to improve the Best eKnowledge.

AARs do not necessarily need to be restricted to being conducted after a project's closure. AAR can be conducted at any stage of the project. In fact, by conducting AAR during the projects life cycle will enable far richer knowledge to be captured, as team members are more likely to remember learnings in the context of the current situation and by the time a project finishes, many learnings could be long forgotten.

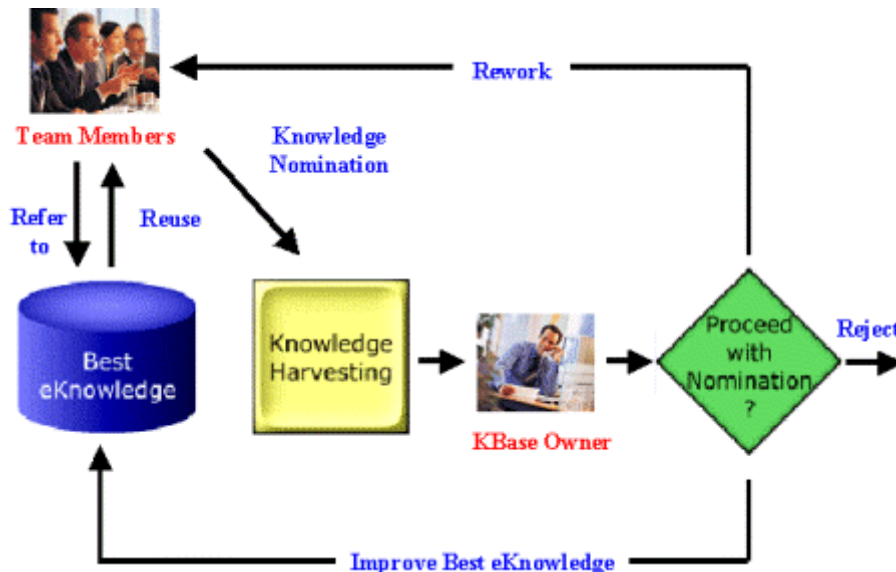
Learning Events

Another technique that can be used to facilitate the development of new knowledge is Learning Events. Learning events are formal sessions that a Project Manager or Knowledge Manager can organise, which calls for team members to research a particular area of related interest and present the findings back to their team. This enables team members to learn and share knowledge in a team environment, whilst developing their own personal interests.

There are many more knowledge harvesting techniques available and not all will suit every organisation. The key is to test and find out which techniques work and then ensure that there is a process to implement them as part of the KM process. Factors to bear in mind, is who is responsible for knowledge harvesting and how frequent they should be conducted.

4.0 Best eKnowledge and Best eXperts Process

For Best eKnowledge and Best experts to be of value, it must be constantly updated to provide the organisation with the best available knowledge and experts. The following diagram shows a process for maintaining Best eKnowledge and Best eXperts.



The process presented here follows on from the knowledge harvesting process. Once knowledge has been harvested, the knowledge manager can submit knowledge nominations to the Best eKnowledge knowledge base to improve the current Best eKnowledge. At the same time, team members can also submit knowledge nominations, which they feel will improve the Best eKnowledge.

To ensure that the quality of Best eKnowledge is of a certain level of quality and that existing knowledge is not being repeated, a Knowledge Base Owner (KBO) should be appointed to manage the knowledge base.

When a knowledge nomination is received the KBO should review the knowledge to assess whether the:

- Knowledge is of Value and can improve the Best eKnowledge or,
- Knowledge already exists or is of no value whereby the knowledge nomination is rejected or,
- Knowledge has potential for improving Best eKnowledge, but requires more work or clarification on the knowledge nomination.

This Best eKnowledge process should be conducted at least on a monthly basis to

ensure that the users are accessing the most current Best eKnowledge.

This process can also be applied to developing the Best experts where information on each expert is reviewed and updated. To learn more about developing Best eXperts and Personal Development Planning, a separate module is available.

5.0 KM Maturity Model

In order to identify whether we are effectively demonstrating KM and we need to ensure that we are executing **all** steps in the KM process. In particular we need to ask the following questions:

1. Are we effectively **capturing** new people/experts, project work, new learnings, new ideas, insights?
2. Are we effectively **storing** new people/experts, project work, new learnings, new ideas, insights?
3. Are we effectively **sharing/applying** new people/experts, project work, new learnings, new ideas, insights?
4. Are we effectively **collaborating** and discussing problems, issues, new ideas, learnings insights?
5. Are we effectively **harvesting** new learnings, new ideas, insights?
6. Are we effectively **developing shared and applying best eKnowledge/products/services and better shared best practices/methods/designs etc and applying it?**
7. Are we effectively **developing best experts and capitalising on Communities of Practice?**
8. Are we effectively **measuring** the above KM activities?
9. Are we effectively **maintaining** the system?

If any of these questions result in a no, then we need to identify how effectively we have been in carrying out each of the 9 steps.

The 'KM Maturity Model' below, provides as evaluation of the progress of your KM initiative. Each step is evaluated against a weighted figure, which is in context to all 9 steps, to give an indication of the relative importance of each of these steps. You will see that a weighted figure has been assigned, however for each organisation, the weighting may be different, depending on the relative importance you place on each step in your organisation.

Against each of the weighted steps, a score is assigned based on how effectively you

feel your organisation is progressing or achieving KM so far. To start the measurement process, you will first need to score yourself on the 9 steps, at the beginning of your KM initiative.

The next column gives a simple Yes/No summary of whether the step has been achieved and completed satisfactory and if not, 'Next Steps' are suggested to improve the progress further.

As a guideline, the KM Maturity Model should be reviewed and scores assigned on a monthly basis, to track your KM initiative.

What does the completion of each step mean?

Successful completion of steps 1-3 indicates **effective information management and improved communications**.

Successful completion of step 4 indicates **effective collaboration** using shared spaces is starting to take place.

Successful completion of steps 5-7 and 9 indicates **effective knowledge management** is taking place, i.e capitalising on the collective relevant explicit knowledge in the system and tacit knowledge in the expert networks.

Successful completion of step 8 reports **effective business value** derived from knowledge management.

KM Maturity Model

Questions		KAV Weight	Measure						Achieved	Next Steps
			1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	Are we effectively capturing new people/experts, project work, new learnings, new ideas, insights?	15								
2	Are we effectively storing new people/experts, project work, new learnings, new ideas, insights?	5								
3	Are we effectively sharing/applying new people/experts, project work, new learnings, new ideas, insights?	15								
4	Are we effectively collaborating and discussing problems, issues, new ideas, learnings insights through a shared Knowledge space?	30								
5	Are we effectively harvesting new skills/competences, new learnings, new ideas, insights?	20								
6	Are we effectively developing shared and applying best eKnowledge/products/services and better shared best practices/methods/designs etc and applying it?	30								
7	Are we effectively developing best experts and capitalising on Communities of Practice?	50								
8	Are we effectively measuring the above KM activities?	25								
9	Are we effectively maintaining the system?	10								
Total		200								

6.0 Starting the 9 Step KM Process

Certain activities need to be conducted in order for the 9 Steps of the KM process to flourish. The starting point is usually to identify a project or process to apply the 9 steps to. If you have conducted Module 3.1 (Analyse and leverage knowledge in the business process), then this is a good starting point.

The following is a minimum list of activities to set up:

- Define a first version of the Best eKnowledge
- Set up Libraries and categories
- Set up standard discussion topics and categories
- Input team members
- Assign a Knowledge Manager and Knowledge Base Owner
- Set up a team contract (see Module on Effective Team Working)

This will allow the team to start applying the 9 steps in a more structured way. It is easier to improve and apply a process to something that already exists.

7.0 Continuous application of the 9 Step KM Process

The 9 Step KM process should be constantly applied by all the team to the project or process, which is being KM enabled. The measurements in particular must be done, at least on a monthly basis, to ensure that the progress of the KM initiative is being tracked and where more effort is required, action is being taken to resolve this.

The measurement is one of the key deliverables that can truly demonstrate the success of your KM initiative. Reporting the progress on the 9 steps will enable all Stakeholders to understand the progress and benefits of the KM initiative.

Glossary

Knowledge The ideas or understandings, which an entity possesses that are used to take effective action to achieve the entity's goals.

Knowledge management The ways to create, retain, share, account for, and leverage knowledge - at all levels, from the personal level to the team level, the organisational level, the inter-organisational level, and the global level.

Knowledge Asset A resource that an organisation wants to cultivate and manage. Human assets are people and networks of people, structural asset could be an automated sales process and market asset could be a corporate brand.

Business case A document describing the business issues driving the project, the project objectives, the project scope, the approach and time frame for achieving results, the budget and the project team.

Critical Success Factors The most important activities and processes the organisation has to make right to reach the goals outlined in the strategy. Examples include: product development, inventory reduction, time to market, customer service and so on.

Vision The dream of a future state for the organisation.

Change Agent The person responsible for the process of change and incorporating the principles and tools of change management into an organised and systematic plan of implementation.