



Knoco Newsletter

December 2014

6 crucial points of balance for your KM Program



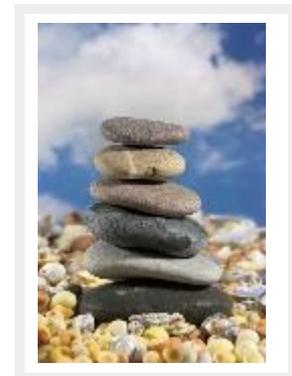
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Other News 

[**New - KM Starter Offers**](#)

Delivering a successful Knowledge Management program requires balancing many different, often competing, elements.



In this issue of the Knoco Newsletter we look at the 6 major balance points that the successful Knowledge Manager has to pay attention to.

Balancing short-term gain with long-term change

Knowledge Management should be a strategic long-term program of change, based on thorough [assessment and analysis](#), and focused on delivering a robust [Knowledge Management Framework](#).



However a KM framework takes significant time to become fully embedded, and all the time the clock is ticking on the KM organisation to show its value.

low-investment starter offers, for companies wishing to get started in KM.

These include quick and easy ways to

[Assess KM in your organisation](#)

[Build a KM Strategy](#)

[Scan knowledge topics, to find those most in need of attention](#)

[Gain engagement through a workshop](#)

[Understand your org. learning culture](#)

[Create a KM "proof of concept"](#)

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Every Knowledge Management implementation therefore needs to balance the long-term strategic approach with a series of short-term quick wins or "Proof of concept" deliveries, each of which should use KM to solve a business problem or improve an internal process.

These might include

- [After Action Reviews](#) for improving team delivery,
- [Retrospects](#) for capturing and distributing team lessons,
- [Communities of Practice](#) for improved knowledge sharing,
- [Peer Assists](#) for sharing knowledge between projects, and so on.

Through these quick wins, people can see KM in action, and realise that "Yes, KM is moving forward, and it is delivering value to the organisation, and to the people who use it".

Even after the strategy is complete, the KM team needs to continue to solve business problems. However rather than small proof of concept exercises, you move on to larger scale [Pilot Projects](#) as part of the Implementation program. By solving business problems, the KM team continue to show the value, and engage people in the process while the long-term strategic change continues. This short-term, long-term balance is crucial to success.

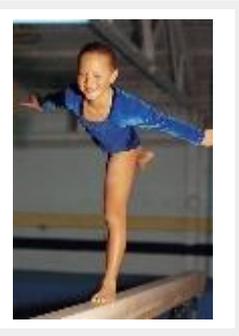
[Take our quick poll to compare your strategic balance](#)

[Contact us](#) for help in balancing long term change with short term gain

Balancing value for the individual with value for the organisation

[Our facebook page](#)
[Our Linked-in page](#)
[Nick's blog](#)
[Tom's blog](#)
[Rupert's blog](#)
[Stephanie's blog](#)
[Vedalis blog](#) in French
[Ewa's blog](#) in Polish
[Knoco on YouTube](#)

You will need to balance the expectation of the business management in terms of delivery of the KM program, with the expectations of the users - the Knowledge Workers in the organisation.



These two customers are your major stakeholder groups, and they will have different expectations and requirements that both need to be taken into consideration. You have to understand these separate wishes and expectations, and the value KM will deliver to each group versus the burden it adds to their work. KM needs to make sense for both stakeholder sets.

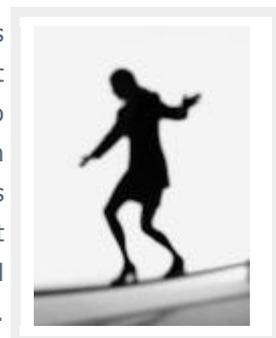
Work out the value proposition for both groups. Knowledge Management will help the knowledge workers by providing them with the knowledge they need to solve their problems and deliver their work. It will help management by making the knowledge workers more effective and more efficient. If you keep these value propositions balanced, you can satisfy both of your stakeholder groups.

[Take our quick poll to compare your value balance](#)

[Contact us](#) for help in balancing value to the organisation with value to the individual.

Balancing conversation and content.

Conversations and Content are the ways by which Tacit knowledge and Explicit knowledge are transferred. Both need to be part of your KM approach, and both need to be kept in balance. Conversations are a far richer medium than Content, but Content can reach far more people, and has a longer life-span than a conversation. Each has its unique place.



Any comprehensive Knowledge Management framework needs to enable, promote, facilitate and otherwise support both conversation and content. Managing conversation without content leaves no trace, other than in the minds of the people involved. That is itself is useful, and we know that most of the processes of Knowledge Management, such as [Retrospect](#), [After Action Review](#), [Peer Assist](#) and so on are valuable individual learning experiences. But managing conversation without content is not a valuable organisational learning experience. Unless new knowledge becomes embedded in process, or guidance, or recommendations, it is never truly "learned", and without this we find knowledge becomes relearned many times, with errors being repeated, wheels reinvented and so on.

Managing content without conversation leads KM towards the already established fields of Content Management and Information Management, and you could challenge what KM then adds over and above these other disciplines. A focus on content without conversation results in a focus on publishing, and on creation of [knowledge bases](#), [blogs](#) and/or [wikis](#), as a means of transferring knowledge. But unless people can, through conversation, question and interrogate knowledge in order to internalise it, learning from content alone can be very ineffective - [an estimated 14 times less effective than conversation](#).

There is a saying in social media circles that "Conversation is King, Content is just something to talk about". Like any other attempt to avoid duality, this is wrong. Knowledge Management, as a field, is far more "both/and" than it is "either/or". Content and Conversation are the King and Queen of Knowledge Management - they rule together, and need to be kept in balance.

Content is something to talk about, Conversation is where Content is born and where it is tested. As Knowledge Managers, we need to focus equally on both.

[Take our quick poll to compare your conversation/content balance](#)

[Contact us](#) for help in balancing conversations and content.

Balancing Push and Pull

Push and Pull are the two drivers for initiating knowledge transfer, where "Push" is volunteering knowledge, and "Pull" is seeking knowledge. Push represents the supply of knowledge, through publishing, telling, or sharing. Pull represents the demand for knowledge, through seeking, searching or asking. Knowledge Management creates a marketplace for knowledge, and in any market supply and demand must be in balance. Keeping Push and Pull in balance is therefore of prime importance for the knowledge manager.



In conversations, Pull is expressed by Asking. In many ways, asking is the most effective way of initiating knowledge transfer, and studies show that if people are looking for knowledge, most of the time they will ask. Asking is supported by [Community collaboration technologies](#) such as Q&A forums and Yellow Pages, and processes such as peer assist and appreciative inquiry.

In conversations, Push is addressed by Telling, supported by technologies such as blogs and microblogs, and processes such as baton passing, [knowledge handover](#), mentoring, teaching and lectures.

In the content side of the equation, Push is addressed by Publishing, and is supported by technologies such as [lessons management systems](#), repositories for best practices, wikis, call center knowledge bases, Intranets and online libraries. For many, this is what they immediately think of when they hear the term "KM."

In content, Pull represents Search, supported by search technology, semantic search, data mining, or text mining.

Just like Conversation and Content, Push and Pull need to be in balance. There is no point in publishing without search, for example, just as there is no point in telling if nobody is asking. Supply without demand is a waste of effort. We have unfortunately seen many

organizations that fall into the trap of focusing exclusively on Push. They focus on wikis and blogs, for example, and find that lots of knowledge is being published, but very little is sought.

Push is such a popular first-pass approach to KM strategy, with many companies starting from a position of “our strategy is to introduce a knowledge sharing culture” or “we intend to lower the barriers for publication”, but such approaches rapidly become unbalanced. We must not fall into this trap! Instead of a strategy of “creating a knowledge sharing culture,” it is better to create a culture where knowledge sharing is balanced with knowledge seeking and knowledge re-use, and supply of knowledge is balanced with demand.

[Take our quick poll to compare your push/pull balance](#)

[Contact us](#) for help in balancing push and pull.

Balancing Roles, Process, Technology and Governance

There are 4 enablers that support Knowledge Management, like 4 legs that support a table. These are

- [The technology elements](#), such as portals, collaboration tools, search engines, lesson management systems etc.
- [The elements of roles and accountabilities](#), such as CoP leaders, Knowledge Managers, and Knowledge Owners
- [The process elements](#), such as After Action Review, Lessons Capture, Knowledge Asset creation etc
- [The governance elements](#), such as KM policy, metrics and incentives, support etc.



All of these elements are mutually supportive. Yes, the roles support the use of the technology, but to an equal extent the technology supports the roles. Yes. the processes support the technology. but to

an equal extent the technology supports the processes, as do the roles, as does the governance. Like the 4 legs on a table, the 4 elements of KM are all equally important. No single element is dominant - they all support KM, and they support Knowledge Management in supporting the business.

If you find one of these enablers is becoming dominant in your thinking for any reason, then your table is at risk of becoming unbalanced. If any of these elements is missing completely, your table will fall.

Balance your perspective. Focus on all four enablers to an equal extent, and your Knowledge Management table will stand firm and secure in support of the business.

[Take our quick poll to compare the enablers balance](#)

[Contact us](#) for help in balancing push and pull.

Balancing Learning and Acting

There can be no learning without action and no action without learning.

One of the key aspects that any organisation needs to balance is learning vs. acting, because as Sophocles said long ago "It's the doing thing that counts".



Whether you are trying to exploit new knowledge or capitalise on existing learning within your organisation, learning alone will not deliver results. A lesson isn't learned until there is a change or action implemented based on it and [innovation](#) hasn't been achieved unless the idea is implemented and commercialised. So the ultimate test of whether an organisation is succeeding in Knowledge Management is whether ideas and learning are regularly being converted into sustainable value-adding benefit.

The problem is that it is often at the point of implementing learning that knowledge management appears to fail. This ties in closely with the challenge of driving change. New research is pointing increasingly to crucial role that leaders play in determining whether implementation of learning will be successful or not based on the way in which heuristics influence decision making. The underlying problem is that heuristics - deep-seated traits which influence our ability to make decisions - commonly hold us back when it comes to taking bold moves to try something new.

Knowledge Managers need to understand dynamics such as these if they are going to balance organisational capacity to talk about knowledge, share knowledge and seek for knowledge, with organisation ability to execute. It's a tough challenge, but the reward for being able to deal with these types of issues are substantial.

[Take our quick poll to compare the learning/acting balance](#)

[Contact us](#) for help in balancing learning and acting.

Other News

We are pleased to welcome [Knoco Venezuela](#) to the global Knoco brand.

Knoco Venezuela is headed by Ronald Oribio. Ronald has extensive professional experience in the Oil and Gas Industry, and while working for BP, Ronald was exposed to the impact Knowledge Management has on both individual and business performance.



[Ronald Oribio,](#)
[Knoco Venezuela](#)

Since then he began developing a passion for this subject, with a special interest on collaboration and the sharing of knowledge. He is focused on introducing clients to the potential for a step change in performance improvement from KM-based strategies and initiatives.

and the importance of preserving critical knowledge and the different alternatives available to achieve this goal.

Contact Knoco Venezuela at ronald.oribio@knoco.com to learn about the knowledge management consulting services available to you in Venezuela.



Stephanie Barnes at KM World, signing copies of ["Designing a Successful KM Strategy"](#)

Stephanie reports that her workshops at KM World went well, and her introduction of our new book ["Designing a Successful KM Strategy"](#) was well received. At last count they had sold 46 copies, the most by far of any of the books that were on sale and Stephanie has signed many of them. The photo above shows Stephanie at her book signing, accompanied by Ian Thorpe, Patti Anklam and Connie Crosby.

As well as the release of "Designing a Successful KM Strategy", other Knoco members such as Nick Milton and Ian Fry have shared practical experience by contributing chapters to these new books

- [Utilizing Evidence Based Lessons Learned](#)
- [Gaining Buy-In for KM](#)
- [Re-engineering clinical trials](#)

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