

Knowledge Management Implementation

There has been a tremendous increase in attention towards the discipline of knowledge management and its benefits to organizations. Organizations wanting to implement **Knowledge Management** look towards creating a working environment where knowledge and experience can easily be shared. The basic goal for any Knowledge Management System is simple and straightforward- **to enable right information to flow to the right people at the right time** with a consequence of helping them take quicker, more informed and effective decisions.

However not many companies are able to launch and implement a successful KMS. The culprit is not always reduced enthusiasm as much as a lack of proper guidelines or methodology. The organization wanting to implementing and run a successful KMS should follow certain basic guidelines or a road map to avoid the risk of failure.

Knowledge audit

Companies planning to implement a KMS should fully study and understand the current processes followed for information flow in the organization and available infrastructure at its disposal. Knowing what is already in place, it is easier to identify the areas that are available to be implemented upon and later find out what is lacking. To achieve this, a KMS implementation should start with a **knowledge audit**.

Knowledge audit tries to understand and analyze the existing knowledge level of employees with relation to the processes of the organization and to an extent even its operations, information sources available to them, level of productivity at performing tasks etc. Also an infrastructure audit helps the organization in knowing the current IS

infrastructure, helps it figure out whether and how much part of it will be of any help in building the KMS.

Strategic planning

Before embarking on knowledge management, an organization should plan and decide its strategy for going forward. A typical KMS implementation should begin by trying to find out areas and processes that will be most affected by a KM exercise. It should be remembered that a KMS should be **process-focused and not technology-focused!** Understanding this helps the organization to plan out specific strategies and systems for those processes and have measurable and specific benefits in these critical areas of operation.

KMS for an enterprise would ideally provide measurable benefits to broad areas of:

Product/ Service Design and Development ;
Customer and Issue Management ;
Business Planning ;
Employee Management and Development

System Design and Architecture

Based on the initial audit and strategic planning, the KMS implementation team chalks out a system design and architecture. The KMS implementation team should include key stakeholders both within and outside your company who act as sources of expertise that are needed to successfully design, build, and deploy the system while balancing the technical and managerial requirements. This step integrates work from all preceding steps so that it culminates in a strategically oriented management system design and acts as a blueprint for the KMS implementation.

Important considerations like those of providing for multiple delivery mechanisms,

remote connectivity, push or pull based content delivery should be addressed in designing the architecture for the KMS before the development activity starts.

Phase wise implementation & Deployment

A successful knowledge management project must begin with knowledge that already exists, deliver initial results, and then continue to expand. A typical example is to deploy a KMS using a **RDI (Results Driven Incremental)** methodology. This step also involves the selection and implementation of a particular phase - pilot phase, to precede the introduction of a full-fledged knowledge management system.

Using the phase wise implementation approach helps organization in multiple ways. For one, it shows quick results because of which there is a greater level and chance of acceptance of the KMS if the pilot is successful and if the pilot is unsuccessful the output brings out pitfalls or functional and technical snags in the overall KMS before developing it full.

Training

Training forms an extremely important aspect for any successful KMS. Proper attention ought to be paid to the different user groups and their respective uses of the KMS while training them. The training can take place at different levels: functional - explaining different module features and uses of the KMS and technical - training users to increase their expertise to use their computers to enable them use the KMS to its fullest.

Effective KMS also have training modules inbuilt in them so that users can also train themselves at their own convenience and speeds.

Performance evaluation

Being able to measure returns serves two purposes: it arms the organization with hard data and figures to prove the impact of effective knowledge management, and it lets it refine its KMS design through subsequent iterations. A KMS is evaluated on different levels - for its financial impact, for its impact on productivity and workflow by way of information sharing leading to more effective decisions, for its competitive quotient (the benefits it brings competitively). Different set of metrics address these different needs. Some of the more common metric tools are the **Balanced Score Card method** and **Quality Function Deployment**.

Conclusion - Continuous innovation

The ultimate objective of an enterprise undergoing KMS implementation should be to create an enterprise wide KMS resulting into what can be called a Knowledge Powered Enterprise. In a **Knowledge Powered Enterprise** the process of KM is embedded in the core operations of the company and its workflow and there is an open culture towards building and sharing knowledge for organizational benefit. This requires patience, a steady approach and a consistent focus towards enabling KM in the organization.

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