



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

**Building capacity for integrated  
knowledge management solutions**





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## Foreword

The Local Government Knowledge Management Toolkit (the Toolkit) has been developed to help build the capacity of local government staff to recognise the opportunities for discovering and sharing knowledge. The Toolkit has been prepared on behalf of the Australian Local Government Association to assist local governments to find, harness, and manage their knowledge resource. A strategic outcome is to facilitate flows of knowledge within and between councils, and ultimately the community all local governments serve. The Toolkit can be used as a text book document, teaching aid or as a series of individual modules.

The Toolkit has three components:

1. *Executive Summary*

Information on high-level issues for local government managers to consider and to then consider building into business behaviours where appropriate (available in hardcopy, CD and web versions).

2. *Description of What Knowledge Management is all about*

A guide containing key definitions and knowledge statements that will help local government managers to determine how well their organisation currently manages its knowledge resource (available in hardcopy, CD and web versions).

3. *Technical Modules*

The how-to-guide comprises six modules and a number of checklists. Each of these modules will help local organisations to increase their capacity and success at harvesting the knowledge within, and potentially available to, their organisation (available in hardcopy, CD and web versions).

It is acknowledged that when dealing with capacity building and the issue of knowledge management in local government there can be no one-size-fits-all product. The Toolkit has been drafted with this in mind and with the view to providing signposts for all local government organisations, wanting to improve their Knowledge Management. It is also important to recognise that in many cases each State and Territory may have its own initiatives in the area of Knowledge Management. In this respect, the Toolkit will complement activities that may already be being carried out by respective State and Territory jurisdictions and local government associations.

Toolkit users are encouraged to communicate with their respective State and Territory local government associations in order to maximise the full potential that can be gained from improved Knowledge Management.



Mike Montgomery  
President  
Australian Local Government Association



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## Executive summary

The Knowledge Management Toolkit has been developed to help local government organisations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge based assets. This value is unlocked when knowledge is shared across an organisation, among employees and departments and even with other organisations.

In most organisations there are two types of knowledge assets. The first is information that the organisations hold and this can include business plans, client lists and databases. As a good rule of thumb this information can be stored either electronically or on paper.

The second and much more elusive asset is the knowledge, skills and experience that is in the heads of employees, which is often the most valuable asset that an organisation holds. The major difficulty with unlocking this value is to work out an effective methodology to recognise, generate, share and manage that knowledge.

This toolkit has been developed to assist your organisation to identify your knowledge based assets and details strategies for sharing that knowledge across your organisation.

### Benefits of Knowledge Management

In today's information driven economy, organisations uncover the most opportunities – and ultimately derive the most value – from intellectual rather than physical assets. To get the most value from an organisation's intellectual assets, knowledge must be shared and serve as a foundation for collaboration.

### Outcomes of Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management is not in itself a goal, it is a tool that enables organisations to operate efficiently and must be aligned to an organisation's strategic focus. Knowledge Management (generally referred to as “KM”) can enhance an organisation's effectiveness by:

- Promoting innovation by encouraging staff to share ideas;
- Facilitating the flow of ideas within an organisation;
- Improving customer service through improved response time;
- Improving staff retention rates by recognising the value of employee knowledge and rewarding it; and
- Streamlining operations and reducing costs through the elimination of redundant or unnecessary processes.

## Executive summary

### Barriers to Success

The key to Knowledge Management is recognising that it is a cultural issue. Many organisations ignore people when designing processes and systems – the typical ‘top down’ approach. In an environment where an individual’s knowledge is valued and rewarded, establishing a culture that values and, most importantly, knows how to apply knowledge is vital. All employees need to be convinced of the value of KM, particularly as they are being asked to share their knowledge and experience.

Other critical issues are:

- KM strategies should not be driven by technology;
- IT comes after KM decisions based on who (people), what (knowledge) and why (business objectives);
- KM strategies should be based upon specific business outcomes;
- KM strategies need to be constantly reviewed so there is no endpoint to a KM plan;
- KM strategies need to recognise that not all information is knowledge and that information overload could be an unwelcome by-product of KM; and
- KM should be led by people who have a thorough understanding of the organisation’s goals and that it is not necessarily a function of the IT department.

### The Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed in two parts.

Part One offers key definitions and knowledge statements that will help you to develop the necessary skills to undertake a knowledge management project and to determine how well your organisation manages its knowledge.

Part Two contains six modules; by working through these you will help your organisation to move from being knowledge blocked to knowledge centred.

### The Business Case

Knowledge Management does not lend itself to a classic business case or cost/benefit analysis but there are theoretical models that seek to facilitate the placing of value on intangible assets – such as knowledge.

Those interested may wish to review the work of Karl-Erik Sveiby ([www.sveiby.com](http://www.sveiby.com)), particularly “Nokia’s Invisible Balance Sheet”.

What can be provided is a measure of the initial need for, and progressive effect of, KM. The measure of progressive effect will be of particular value to the champion if funding and resources are sought as the program approaches full implementation.



## Executive summary

The checklists given in this document can be taken as a base value for the organisation – at the start of Knowledge Management we are at Level One.

Proving the success of KM implementation requires no more than an improvement in the base figure with the resultant progression of the organisation to a Level Two organisation.

That such progress yields true value is demonstrated by the full-scale adoption of KM principles by most of the world's leading corporations, including Microsoft, major oil companies, pharmaceutical companies, accountancy and legal practices.

The brief case studies below illustrate how tangible benefits have been derived from practical KM initiatives in diverse organisations.

## Case Studies

### OTICON

On August 8th, 1991 at 8.00p.m Oticon, a ninety year old Danish hearing aid manufacturer “dis-organised” its traditional, rigid, hierarchical corporation into a flatter, more flexible one. Oticon did this by announcing to its entire staff that from that moment on, everyone lost his or her job – in the sense that no one had a title, an office, a boss or a job description.

Blowing up the organisational structure and letting a new one emerge on its own enabled Oticon to reduce price per unit by 20% in under two years and reduce time to market by 50%. Within three years the newly dis-organised Oticon was the third largest hearing aid manufacturer in the world, it had grown by 23% in a declining global market and increased gross profit by 25%.

### THE WORLD BANK

In 1998 the government of Pakistan sought advice from the World Bank on its plans to remedy the imminent collapse of its highway scheme. It proposed adopting a new technology and wanted a report within two days. Habitually, such a report would have taken the World Bank from six to eight months. But an appeal was launched across a KM enabled communications system and narratives of experience with, and intelligence about, the technology poured in from around the world. The report was delivered.

Stephen Denning, KM Project Manager for the World Bank, remarked “if you heard the story and thought that the information technology made it work you would only be half right. What really made it possible was a change in our organisation’s culture that has made it possible to say “I don’t know” to several hundred people.”

### THE RITZ CARLTON HOTEL COMPANY

Hotel companies value the feedback of their guests, but with the Ritz Carlton the task falls not to the guests, but to the staff. This is “knowledge harvesting”, and thus sharing, in a very clear way. Client profiles are built-up by the observations of all staff who are trained to note preferences – each is issued with a “preference pad” on which to note such observations as what is used from a mini bar or taken from a bowl of fruit. And to spend a few extra seconds (in taking a reservation, for example) trying to glean some information about the guest that will allow a personal touch and give the company a competitive edge.

# PART ONE

## INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### Module One - WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

Most local government bodies already practice some form of Knowledge Management (KM). But usually such practice is neither conscious nor structured.

This kit is about how to practice Knowledge Management in your council. In it you will find a definition of the term Knowledge Management, you will find KM's value explained and you will be assisted in defining and designing appropriate KM processes through the use of practical checklists and task sheets.

#### Introduction

When organisations are unaware of all that they know they fall prey to duplication, re-invention and waste. They miss out on one of the fundamental gains made by organisations with well-developed Knowledge Management policies:

- When knowledge is added to knowledge, new knowledge is created.

Knowledge Management has a twenty year history of use by some of the most forward-looking and competitive business enterprises. They recognise that what their employees know about performing their work is a highly valuable intangible asset.

#### What is Knowledge?

One of the most common mistakes people make is to confuse Knowledge Management with Information Management and assign it to the area of IT.

Think of a great library. All the **information** you might require is packed onto its shelves. That information will stay on the shelves, quite useless – unless it is used. Once used – by being comprehended by a reader and, by that reader, added to all of the other information and experience that the reader has built-up in life – it becomes **knowledge**.

Knowledge is not information and it is not data. Knowledge is what is KNOWN.

#### What is a knowledge-centred organisation?

A knowledge-centred organisation recognises the value of the intangible asset: what the organisation knows, or more accurately, what is known by its people.

A knowledge centred organisation recognises that value through the implementation of a practical, deliberate, whole-of-organisation commitment to practices and procedures that encourage the flow of knowledge across all traditional boundaries.

Traditional boundaries are the departmental frontiers or job definitions that people have always regarded as needing to be “defended”.

A knowledge-centred organisation fosters a climate of trust within which people feel safe in sharing their knowledge.

## Module One - WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

### What is a knowledge worker?

It is important – and it is, perhaps **particularly important** for local government – to recognise that

#### ALL WORKERS ARE KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

Most workers rely on information. Many workers rely on IT. But all workers rely on knowledge.

Consider the gardener. On many days they will work without information (no memo, email, newsletter or briefing has specified what needs to be done) and without IT. On what basis will the gardener do the work? On the basis of the knowledge he or she has, and the knowledge that they share with colleagues.

So the gardener is a knowledge worker.

A knowledge-centred organisation recognises that placing restrictions on the flow of knowledge inhibits discovery of innovation and intelligence which can translate into better ways of working, greater cost effectiveness and improved job satisfaction.

The gardener's knowledge, for example, is useful not only in terms of which plants to plant, which plants to prune and which to feed. The gardener is out and about, observing how the council's public spaces are being used, by what category of person, noting noxious weeds perhaps, traffic incidents whilst planting out a roundabout and playground incidents whilst mowing in a park.

## Module Two – WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING?

These checklists compare statements that identify levels of Knowledge Management awareness. In each, a Level One (or *Knowledge Blocked*) organisation, is in the left-hand column, with a Level Two (*Knowledge Aware*) in the centre and a Level Three (*Knowledge Centred*) in the right-hand column.

Confer with and circulate the sheets to your colleagues in all parts of the organisation and collate average scores. Later in the Kit we will explain how to translate your scores into a ranking for your organisation as Level One, Two or Three.

This ranking will help you to determine what needs to be done, to argue the case for KM, and to establish a baseline against which progress can be measured by revisiting these statements at appropriate intervals.

The first checklist will enable you to get a picture of what your organisation is currently doing in the area of KM.

PART ONE INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**Module Two – WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING?**

KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
We do not have a KM policy	We have discussed our KM policy and begun implementation in one (or more) section(s)	We have an organisation-wide KM policy that is well-established and broadly supported
We do not have an organisation-wide communications capability (e.g intranet)	We have partial networking but some parts of the organisation continue to work on incompatible platforms	We have a fully integrated IT platform ensuring seamless information flow across the organisation
KM is not explained to new staff joining the organisation	KM as a work practice is sometimes mentioned to new staff in some areas of the organisation	KM as a part of the organisation's policy is always explained to new staff on joining the organisation
We do not conduct exit interviews	Some sections conduct exit interviews but there is no formal process for sharing the results of the interviews	Exit interviews are an established practice across the organisation and there is a clearly understood process for feeding knowledge gained into the organisation
KM is not a consideration in developing strategic, financial, management or other plans for the organisation	KM principles have been recognised in some aspects of our planning	KM is always included in developing the organisation's plans
We do not have an incentives or recognition program for staff contributing knowledge	Certain areas in certain circumstances reward staff for knowledge contribution	We have an organisation-wide and generally understood program for recognising knowledge contributions made by staff
We do not have regular formal or informal meetings across section or departmental boundaries	We sometimes organise meetings across departmental or section boundaries	Section boundaries are not recognised as a limitation on those who may be able to make contributions to meetings

Make a note of how many Level One (Blocked), Two (Aware) and Three (Centred) statements are broadly agreed within your organisation.

You will already have a valuable sense of what is being done – and what staff perceive as being done – in the area of KM.

We move now to questions that will allow you to develop a KM plan for your organisation.



PART ONE INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**Module Three – HOW DO WE FIND KNOWLEDGE?**

We often don't know what we know until we need it, or are asked about it. And when we are asked we often give a wrong or incomplete answer – because we hear the wrong question or are concerned about saying the wrong thing; but finding out what our organisation knows, and how that knowledge flows, is the basis for planning a Knowledge Management policy.

The following action plan offers some ideas on what steps should now be taken to find where knowledge is and where it is blocked.

ACTION PLAN	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	“TO DO”
Scan across our departments and sections to identify knowledge or technology that is currently used by only one section	Staff at all levels and from all departments and, importantly, from all physical locations where the organisation operates	Develop an IT audit that identifies issues of compatibility and so obvious reasons for blockages to the flow of knowledge
Determine how our policies support or hinder cross-segment co-operation to develop and share knowledge	All levels of management to respond to an explanation of the principles of KM and determine whether there are practices in place which encourage/discourage appropriate practices	Prepare written brief so that all managers understand the concept of KM and, particularly, the need for a climate of trust in which knowledge is encouraged to flow across traditional boundaries; convene meeting
Collect information about what other organisations in the sector are doing with regard to KM	Colleagues in other local government organisations through state and territory organisations and via the ALGA website	Prepare and circulate report on interesting and successful initiatives reported by councils of similar size and/or situation

The analysis of what your organisation currently does in the area of KM, allied to the actions illustrated above and others that may be appropriate to your situation, will have given you a good idea of where your organisation is as a KM starting point.

We turn now to an examination of what KM is, in practical terms, and how to approach design and implementation of a KM Policy.



## Module Four - INTRODUCING KM INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### Not an IT System

Knowledge Management as a concept is very simple: if knowledge is what people know:

KM means allowing and encouraging a flow of knowledge throughout an organisation.

At this point it is tempting to reach for an off-the-shelf package that purports to be KM. An IT solution perhaps, because KM appears in software titles. There are a number of reasons however for suspecting the adequacy of such so-called Knowledge Management Systems as KM tools. For example:

1. The DIFFICULTY that people can have in expressing “what they know” in written form;
2. The UNCERTAINTY that people feel when invited to offer (write) a formal answer – “what if I say the wrong thing?”; and
3. The POLITICS of discretion where people self-censor their contributions to a system when, in a more dynamic environment, they may be prepared to admit to error (because “we learn from our mistakes”) or even personal opinion (“so-and-so is a real pain to work with”).

### Is it worth it?

The first question that many organisations ask is whether or not the introduction of Knowledge Management is worth the time, the money and even the disquiet that can surround sharing.

Two concepts are important for understanding knowledge management:

- Knowledge makes people an investment, not just a labour cost; and
- Knowledge is only valuable when it adds value

In organisations with mature KM programs there is evidence of:

- Improved job satisfaction leading to better retention rates;
- Specific instances of innovation arising from shared knowledge; and
- Efficiencies born of knowledge rather than skill – where solutions shared by technicians in a meal room saved their employer’s time and money whilst making colleagues’ work easier through the exchange of on-the-job learning.

### Who does the managing?

Without a committed project champion (or champions) able to take on a “boundary-spanning” role across the organisation, the implementation of Knowledge Management will be compromised. That champion can come from anywhere within the organisation, and not necessarily an IT area.

## Module Four - INTRODUCING KM INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### Assessing the need

The champion (or champions) charged with introducing Knowledge Management into their organisation may have to recommend priorities.

Perhaps the impetus for change may have come externally. Many councils have seen the opportunity to investigate the advantages of KM as a result of changes to legislation (accountability and FOI are examples).

Effective KM means, ultimately, a whole-of-organisation acceptance of a new way of thinking, communicating and valuing. In this context, “understanding your organisation” means understanding the barriers to change

### Assessing the Organisation

The following checklists repeat the pattern of statements appropriate to Level One, Two and Three organisations. They examine the organisation from the point of view of:

1. How it assesses knowledge;
2. How it acquires knowledge;
3. How it builds knowledge;
4. How it learns knowledge;
5. How it contributes knowledge; and
6. How it uses knowledge.

Again, circulate the checklists to arrive at a consensus view of how your organisation is perceived in all areas and at all staff levels.

Note the number of Level One, Two and Three answers and, in each case, what initiatives would be required to move your organisation from Level One to Two to Three.

## Module Five - KNOWLEDGE MAPPING

The basis for Knowledge Management is knowing what an organisation knows, and how that knowledge flows – or is blocked from flowing – throughout the organisation. Developing an understanding of what is known, and how knowledge flows, has become known as “knowledge mapping”.

There are various ideas for “mapping” knowledge. British Telecom has proposed a 3D “Knowledge Garden”, and others have offered diagrams that resemble the plans for railways systems. The idea of a “Corporate Yellow Pages” style of cataloguing has also been mooted.

### Asking questions

How, then, to gather the material for your knowledge map? The only way is to ask. Asking in the form of soliciting written responses is hazardous, inviting the possibility of self-censored information or the answers that people think you want to hear. A concept that is recommended again and again in establishing Knowledge Management is Storytelling

KM is “gathering knowledge by conversation”, so once people start to tell stories – of what they have done and what happened, what went right and what went wrong, what was the funniest or the most terrifying thing that ever happened at work – they start to function on a storytelling level. This is the way of conversing that all of us recognise as the way in which we describe the things we never knew we knew, and the opinions we never knew we had.

### Trust

Knowledge Management is two-way: people surrender exclusive possession of their know-how and they gain the knowledge that others have. The organisation benefits and the individual benefits, but the idea of sharing knowledge is often seen as threatening. Knowledge is what makes us particularly valuable in our jobs. There is, often, particular resistance from those whose jobs are all about the storage of, and access to, knowledge: record keepers, archivists, librarians and filing clerks.

Many large organisations, seeking to foster trust and a willingness to share knowledge, have introduced incentives which are sometimes associated with actual rewards. Other organisations have rewarded people with no more than status and acknowledgment of the contributions made.

That is the “how” of asking, the checklist below sets a framework for “what” should be asked.

PART ONE INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**Module Five - KNOWLEDGE MAPPING**

WHAT DO YOU ASK?		WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING?	
	What is known?	This is a good example of where narrative helps: ask someone what they know and they will only tell you what they know they know. Ask them how they do a certain job or reach a certain decision and they will begin talking about a process and reveal the knowledge that they employ almost unthinkingly	
	Where is it known?	“Map” areas of overlap – particularly where there is expertise in common areas, even if it derives from quite different responsibilities	
	Who knows it?	This question can be posted on the intranet	
	How do we know that they know it?	Also intranet – but storytelling will often get people to think about how they know what they know	
	How does/can knowledge flow?	These conclusions can be drawn from the stories as they accumulate and paint the picture of how people in the organisation have come to know what they know	
	What prevents knowledge flowing in a given direction?	This can best be established in a storytelling way where anecdotes reveal occasions where it was hard for people to complete a job or discover the things that they needed to know	

## Module Six - SELLING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The procedure requires a series of steps:

### Formalising the task

The champion(s) need to be sure of receiving, and being seen to receive, support from the highest levels of the organisation.

For this reason, once the champion(s) has the lead, the task needs to be formalised.

### Council Endorsement

The obvious first step in the local government sector is to seek council approval for the program.

There may be associated costs and changes to work practice and other visible as well as less visible adjustments to the way in which council operates. A brief, plain English presentation should be adequate to secure council endorsement.

### Budget Approvals

Necessarily, when the investment is in the development of a process for effectively managing an intangible asset (knowledge), that benefit cannot be demonstrated in the absolute terms that are habitually applied to tangible assets (buildings).

But Knowledge Management is about releasing the collective knowledge within an organisation. Outcomes of such a change to an organisation's culture should be measurable at little or no cost.

For this reason implementation need not be delayed by budget and any costs (for example, for changes to building layout or communications capability, as mentioned later) may be delayed until proof of effectiveness can be shown.

### Assigning responsibility

Local solutions to the choice of champion will vary. Larger councils may appoint a Knowledge Officer, perhaps more commonly the role will be taken into someone's continuing job description.

### Support Plans

A priority is the development of a comprehensive support plan to ensure that advocacy is available throughout the organisation and at all critical times.

## Module Six - SELLING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### Setting up The Project Control Group

Those leading the introduction of Knowledge Management will need to ensure that they neither become isolated within the organisation nor seem to be associated with one or other particular sections of the organisation. The maintenance of a whole of organisation appearance remains paramount.

A Project Control Group, committed to regular and scheduled meetings, will be valuable. The group should be as representative as possible with regard to all areas of the organisation and seniority levels.

### Terms of Reference / Charters

The Control Group should formalise its terms of reference – perhaps extending this into a charter in which the meaning, aims and advantages of KM are made clear.

### Internal & External focus

In designing KM an organisation needs to plan for learning and sharing from both external and internal contributors. For a council, information gained from customers and sub-contractors (and other councils) is external and can be transformed into corporate knowledge if it is brought into the organisation and shared.

### Learning from others

A formal reporting process is a practical process which can be put in place to ensure that knowledge is available for sharing, but once a person with the knowledge writes it down it becomes information.

For this reason a dynamic context for such material should be established. Many companies are literally designing such opportunities into their workplaces. They have recognised the importance of workers meeting and conversing and have provided informal seating areas, or refreshment facilities and reduced partitioning.

### Internal & External Communication

Individual councils, as a reflection of size, available manpower and geographic position will determine for themselves effective ways of harvesting knowledge internally and externally.

The simple expedient of following up external agents (clients, sub-contractors etc) with questions that generate information that council staff can transform into knowledge is useful.



## Module Six - SELLING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### Asking questions: other councils

Differences in size and location notwithstanding, the almost 700 local government bodies across Australia have much in common and represent a genuine community of practice.

Through the special interest section of the Local Government Connect website ([www.lgconnect.gov.au](http://www.lgconnect.gov.au)) and state and territory associations this exchange of information and experience will provide those approaching Knowledge Management with ideas, methods and cautions.

### Asking questions: internal consultation

Questioning to a different end is the ongoing inquiry of council staff as the KM program rolls out and is experienced.

The culture of trust and the whole of organisation approach require transparency and open lines of communications. An obvious and simple initiative is to ask questions rather than wait for answers.

### Sharing Sessions

KM has the potential to be seen as intrusive. It depends enormously on an atmosphere of trust without which the possibility of knowledge being shared, of people effectively giving up what they have accumulated as their particular capital over many years of work, is remote.

The cultivation and advertisement of a no blame environment is the basis for true knowledge sharing and a pre-requisite of the freedom to share both positive and negative experiences.

### Communities of Practice

Regular meetings that draw on Communities of Practice (COPs) from across different areas of the organisation are valuable.

The idea of COPs is central to effective KM. Not all of the knowledge in an organisation – particularly one as diverse as a local government authority – will be relevant to any given individual. COPs evolve where common ground is discovered through knowledge sharing.

It is important to emphasise that a COP is not a committee.

## Module Six - SELLING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

### Knowledge Grows

A part of Knowledge Management is a commitment to adopting, and adapting to, change as knowledge is superseded or augmented.

In this checklist you can assess your organisation against statements that define its ability to adopt new methods and constructively replace those that have become outmoded.

PART ONE INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**Module Six - SELLING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

	KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
	When a new challenge or opportunity arises we do not consider our existing knowledge	When a new challenge or opportunity arises we sometimes assess our existing knowledge before hiring new people	When a new challenge or opportunity arises we first assess our existing knowledge before hiring new people
	We do not consider the impact of relationships on productivity before we automate tasks and replace person-to-person contact with person-to-computer contact	In some circumstances individual departments might try to understand the impact of relationships on productivity before we automate tasks and replace person-to-person contact with person-to-computer contact	We try to understand the impact of relationships on productivity before we automate tasks and replace person-to-person contact with person-to-computer contact
	We never think about whether the knowledge we build for our organisation can be used in other ways	Before we initiate new projects some departments might think about whether the knowledge we build for our organisation can be used in other ways	Before we initiate new projects we think about whether the knowledge we build for our organisation can be used in other ways
	We do not participate in sector-wide groups to help us to decide whether we need to acquire new knowledge	Some parts of the organisation participate in sector-wide groups to help us to decide whether we need to acquire new knowledge	We participate in sector-wide groups to help us to decide whether we need to acquire new knowledge
	We avoid new business ideas	Some departments may endeavour to use the resources and skills we have in place when testing a new business idea	We endeavour to use the resources and skills we have in place when testing a new business idea
	We do not make use of relationships with related organisations	Some departments may make use of informal relationships with related organisations in order to keep our knowledge pool up to date	We make use of informal relationships with related organisations in order to keep our knowledge pool up to date



## Module Seven - KM STRATEGY

Once the first stage of communication is concluded – the whole of the organisation knows what is planned and knowledge mapping is complete – the strategy can be determined and implemented.

### How to determine best strategy for the organisation

What factors will influence the design? Clearly the size of the council is a major consideration. Across local government in Australia there is such a diversity of organisations that some small and compact councils could envisage a whole-of-organisation reform, but most will favour a “roll-out” approach.

In determining the timeline for a roll-out and the organisational priorities with regard to when sections and departments come “online”, the driver(s) will need to relate the KM strategy to council’s overall operational plan.

### Aligning KM to Strategic & Business Plans

The most important basis will be alignment with council’s overall strategy as defined in its Strategic and Business plans where change and growth are factored into practice development.

Aligning Knowledge Management with these key documents means, in the first instance, noting those areas within council that are subject to change. KM is a significant alteration to work culture and where the opportunity exists for it to “piggy-back” other innovations, it should be exploited. For this reason, many councils that have begun the KM process have been inspired to do so by seemingly unrelated changes.

Similarly, where council’s planning has identified areas of particularly strong growth, there may be a case for prioritising the area for KM reform. It is easier to implement change as growth happens.

### Exit Interview Policy

Conducting exit interviews in an organisation that has yet to establish itself as “knowledge centred” preserves knowledge from being lost to the organisation, the practice can also identify blockages to knowledge flow.

Clearly, simply conducting interviews is not enough, there must be a secondary procedure for feeding the knowledge gained into the organisation. This sharing of the knowledge gained at the interview is a test of the organisation’s capacity to function as a knowledge aware body.

## Module Seven - KM STRATEGY

### Putting it to work

This action plan is really a memory jogger. It suggests a design that you can adapt to the implementation plan that you have developed.

You list (in the left-hand column) the specific initiatives that will be introduced and then, according to the resources, support and needs of your organisation, complete the checklist boxes.

Knowledge Initiatives	Who should do it?	What do we need?	Where can we find examples?	When do we do it?
Formal KM Plan				
Exit interview				
Informal meetings				
Notice board/intranet				
Physical workplace changes				

### Formal KM Plan

Review the Checklists in Part Two of this Kit. By referring them to the action plans you will be able to design initiatives that will move your organisation from Level One and Two to Level Three.

Commonsense procedures will suggest themselves and can be drafted as the KM Plan.

## Module Eight - CONSULTATION

One of the keys to the success of a Knowledge Management program is broad and continuing consultation – both to ensure that the intelligence which informs the creation of strategy is accurate and to foster the climate of trust that is essential to success.

### Micro/Macro Discussions

The idea that knowledge comes from conversation is an essential truth. Conversation is also a basis for building trust. People prefer being spoken to, and being asked, rather than being sent bulletins.

### Collating the Feedback

Setting up a meetings protocol without installing a mechanism for collating input and feedback is wasteful. It falls to the drivers to ensure that the minutes of meetings are properly taken so that those who participate recognise that their participation is valued.

### IT Implications

It is not inevitable that a KM strategy will have IT implications. If the sharing of knowledge is the sharing of what is in people's heads, then there is good reason to suggest that the tea room is a better tool than the computer and that the means of Knowledge Management respond to the needs of the users and not the claims of the software sellers. Certain basic measures will, however, be of value.

### Intranet

Councils are, by their very nature, frequently scattered across various buildings and depots. The physical image of a KM exchange – the tea room, the open plan office, the water cooler – is difficult to sustain in such an organisation. Where this is the case the intranet can be valuable. Ensuring that all staff know how to access and contribute to the resource is fundamental to achieving maximum value.

### Software Rationalisation

Where emphasis is being placed on sharing and exchanging knowledge across an organisation – and that is the central emphasis of KM – any impediment to the effectiveness of such traffic should be removed.

Everyone knows stories about how many databases exist within an organisation and how many incompatible programs act as barriers to sharing and communication. Dismantling these barriers will obviously be essential to effective KM, as well as yielding dividends of efficiency and transparency in many other areas.





## Module Nine - IMPLEMENTATION

### Implementation Team

Like any whole-of-organisation initiative, KM will be best served by an advocacy team that not only assumes responsibility for implementation, but also for explanation and, where required, mediation.

### Management Structure

In order to ensure the successful adoption of KM, representation of key departments on the management structure of the team will be an advantage – and will serve the added purpose of maintaining open lines of communication across the organisation.

### Implementation Strategy

The KM strategy will have defined the ways in which knowledge is to be harvested and shared – through meetings, debriefings, a change to workplace structures, the use of exit interviews and so on. The Implementation Strategy is where you define not what is going to be done, but how and when.

### Pilot Program

Effective KM will require a whole-of-organisation adoption of the principles. As a means of demonstrating the value of adopting such changes, a pilot program may be favoured.

Individual organisations will have to determine the scope of such a program, which may take two forms:

1. Broad implementation of limited KM principles, such as the creation of a Community of Practice, the introduction of Exit Interviews or the establishment of an Intranet; or
2. The introduction of a range of KM principles into a limited section of the organisation (such as a department, depot, or number of sections grouped as a Community of Practice).

Pilot schemes have the opportunity to dispel concerns that often accompany change:

1. Will my job be secure?
2. Are we fixing what isn't broken?
3. What's the point?

### Reporting requirement

A regime of regular reporting through management, whole-of-staff and external (ratepayers) communities should be established with clear guidelines as to the method (addressing council, mail-outs, convened meetings) and cycle (monthly, six monthly etc).

## Module Nine - IMPLEMENTATION

### Performance Measurement Tools

It is valid to use measurement in two areas throughout the implementation stage:

1. In the measurement of received experience – in other words, how people feel about the effect of KM on their work; and
2. The objective measurement of efficiencies in job execution, turnaround, client response and other measurable areas.

### Troubleshooting

Troubleshooting does not indicate trouble; troubleshooting means that KM is interacting with the people and the culture in a living way and exposing issues that need to be resolved.

It is important to ensure that a troubleshooting procedure is in place from the outset. It may be best not to talk in terms of “complaints”, but people should know where concerns or issues or questions or problems can be vented. Such a procedure may be as simple as clearly identifying the appropriate contact person, or holding regular sharing sessions.

### Encouraging Feedback (internal & external)

Feedback as a way of assessing the success of the KM strategy will be of great value.

It is important, at the evaluation stage, to take a proactive approach to feedback. Both internally and externally, those charged with evaluation should encourage feedback in any form.

### Using Knowledge To Strengthen The Customer Relationship

In this final action list we propose some of the things that might be done to bring customers into the KM process – to the benefit of both the organisation and the customers through the service(s) you offer.

Again, the best way to proceed with the steps will depend on the individual organisation, its resources and circumstances, but preparing a plan such as this prior to commencement will be helpful in ensuring that maximum value is extracted from the benefits of KM.

PART ONE INTRODUCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

**Module Nine - IMPLEMENTATION**

	ACTION STEP	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED	MY FIRST "TO DO"
	Identify types of information that are routinely extracted from customers as part of standard transactions		
	Determine whether information currently purchased from other sources might instead be obtained from customer narratives		
	Convene a cross-boundary group to determine how customer information could be put to better use		
	Research what other organisations in the sector are doing		



## PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

As you work through this series of modules, and the Action Plans associated with them, you will be able to assess the Knowledge State of your organisation and implement initiatives that will progress the organisation from Knowledge Blocked to Knowledge Aware and, ultimately, Knowledge Centred.

### Module Ten - How does the organisation assess knowledge?

This module will allow you to identify the ways in which your organisation assesses (identifies and values) knowledge and compare this to the “best practice” responses, which are always those given in the right-hand “Knowledge Centred” column.

	KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
	We do not consider knowledge as part of our asset base	We recognise the value of knowledge but do not think of it as an organisational asset	We recognise that knowledge is part of our asset base
	KM is never mentioned in reports about the organisation	Senior management is aware of KM principles but does not include KM in reports about the organisation	Members of senior management include knowledge management in reports on the state of the organisation
	KM is not part of the organisation’s policy and is not referred to in communications	KM is acknowledged but there is no general program and no organisation-wide updates	We regularly publish updates on the knowledge management program
	KM is not part of our strategic planning	KM is considered when strategic planning takes place but is not recognised as a necessary factor to be incorporated into plans	We have developed a framework that integrates knowledge management techniques into strategic planning
	We avoid new business ideas	Some departments may endeavour to use the resources and skills we have in place when testing a new business idea	We endeavour to use the resources and skills we have in place when testing a new business idea
	We do not have a framework which links knowledge, information and behaviours across sections and departments	We recognise that there is interaction between departments but do not have a formal framework for measuring and mapping these interactions	We have a framework that describes how our organisation’s knowledge assets interact with one another

PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Ten - How does the organisation assess knowledge?**

	KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
	We do not apply knowledge management in any assessment process	The inclusion of knowledge measurement in assessment is left to the discretion of individual managers	We experiment with different ways of measuring how well we are using our knowledge
	People are reluctant to share their knowledge because of job security concerns	People offer their knowledge only when they are directly asked	People feel free to volunteer knowledge as they identify it
	The flow of knowledge across the organisation is not recognised as relevant or useful information	The flow of knowledge is recognised as a valuable aspect of the organisation's effectiveness but has not been mapped	We have mapped the process flow of knowledge across the organisation

**ACTION PLAN:**

- Establish an education/information program so that people become aware of and interested in the concept of knowledge;
- Review the organisation's business plan, customer service charter and performance measurements;
- Identify areas where knowledge is recognised to be a major contributor to success;
- Introduce a job/skill sharing program where staff sit with colleagues to gain full understanding of other skills/responsibilities;
- Introduce a mentoring scheme in which experienced staff can pass on their tacit ("rule of thumb") knowledge to less experience colleagues.

PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Eleven - How does the organisation acquire knowledge?**

This module will allow you to identify the ways in which your organisation acquires (and shares/distributes) knowledge and compare this to the “best practice” responses, which are always those given in the right-hand “Knowledge Centred” column.

KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
Groups and individuals never share their expertise	Groups and individuals sometimes share their expertise	Groups and individuals routinely share their expertise
The electronic and physical places where we store our knowledge are not kept up to date	Electronic and physical places where we store our knowledge are kept up to date in some departments	The electronic and physical places where we store our knowledge are kept up to date
The organisation does not allocate resources to communities of specialists that wish to manage their knowledge	The organisation allocates resources to specialists that wish to manage their knowledge within sections or departments	The organisation allocates resources to communities of specialists that wish to manage their knowledge
The organisation does not have a facility for intranet posting of requests for knowledge	The organisation has an intranet capability but its use for knowledge requests and knowledge sharing has not been promoted	Requests for knowledge posted to the intranet or discussion forums are generally easy to understand
Experts never identify important knowledge for other users	Experts sometimes play a role in identifying important knowledge for other users	Experts play a role in identifying important knowledge for other users
People are never asked to search for information beyond departmental or other boundaries defined by their job descriptions	When people are given the task of searching for information they have difficulty fulfilling the request across boundaries	When people are given the task of searching for information they are able to fulfil the request across boundaries
Staff are not able to search across a wide variety of applications and databases	Some staff are able to search across a wide variety of applications and databases	All staff are able to search across a wide variety of applications and databases
The organisation has not created physical meeting places which enable people to share knowledge	The organisation has created some physical meeting places which enable people to share knowledge in limited worksites	The organisation has created physical meeting places which enable people to share knowledge

## Module Eleven - How does the organisation acquire knowledge?

### ACTION PLAN:

- Encourage a system (such as a centrally stored disc on a network) for storing and retrieving email attachments;
- Standardise software suites on all staff PCs to ensure access to all databases and data types (e.g. powerpoint presentations);
- Review areas where a department or section interacts with customers and talk to staff about how best to share the interaction/feedback;
- Review areas where a department or section interacts with suppliers/sub-contractors and talk to staff about how best to share the interaction/feedback;
- Review areas where a department or section interacts with other parts of the organisation and talk to staff about how best to share the interaction/feedback.



PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Twelve - How does the organisation build knowledge?**

This module will allow you to identify the ways in which your organisation builds (encourages and distributes) knowledge and compare this to the “best practice” responses, which are always those given in the right-hand “Knowledge Centred” column.

KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
Ideas, technology or methods developed in a department or section are not communicated to other parts of the organisation	Ideas, technology or methods developed in a department or section can be used by other parts of the organisation but they have the responsibility to find out what is being done	Ideas, technology or methods developed in a department or section will be automatically communicated to other parts of the organisation
Knowledge management is no-one’s responsibility within our organisation	We believe that knowledge management is the business of delegated specialists	We believe that knowledge management is everybody’s business
We do not believe that non-work related experiences could benefit the organisation	We recognise that non-work related experiences could benefit the organisation but have no procedure for encouraging people’s input	We encourage people to think about how their non-work related experiences could benefit the organisation
Our IT systems are not fully compatible across departmental boundaries	Our IT systems partially enable the formation of cross-boundary networks of people	Our IT systems promote the formation of different, cross-boundary networks of people
Our organisation regards people as costs	Our organisation recognises that people are assets rather than costs on the basis of their skills, but does not recognise the value of knowledge	Our organisation treats people like assets rather than costs and acknowledges that knowledge is an important asset
We do not have a knowledge management effort	We have a knowledge management effort but have not appointed anyone to lead the program	We have launched a group (or appointed a person) to lead our knowledge management effort
We do not share technology and ideas across unit, section or departmental boundaries	We share technology and ideas across unit, section and departmental boundaries but do not have a formal policy that ensures we do	We have a formal policy that ensures we share technology and ideas across unit, section and departmental boundaries
People do not share knowledge	People do not know when it is inappropriate to share knowledge externally	People know when it is not appropriate to share knowledge externally

## Module Twelve - How does the organisation build knowledge?

### ACTION PLAN:

- Appoint a Knowledge Manager and make it a rotating position so that other members of staff understand and share the responsibility;
- Standardise IT infrastructure so that all staff have access to databases;
- Introduce an intranet with a KM message board – or build such a page on the existing Intranet;
- Encourage departments and sections to include “knowledge” as defined in this kit, and as distinct from information, into their records/databases;
- Ensure that sharing knowledge is understood as a way of gaining efficiency, not losing power.

PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Thirteen - How does the organisation learn knowledge?**

This module will allow you to identify the ways in which your organisation learns (communicates and ratifies) knowledge and compare this to the “best practice” responses, which are always those given in the right-hand “Knowledge Centred” column.

	KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
	When people finish projects they never take the time to meet with their team to analyse the experience and discuss what could be done better	When people finish projects they sometimes take the time to meet with their team to analyse the experience and discuss what could be done better	When people finish projects they always take the time to meet with their team to analyse the experience and discuss what could be done better
	Our planning process is a “top down” decision-making system	Our planning process does not include looking at a number of scenarios so that we can think through how to respond to different situations	Our planning process includes looking at a number of scenarios so that we can think through how to respond to different situations
	Feedback from our customers is not incorporated into planning	Our learning process seldom includes gathering feedback from our customers	Our learning process often includes gathering feedback from our customers
	People are never confident enough to admit when they fail	People are sometimes prepared to admit when they fail	People are always ready to admit when they fail so that the lessons learned can be shared through the organisation
	People do not apply the ideas they learned in past work situations to new ones	People apply the ideas they learned in past work situations to new ones but do not share the knowledge	People apply the ideas they learned in past work situations to new ones and share their knowledge with colleagues
	We do not practice group discussion or debrief	When we have a success we sometimes talk together about what we did well but have no formal process for ensuring this takes place	When we have a success we talk together about what we did well
	In our organisation failure is always viewed negatively	In our organisation failure is sometimes considered an opportunity to learn	In our organisation failure is considered an opportunity to learn
	Our organisation does not support activities that promote group learning	Our organisation offers ad hoc practical support to activities that promote group learning but does not have a policy in place	Our organisation offers practical support to activities that promote group learning

## Module Thirteen - How does the organisation learn knowledge?

### ACTION PLAN:

- Establish formal means for discussing learned experience – meetings, email/intranet posting – across boundaries and without self-censoring because you never know what knowledge might be useful to someone else;
- Encourage informal knowledge exchanges and advocate physical workplace changes to facilitate informal gathering;
- If the organisation plans “top down”, with no tradition of encouraging multi-disciplinary input organise role-play sessions so that staff can “feel” what it is like to contribute at an unfamiliar level;
- Encourage broad participation in debriefing and reviews of completed projects;
- Put forward a proposal for the future delivery of cross-boundary group learning opportunities.

PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Fourteen - How does the organisation contribute knowledge?**

This module will allow you to identify the ways in which your organisation contributes (grows new knowledge by adding knowledge to knowledge) knowledge and compare this to the “best practice” responses, which are always those given in the right-hand “Knowledge Centred” column.

	KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
	The organisation does not encourage sharing across groups	The organisation has determined that knowledge sharing across groups might yield mutual benefits but has not committed itself to any implementation policy	The organisation has determined that knowledge sharing across groups will yield high mutual benefits and has a KM policy to facilitate sharing
	Face-to-face interactions do not occur	Face-to-face interactions are sometimes used to strengthen electronic communications	Face-to-face interactions are used to strengthen electronic communications
	People fear that sharing knowledge diminishes the individual’s value to the organisation	People are yet to be fully convinced that sharing knowledge does not diminish the individual’s value to the organisation	People would agree that sharing knowledge does not diminish the individual’s value to the organisation
	People see themselves as being of their sections or departments	People recognise that there are common interests, activities and responsibilities across departments	People see themselves as being members of multiple communities, making it easier to transfer knowledge across boundaries
	Staff do not cross departmental boundaries	People are encouraged to think across traditional organisation units and functional groups in order to promote knowledge sharing but no policy is in place to facilitate the exchange	We link people across traditional organisation units and functional groups in order to promote knowledge sharing
	Face-to-face situations do not occur	Face-to-face situations are only used on an individual initiative	Face-to-face situations are used to facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge that can be difficult to articulate
	People have little or no knowledge of others in the organisation beyond their immediate job area	People can identify others in the organisation who might benefit from their knowledge on the basis of direct experience only	People can identify others in the organisation who might benefit from their knowledge
	Knowledge sharing is not acknowledged	Knowledge sharing is recognised but examples of it are not recognised across the organisation	Knowledge sharing is publicly acknowledged and recognised

## Module Fourteen - How does the organisation contribute knowledge?

### ACTION PLAN:

- Consider an audit of staff interests and out-of-work activities as a way of creating informal networks within the organisation of people who did not know they had interests in common;
- Try running an “old fashioned” day where internal email is not allowed and people have to physically go to and communicate with colleagues;
- Survey the staff to discover what sort of out-of-work events (at which people will network and talk about work) are likely to be supported;
- Publicise the idea of Communities of Practice and get people to jot down all of the areas (IT, HR, OHS, planning etc.) to which they should belong – circulate the lists;
- Plan for the introduction of a system for publicly acknowledging (via staff bulletin, newsletter or intranet) knowledge sharing – encourage staff to tell their stories.

PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Fifteen - How does the organisation use knowledge?**

This module will allow you to identify the ways in which your organisation uses (shares and illustrates the way in which it values) knowledge and compare this to the “best practice” responses, which are always those given in the right-hand “Knowledge Centred” column.

	KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
	Space is used as a symbol of status or seniority in our organisation	Space is only partially used as a symbol of status or seniority in our organisation	Space is not used as a symbol of status or seniority in our organisation
	Nobody is able to describe how their input can affect overall organisational performance	Some people are able to describe how their input can affect overall organisational performance	Everyone is able to describe how their input can affect overall organisational performance
	People would never say that changes to the workplace are based as much on a need to collaborate as to cut costs	People would say that some changes to the workplace are based as much on a need to collaborate as to cut costs	People would say that changes to the workplace are based as much on a need to collaborate as to cut costs
	Nobody feels free to speak up if they have an opinion or idea to offer	Some people feel free to speak up if they have an opinion or idea to offer	Everyone feels free to speak up if they have an opinion or idea to offer
	Ideas are given thorough consideration only if they have been asked for	Ideas are given thorough consideration, no matter who they come from, so long as they come through the proper channels	We give all ideas thorough consideration, no matter who they come from
	All meetings are formally structured	Some of our meetings are formally structured	We make a point of not structuring our meetings because it helps us to think creatively about problem-solving
	We do not expect staff to have to move from their workspaces	Our workspace makes it difficult for us to take our work to where we need to be with very little effort	Our workspace enables us to take our work to where we need to be with very little effort
	People would describe our organisation as rigid rather than flexible	Experience within our organisation varies depending on department, some being flexible and others rigid	People would describe our organisation as flexible rather than rigid

PART TWO IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

**Module Fifteen - How does the organisation use knowledge?**

KNOWLEDGE BLOCKED	KNOWLEDGE AWARE	KNOWLEDGE CENTRED
Our workspace discourages the flow of ideas between work groups and departments	Our workspace hampers the flow of ideas between work groups and departments	Our workspace is designed to promote the flow of ideas between work groups and departments
All staff identify themselves as working for their section or department	Some staff identify themselves as working for the organisation, rather than for a section or department	All staff identify themselves as working for the organisation, rather than for a section or department

**ACTION PLAN:**

- Try holding sessions (including formal planning sessions) in an informal setting, such as a local café;
- Encourage suggestions for simple alterations to workplace layout that will facilitate flow of knowledge and face-to-face meeting – and plan to implement the best suggestions;
- Publicise any section or department that has reformed its work space and report on the benefits gained;
- Arrange for positive publicity for ideas tendered that are outside of an individual’s obvious staff responsibilities;
- Explain how perceptions of status as a barrier (the corner office with the door closed and the PA on guard) are barriers to knowledge flow; begin the process of reforming the way in which space is used to denote status.



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also:

The Knowledge Management Research Centre at:

[www.cio.com/research/knowledge/overview.html](http://www.cio.com/research/knowledge/overview.html)