



Knoco Newsletter

October 2014 How to Design a Successful KM Strategy



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Other News

[New - KM Starter Offers](#)

We have introduced a range of low-investment starter offers, for companies wishing to get started in KM.

This month sees the release for pre-order of a new book - "[Designing a successful KM strategy - a guide for the KM Professional](#)" by Knoco authors Nick Milton and Stephanie Barnes. The book will be launched next week at KM World.

In this issue of the Knoco Newsletter we look at some of the messages from the book, and how you also might craft a winning Knowledge Management strategy.

[Contact us](#) for support for your KM strategy



The 10 Strategic Principles

Knowledge Management (KM) has been around nearly two decades now with as many failures as successes. What usually separates the successes from the failures are the principles behind each of the programs. Knowledge Management programs based on sound principles succeed; those that are not, fail.



Chapter 4 of the book discusses 10 key strategic principles for KM, listed below.

1. KM implementation needs to be organization-led; tied to organization strategy and to specific organization issues
2. KM needs to be delivered where the critical knowledge lies, and where the high value decisions are made
3. KM implementation needs to be treated as a behaviour change program
4. The endgame will be to introduce a complete [management framework](#) for KM
5. This framework will need to be embedded into the organization structures

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](#)

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6. The framework will need to include [governance](#) if it is to be sustainable
7. The framework will be structured, rather than emergent
8. [Knowledge Management implementation](#) should be a staged process, with regular decision points
9. Knowledge Management implementation should contain a [piloting stage](#)
10. Knowledge Management implementation should be run by [an implementation team](#), reporting to a cross-organizational steering group.

[Contact us](#) to find out more about these principles

The organizational drivers behind your strategy.



The first and most important of the 10 principles presented in Chapter 4 is that the Knowledge Management (KM) implementation should be led by the needs of the organization. But what does this really mean? Exactly how can business needs lead the development of the KM strategy? To determine this, you need to work out what the key organizational drivers or imperatives for KM actually are.

Often they are one of the following 4 drivers

- Improved operational efficiency; improving internal processes through the use of knowledge; reducing costs and time.
- Improved customer knowledge; gaining a better knowledge of customer wants and needs, and how these can be satisfied.
- Innovation; creating new knowledge, new products and new processes.
- Company growth; replicating existing knowledge in new markets and new staff.

In reality, companies may have elements of all four focus areas. They may be concerned about operating their manufacturing plants efficiently, while also developing customer knowledge, and retaining a focus on creating new products. However the KM strategy should tackle these one at a time, starting with the most important of the four.

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- [Tom's blog](#)
- [Stephanie's blog](#)
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Don't spread yourself too thin; don't try to do everything all at once. Instead pick the most important driver, and devote your attention to developing an effective KM solution which addresses this focus area.

[Contact us](#) for support in delivering against your business drivers.

KM Assessment and Framework.

Every strategy needs to be based on a clear understanding of the current state, and a clear vision of what you want to achieve.



Once you have determined the organizational drivers for Knowledge Management and the critical knowledge that needs to be managed, the next step in strategy development is an [Assessment of the current state](#) of KM in the organization. This involves answering the following questions:

- Why is this knowledge not being managed already?
- What is preventing knowledge flowing from the people who have it to the people who need it?
- What Knowledge Management elements (People, Process, technology, Governance) are missing?
- What are the most important things we can do to unblock, or to facilitate, this flow of knowledge?

Once your assessment is complete you will be in a good position to move to the next step, namely defining the [Knowledge Management Framework](#) that will need to be introduced to your organization if the vision is to become reality for the areas of strategic knowledge.

Within your KM strategy document, you don't need to have worked out the components of the framework in detail, because you will test these components during piloting. However, you need to have a high-level framework design in mind in order to know what to pilot and what to test. Within the strategy document you can present the framework as a draft or outline in order to make it clear that more testing and verification of the framework will be needed.

[Contact us](#) for support in drafting your Knowledge Management Framework.

Information Management and ECM

There is a lot of discussion about whether information and content fit into the KM picture or not. While an arguable point, the fact is that for many organizations this is where they start with KM. They then evolve into more of the traditional KM activities, activities that have a clearer link to organizational learning, e.g. [lessons learned](#), [after-action reviews](#), and [communities of practice](#).



Other organizations address both areas at once.

Including information and content management (documented knowledge) in your KM strategy involves the following activities;

- Determining a knowledge repository technology for housing the documented knowledge
- Deciding on an information architecture, i.e. taxonomy and metadata
- Defining a lifecycle process for documented knowledge

The book provides details of how each of these steps should be done. [Contact us](#) to find out more.

KM Technology

Chapter 12 of the book takes a deep look at the technologies that are available to support your Knowledge Management strategy and talks about the process of understanding your requirements and picking the right technology.



This is a vital component of your KM strategy, and will comprise a significant portion of your KM strategy document. Understanding the technology requirements and picking the right [Knowledge management technology](#) will be critical to your success.

This is a tricky topic. There are so many technology options to choose from that a disciplined approach is needed if you are to choose wisely and strategically and maximize the return on your investment in KM technology. Make sure your technology selection is based on organizational objectives and user requirements and is supported by training, communication, metrics, and cross functional participation.

The Requirements Roadmap Process described in the book for mapping KM Technology needs follows a process that addresses eight phases of the process: collect, analyze, resolve, select software application, design/develop/ test, implementation, use, and evolve. Incorporating a requirements definition such as this into your technology alignment activities is critical to your success.

[Learn more about the cultural barriers](#) in your own organisation.

Change Management and Stakeholders

Change Management is a key component and contributor to the success of the KM program. People in all roles and with all types of responsibilities need to understand what is in it for them in order to willingly change their behaviors. Understanding their behaviors and the best way to communicate with each and every one of them is crucial in order to successfully implement the entire KM program.



Your KM Strategy should utilize the principles and structure behind Change Management. Those principles are pretty well established, and will not require too much extra research from you. They are based on the work of leadership guru, Dr. John Kotter.

- Create a case for change
- Create a "Guiding Coalition"
- Develop a Compelling Vision for Change
- Develop a Communication Plan
- Empower Broad-based Action
- Create (and Communicate) Short Term Wins
- Remove the Barriers to Change
- Embed the Change.

Part of Change Management will be the identification of key stakeholders. Your KM strategy document should identify these stakeholders, and their degree of interest and influence, and prioritize how you will approach them. Some of the likely stakeholders are the following:

- The senior management team
- The CEO
- Prominent senior skeptics
- Key department heads
- The sponsors of pilot projects
- The knowledge workers in the organization
- The KM community of practice
- External bodies

Other news

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[Contact us](#) to find out more.

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

Knoco is represented in the areas of Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan by [Qasim Hamid](#). Qasim is an expert in holistic Knowledge Management approaches.

His specialization spans not just enabling technologies, but also the business process, organizational, and cultural reinforcements needed to make Knowledge Management work the way it should - driving real business value. Qasim brings over 12 years of management consulting and leadership expertise,



[Qasim Hamid, Knoco W Canada](#)

across Oil & Gas, Aerospace/Defense, Telecomm, Insurance, and Healthcare sectors.

Contact qasim.hamid@knoco.com to learn about the knowledge management consulting services available to you in West Canada

We are pleased to welcome Knoco Colorado to the global Knoco brand.



Knoco is represented in the Colorado area by Tyson Neidig. With over 12 years of Knowledge Management experience, Tyson has driven successful implementations in every possible environment from small companies to large multinational sites.

[Tyson](#)
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With companies such as Stream Global and Hewlett Packard, Tyson has developed and implemented global Knowledge Strategies, built Knowledge Management tools based on Drupal and Salesforce, and used KM to tightly integrate Training, Quality, and Operations business functions, as well as Project Managing Proactive Social Media and Discussion Forums.

Some of his KM activities delivered average cost savings of \$30M per year, increased Customer Satisfaction to 90%, and cut Engineer onboarding time in half.

Tyson holds a Master of Science - Information Technology Management from Regis University, Denver, CO

Contact tyson.neidig@knoco.com to learn about the knowledge management consulting services available to you in the Colorado area.

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