

Knoco News

We have lots of news for you this month.

Firstly, we would like to announce the release of commercial licences for our hugely popular, and highly powerful, Bird Island workshop. Secondly we would like to welcome two new members of the global Knoco family. Thirdly we have a set of interesting articles about Checklists, about Culture Change, and about KM as Gardening.

And finally, we include a sprinkling of inspiring or humorous quotes loosely linked to KM.

The power of Bird Island – now available to you!

Engaging people in the value that Knowledge Management can bring is a perennial problem. How can you show people that KM is really valuable? How do you turn sceptics into believers? Simply, you allow them to experience the value that KM can bring, through an interactive and measurable way.

We have been running the Bird Island exercise now for over a decade. It is an amazingly simple, yet extremely effective simulation exercise that gives people a real KM experience in two short hours. It demonstrates three separate KM processes, each

of which delivers an obvious and measurable performance benefit, and it includes at least two key moments at which "the pennies drop" for people. We have found it to be the most powerful sales tool for engaging people in Knowledge Management we have ever found. It's the nearest thing to "Knowledge Management Proof" that you could hope for.

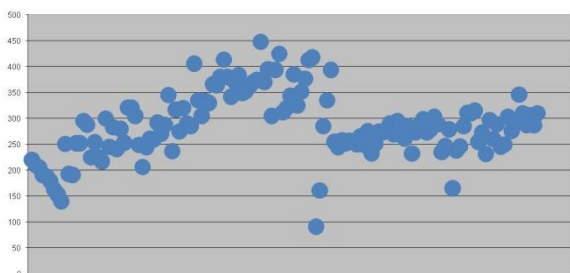
You can read more about Bird Island in our article "[\(Probably\) the longest running KM experiment in the world](#)".

So to give our clients and customers better access to this world-class engagement tool, we have decided to licence the exercise to your in-house trainers. We have created an online reference area for licensed facilitators, which includes a set of agendas for Bird Island workshop, full instructions for the exercise, an equipment list, all the



handouts you will need, a complete knowledge asset for building Bird Island towers, the set of historical data, the powerpoint slidesets you will need as a facilitator, and videos from key points in the exercise so you can see how it works in practice. In addition we have a discussion area for Bird Island facilitators, and an image gallery for you to share pictures from your winning teams.

Contact us for more details, or go to the Bird Island page <http://www.knoco.com/Bird-Island.htm>



Performance data from Bird Island showing improvement over time thanks to KM

Checklists in KM

I don't know if you have read the [Checklist Manifesto](#)? You ought to. It's extremely interesting for the KM professional. I read it recently, and something clicked for me as I went through it. It answered a question we have been grappling with as part of the Knoco approach, which is, how do we get knowledge back out into the organisation?

Identifying new knowledge is relatively easy. Updating practice, as a result of new knowledge, is not too hard either. Getting people to change their behaviour as a result is extremely difficult.

But listen to this story.

17 Jan 2008 Times Online
 "Passengers aboard the BA38 from Beijing were reflecting on their lucky escape, after all 136 were safely evacuated when the stricken aircraft tore into the tarmac. Only three suffered minor injuries. A formal investigation is under way to find out what led one of the safest aircraft in the world to crash land at Heathrow airport this afternoon".

13 May 2008, London Evening Standard
 "The British Airways plane that crash landed at Heathrow may have suffered from "fuel freeze" caused by cold weather, according to investigators. First Officer John Coward was forced to glide the Boeing 777 to safety after both engines failed at 600ft on flight BA38 earlier this year. The Air Accident Investigations

Branch interim report into the incident on 17 Jan has indicated a drop in temperature to -76C while flying over Russia may have caused the fuel to thicken, depriving the engines of the additional thrust needed to land".

As a result of this investigation, new knowledge was created - How to stop ice forming in the fuel on polar flights, and how to recover flight control if icing causes engine failure (counter-intuitively - you cut the throttle instead of increasing it. This allows the heat of the engine to melt the ice and restore the fuel flow).

This was new knowledge.

And how long do you think it took for every 777 pilot in the world to update their flight practices with this new knowledge?

According to Atul Gawande, author of the Checklist Manifesto, it took 30 days.

Only 30 days for every 777 pilot in every airline in every country in the world.

How long does it take your company to incorporate new knowledge? 30 weeks? 30 months? Atul reckons that a new surgical procedure, in contrast, takes 17 years to be globalised. The difference is that pilots codify everything they know into **checklists**. They share them widely, and use them rigorously.

Most jobs nowadays are incredibly complex. The human brain can only remember so much at one time, and suffers easily from

overload. Most mistakes are made, not because we don't **know** what to do, but because we forget (or skip) a crucial step, especially in emergency situations. We need to be reminded of what we know, and what we need to remember.

Checklists force us to stop and review, remind us of what needs to be done, take us through the critical steps, ensure we remember the right things, ensure we ask the right questions, and ensure we have the right conversations. And updates in checklists as a result of new knowledge, can remind us to do new things.

Atul has some fascinating stories to tell of introducing checklists into hospital surgery theatres, the pushback that he received and the difficulties that he met, but also the remarkable improvements in patient safety statistics that were made as a result.

However here's an anecdote to close out our story.

November 26, 2008, Delta Airlines from Shanghai to Atlanta. 39,000 ft above Montana the flight crew experienced "uncontrolled rollback of the right engine" due to ice in the fuel line. The pilot and co-pilot followed the revised checklist, the engine restarted, and none of the 247 passengers knew that anything unusual had happened.

That's effective learning in action. The checklist could become one of the key tools in the KM toolbox.

Knoco Canada – a new addition to the Knoco global family.

We are very pleased to welcome Knoco Canada to the worldwide Knoco family.

Stephanie Barnes has taken up our Canadian franchise. Stephanie already has a long background in KM, initially with Hewlett Packard, where she was World-Wide KM Program Manager. Here she developed the strategic plan for the Knowledge Management Program; including creating and

driving the project plans to execute the Knowledge Management Strategy. This execution included a large component of Change Management, and based on this experience, Stephanie has written us a newsletter article which you can find on Page 4.

Stephanie brings a wealth of KM technology experience to the Knoco stable, with strengths in developing strategies for KM technology, including user requirements, technology selection and implementation strategies, as well as Community of Practice Program metric design and implementation.



Stephanie operates from the Toronto area

"Knowledge is experience; everything else is information."

Albert Einstein

"He who receives ideas from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine receives light without darkening me" – Thomas Jefferson

"I not only use all the brains that I have, but all that I can borrow"

Woodrow Wilson

Also we say welcome to Knoco Australia



This month we have the pleasure of welcoming Australia into the Knoco family as well.

Dr Robert Flynn will be taking that helm at Knoco Australia. Robert assists senior executives in industry and government to find solutions to intractable problems in their organizations, using KM as a driver for Organisational Agility.

Robert's background is in applied philosophy in the

organisational context, which brings an added dimension to the Knoco offering. He has consulted widely, both in Australia and internationally, working at senior manager and CEO level to deliver sustainable organisation capability.

He holds bachelor and master's degrees in economics and business administration, and a PhD in philosophy from the University of Tasmania.

Robert operates from Perth.

Succeeding at change in a Knowledge Worker World

By Stephanie Barnes,
Knoco Canada

The only thing that is certain is death and taxes...and change. Many organizations spend thousands of dollars on knowledge management technology solutions, focusing on the technology, because the technology is easy to focus on, it's visible: buying the servers, installing the software, testing it, releasing it, those are activities that are very visible. Involving stakeholders in the software selection process, understanding what helps versus what hinders them in their performance, providing training, communicating, these are invisible, "soft" activities. Soft-skills and activities are often ignored, or down-played in organizations, sometimes it's because of cost, sometimes it's a lack of understanding of their importance, sometimes because there's "no time."

Projects fail because of this lack of attention to soft-skills, especially Knowledge Management projects. With Knowledge Management projects knowledge workers have already found a way to get their jobs done, it may not be the most efficient and effective way to get it done, but they get it done, that's who they are. They may miss opportunities to share and leverage other people's experience or create something new because they didn't know there was a

possibility to share/leverage/create, but they get their job done. In implementing a Knowledge Management project knowledge workers are being asked to do things differently, whether that's share information in a repository or micro-blogging site, or participate in a Community of Practice; chances are it's different than what they are doing now, and they will keep doing their "old way of doing things" unless they are given a reason to change.

Why/how do people change their behaviours? Because they have a reason to change, they understand the "what's in it for me." A good program manager will have included key stakeholders in the whole process from the strategy and requirements gathering stages to roll-out to the organization. Stakeholders, who include front-line employees who will be using the system, have contributed their needs and requirements to the selection of the technology, so the technology is actually supporting them, not causing more work. Connecting with stakeholders is critical, this helps them understand the change that is coming and to have influenced it so that they can feel proud of what's being build and act as change agents with their peers, when the time comes to start using the technology.

Once the connection is made, communication has to maintain and inform the relationship. Tell the stakeholders the truth, own up to any changes in the plan or scope or

functionality, the situation will only get worse if the organization tries to hide or sugar-coat changes that were not agreed to by the team.

Communication and training will drive the adoption and acceptance of the technology and process changes. The IT team can get the technology 100% right, and if they ignore the people and process side of the equation, they will fail. These people and process side often gets cut or short circuited when budgets tighten, this is short sighted. Better to reduce the scale of the project or extend a timeline than to skimp on training, communication, and involvement of stakeholders. If the organization has time to do it wrong and fail and fix it, then they have time to get it right the first time at a much lower cost than doing it wrong and then fixing it.

Involving stakeholders in all stages of the process, ensuring that the technology enables them and that they have the communication and training that they need to be successful, will ensure that the organization's Knowledge Management investment will have an ROI to be proud of.

Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.

Winston Churchill

KM and Gardening

People often think of KM as being Organic, or being an Ecosystem, and that's a pretty good metaphor in some ways. But anyone with a garden will know that if you want to produce flowers or vegetables, then "Organic" is hard work, and requires a lot of management!

You don't just "create the conditions so anything can grow", because all you get is weeds. You create the conditions, fertilise the soil, plant the seeds, remove the weeds, deter the pests, tend and water and fertilise, and eventually your flowers and vegetables will grow.

If knowledge is Organic, then KM is Gardening

Even within the topic of gardening, there is a range of approaches, and we can see that also in KM terms when it comes to how we work with [communities of practice](#).

There are two approaches to "community gardening";

"select and support" and "seed and promote".

The first sets the conditions for community growth, lets communities emerge spontaneously, and then selects and supports the ones that are felt to be strategic. It's like preparing a flower bed, allowing flowers (weeds) to appear, then thinning out the ones you don't want and watering the ones you do want. You get a wildflower garden.

The second approach is to deliberately seed communities on key topics. Here you plant the things you want to grow – the gardenias, the hollyhocks, or the carrots and pumpkins.

Each approach has its merits and demerits

The "select and support" approach makes use of existing networks and existing energy. As a manager or network champion, you will be "pushing on an open door". Payback will be rapid, as there will be very little start-up time and cost. The

communities will spring up. However there may be no existing communities which cover the most crucial and strategic topics, and many of the communities that do emerge may have relatively limited business benefit.

The "seed and promote" approach allows you to set up communities to cover the three areas of

Strategic _____ Competencies (crucial to competitive success),
New competencies (crucial to growth and new direction)
Core competencies (crucial to income and market share)

However payback will take longer, as you need to climb the start-up curve, and it may be hard work generating enthusiasm and energy among prospective community members. These communities will take more work, just as creating a vegetable plot full of prize-winning vegetables takes more work. But the results may, in the long term, be more valuable.

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