



February 2017

Learning Knowledge Management on-the-job 6 actions you can take.



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This newsletter looks at the issue of Learning about Knowledge Management.

As a Knowledge Manager, the most valuable knowledge you need to acquire and develop is "How to manage knowledge in my organisation". You need to manage this "knowledge about managing knowledge" and you need to apply all the tools of KM to your work, and the work of the KM team and KM champions in the organisation.

Knoco's preferred way of working is to help organizations "learn on the job" when it comes to KM. This newsletter gives you some ideas, hints, and practices you can apply, and suggests 6 learning activities

Managing knowledge about Knowledge Management

[Implementing Knowledge Management](#) is a project; implementation has a team, a budget, a start and an end (the end being when you transition KM to an operational organisation, once the implementation team has done its job). Managing knowledge about KM, therefore is done in a project context, and we can use standard [project KM models](#) as a framework.

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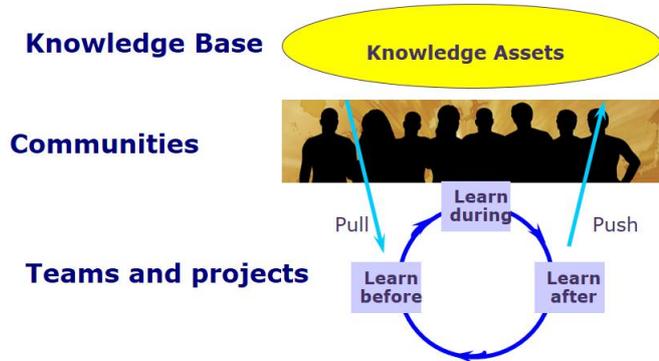
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Knowledge Management Model



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Knoco model for project KM

The standard project KM model shown above contains the following elements:

- Learn before you start, so you have the knowledge you need to get going;
- Learn during implementation;
- Learn after Implementation;
- Build your knowledge asset on Managing Knowledge;
- Develop communities of practice, both inside and outside the organisation.

The KM model should be documented in a KM plan, or learning plan. The sections of the newsletter take all the model elements, and go into more detail.

[Contact Knoco](#) to learn more about project based Knowledge Management, and how this might apply to your KM implementation program.

1. Build your Learning Plan

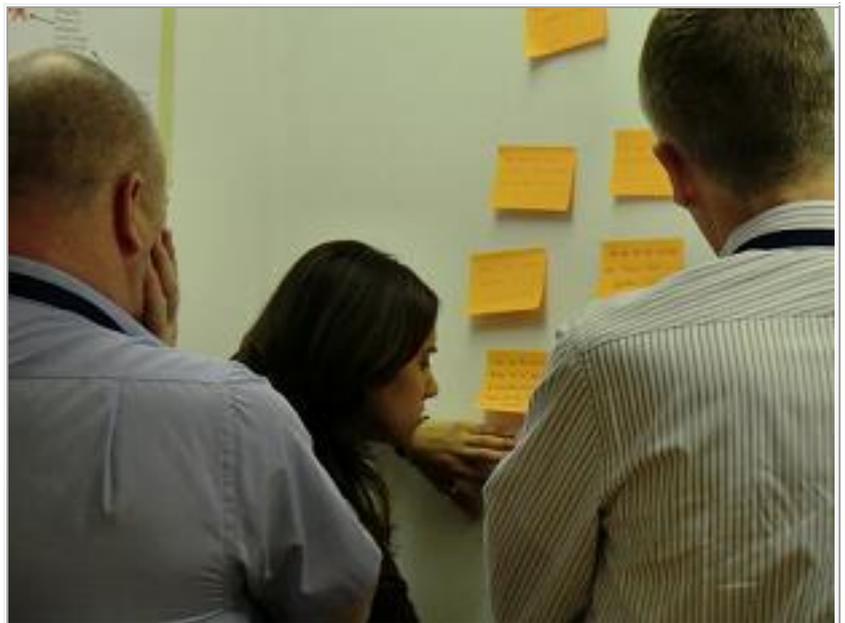
Most organisations embark on Knowledge Management Implementation only once, so have no prior experience they can build on. They need to build the knowledge from scratch. However there is learning that you can do at the start in order to be better prepared, for example:

- Other organisations like yours have implemented KM - some successfully, some unsuccessfully - and have knowledge you can learn from;
- Your organisation has been through change programs in the past - sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully. You can learn from these as well.

So some knowledge may already exist, and some will need to be created. But what knowledge do you need, where will you find it, how will you create it, and what learning activities should you plan for? Your first step in answering these questions should be to conduct a [Knowledge Gap Analysis](#) workshop, in order to create a Knowledge Management Plan. The Knowledge Gap Analysis workshop involves:

- Agreement on the requirements and functional specifications for the KM project;
- Breakdown of the project into its core elements;
- Identification of knowledge gaps associated with each element;
- Discussion on whether this knowledge exists already, and if so, where;
- Discussion on how any new knowledge will be created;
- Assignment of specific learning actions to individuals, to either acquire the existing knowledge, or plan how to develop and capture the new knowledge.

[Contact Knoco](#) to learn more about Knowledge Gap analysis and KM planning. You can order a KM plan template from [our downloads page](#).



Team involved in a Knowledge Gap Analysis workshop

2. Learn before doing

As we have described, you can often identify existing knowledge to help you with your KM implementation, and we identified two key areas of knowledge: knowledge about

how to managing knowledge, and knowledge about how to implement a major exercise of cultural change. Here are 4 things you can do to acquire that knowledge:

- You can learn from the current state of knowledge management in your organisation. Almost certainly there will be some elements of KM in place already, but what is being done, and who is doing it? What successful processes and technologies are already in place? What technologies and processes have been tried and failed? This knowledge already exists within your organisation, you just have to find it. Commission a [Knowledge Management Assessment](#) to identify the existing good practices, and the gaps which you need to fill;
- You can probably learn about implementing change from within your own organisation. There are bound to have been several change program in the past, both successful and unsuccessful. Learn from these. Hold a [Peer Assist](#) with as many members of previous implementation teams as you can find. Learn about what works and does not work in your own organisation. Learn where the risks are and how you guard against them, where the pitfalls are and what strategies you can use to avoid them.
- You can learn about both Knowledge Management and Change programs from [trusted experts](#), with strong experience in implementing Knowledge Management. Use these experts for [in-house training](#), so you can learn not from a canned set of generic presentations, but through analysis of the in-house needs and opportunities. Uses these experts as coaches and mentors.
- You can also learn about implementing knowledge management from other organisations. Find some people who have been involved in successful knowledge management implementations in other organisations, and invite them to a peer assist. Learn from them. Find out the pitfalls they faced and the solutions they applied. You may not be able to copy them (as every KM implementation is different) but you can learn from them.

[Contact Knoco](#) to learn about our KM coaching and training services, or to arrange a Peer Assist

3. Learn during implementation

The time you spend implementing knowledge management will be a tremendous learning experience. You will gain new knowledge rapidly, and you need regular and structured processes for collecting this knowledge and sharing it. You need to be doing the following;

- Conduct regular [After Action Reviews](#) (AARs) on a sustainable timescale, perhaps tied to your weekly or monthly KM project meetings;
- Conduct one-off AARs after significant activity;
- Make sure you take action on any lessons arising from these AARs;
- Use a smaller scale project learning cycle on any subprojects, making sure you learn before, during and after any Knowledge Management Pilot projects, for example;
- Draw on the knowledge of your trusted advisors on a regular basis, perhaps inviting them in for a quarterly check-up (this is a service Knoco offers to many of our clients).

By conducting regular "learning during" activities, you will learn more rapidly about Knowledge Management, and build a constantly improving body of knowledge.

[Contact Knoco](#) for help in applying After Action Reviews.

4. Learn after implementation (and other milestones)

You need to do a major knowledge capture at the end of your implementation exercise, for sure, but as KM implementation can take many years it's better to schedule knowledge capture after major milestones. These might be project stages, or the end of pilot projects, or after annual performance reviews with your steering committee. You will have learned many lessons about managing knowledge, about organisational change, and implementing KM. You should capture this knowledge for the sake of on-going knowledge management in your organisation, and for the sake of future internal change programs.

[Hold a major retrospect](#). Spend at least a day on this, possibly two days. Make sure the entire team is there, and also major stakeholders from the business. Get an external facilitator to help you. Record the Retrospect. Discuss the following items:

- What did we set out to achieve through the knowledge management implementation? What was our vision? What were our objectives and deliverables?
- What did we actually achieve? Did we meet the targets and deliver the objectives? Did we deliver the vision?
- What did we do that helped us towards our objectives, why did it help us, and what has this taught us about KM implementation?
- What did we do that failed to help us towards our objectives, why did it fail, and what has this taught us about KM implementation?
- What is still left to be done? And what will we do about this?

Publish what you have learned as a case study. There are still very very few case studies of major knowledge management implementation programs. Many of the KM journals would be very pleased to print your story, and the KM conferences will be eager to hear it. If you have been working with any external experts or academics, why not invite them to help capture your experiences and learning?

[Contact Knoco](#) for advice on your capturing your KM knowledge.



Discussing learning at a team Retrospect in Sweden

5. Build your knowledge asset

You will need to [build a knowledge asset](#) about managing knowledge in the organisation. In fact, you probably want three knowledge assets, because you have three audiences, as follows:

- The "knowledge workers" -- the users of the knowledge management framework -- need some general knowledge about KM; what it is, how you do it, the value it delivers, and some case histories from within the organisation. They will need some basic material such as "frequently asked questions", "where do I go for help", or "how do I find the knowledge I need";
- The knowledge management specialists - the knowledge managers in the business units, and the coordinators of the communities of practice - need more detailed knowledge. They need a knowledge asset on "how to facilitate the processes", "how to work the technology", "how to build knowledge assets", "how to coordinate communities of practice" and so on. They also

need to be able to find others in the community, and in the KM implementation team, who can help them.

- The KM implementation team need a knowledge asset on implementing KM. Although some of this can be brought in from outside, you will be building most of it during the implementation program. This knowledge asset will be just for the team - you will not necessarily want to, or need to, share it with others. We have worked with many of our clients to build the in-house KM knowledge asset.

[Contact Knoco](#) for help on building your KM knowledge asset.

6. Develop communities of practice

One of your key strategic activities during implementation should be creating, sustaining and delivering value to a knowledge management [community of practice](#). The knowledge management community provides a test-bed for knowledge management tools and techniques, enabling you to learn from community activity, and for the other community members to learn from you.

- Ensure the conversation in the KM forum includes a discussion of learning. The community coordinator should regularly raise the topic of "what are we learning"? If you are aware that certain tools and techniques have been tried in the community, ask directly about those tools. Start discussions on "what are we learning about after action reviews?" Or "what are we learning about the use of collaboration software?" Look to establish consensus about the best way to use the tools, processes and technologies.
- Look for learning and innovation from outside the core team. The core Knowledge Management Implementation team will not necessarily have all the answers. A lot of good ideas and innovations in the field of Knowledge Management may come from the community. The team needs to be open to these ideas, and open to changing their approach and adapting their model.
- Make learning, and the exchange of knowledge, a topic of one of the community face-to-face meetings. Why not hold one of the meetings as a [knowledge exchange](#) on the topic of "delivering value to the business through knowledge management". Such a meeting would be a very powerful way of collecting, rationalising and capturing the company's knowledge about implementing KM for business benefit, and would be a very rich feed of knowledge into your KM knowledge asset.

Also look for external communities of practice, where you can share knowledge with knowledge managers from other organisations. This can be a great way to broaden your learning horizons.

[Contact Knoco](#) for help on launching your communities of practice.



Knowledge Exchange in a KM CoP in China

News from Knoco

Some updates from across the Knoco family are listed here.

- Knoco Indonesia will conduct the 2nd Indonesia KM Summit in Yogyakarta, Central Java - Indonesia on 8-9 August 2017. [Contact Sapta](#) for details.



Delegates and speakers at the 2015 Indonesian Summit

- Javier, in [Knoco Chile](#), has recently launched a [Knowledge Management Community](#) and invited 40 organizations to share practices and learn together. They have already celebrated 2 meetings (November and January) and the next is scheduled for march. [Contact Javier](#) for details
- Rupert and Kais recently ran a KM training program for [Knoco Tunisia](#)'s first client.



Delegates at the Tunisia training workshop

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