Knoco news

Welcome to the Collaboration issue of the Knoco newsletter. In this issue we explore Collaboration – what it means, how it works, and how social media can help.

We read a lot about collaboration, and there are very many guides to the use of collaboration technology.

However there does not seem to be so much available concerning the use of collaborative process, or collaborative structure. Recently, in work for a client, we have been looking for a guidance structure for collaborative process, and came up with the matrix on this page.

Firstly, we are defining collaboration here as shown in the text box. So "working together in a co-located team" is treated here as teamwork, not collaboration.

Secondly we are looking only at process and structure, not at technology. There may be many technology solutions that could support any one process or structure.

Thirdly we are looking at multiway collaboration, and so we are excluding one-way publishing in all its forms, including blogging.

Finally we are looking only at ways of actively working together, so we are not looking at the creation of common databases or libraries, where people can re-use each others' work without their knowledge or involvement.

The two questions which define the matrix are

> **Collaboration Definition**
>
> Collaboration is working together on a common issue, across organisational and/or geographical boundaries".

1) what are you trying to achieve through collaboration?

- working together to deliver a common product or objective?
- seeking knowledge and advice from others to guide your own objective?
- seeking opinion and data from others, to inform your own objective

2) Can you do this collaboration face-to-face, or does it have to be virtual?

The first question really talks about ownership of the output, and the degree of involvement of the collaborators in the solution.

The outcomes are covered in the next page.

What does the business need to do?	Face to face	Virtual
Work together with others on shared objectives	Knowledge Exchange	Virtual work group Virtual Team
Gain advice and guidance from others	Peer Assist	Virtual peer assist Community of practice
Gain data and input from others	Knowledge café	Surveying Online voting Online brainstorm

Collaborative structures and processes.

There are many processes and structures for collaboration. These are some of the most common.

Knowledge Exchange is a face to face meeting where people from several teams (but usually from within the same community of practice) come together to share knowledge on a key operational topic, and to create documented best practice. These can be very high-powered creative meetings, often pivotal in the development of an organisation's knowledge base. They can help launch a community of practice, or can be a regular community event.

Virtual workgroups and **virtual teams** are the virtual equivalent of col-located workgroups and teams. While groups that are always co-located can cope with fewer supporting management practices and formalised communication channels, completely virtual teams and projects must be supported by excellent management practice and supporting systems to be effective.

Peer Assist (real or virtual) is a meeting, where a project team invite a number of people with relevant knowledge and experience, which they bring to bear on the issues of the project. They apply out-of-team knowledge to the team's context. It is one of the easiest and most effective ways of bringing knowledge to the point of need, and collaborating on improving a project's chance of success.

Communities of Practice are peer networks of practitioners within an organization, who help each other perform better by sharing their knowledge and providing advice to solve each other's problems. Community members can raise issues and problems, and see if anyone in the community can provide insights and suggest solutions. Many of the larger organisations have set up dozens of communities of practice, some of which may have over a thousand members each.

Knowledge Café is a meeting to bring people together to have open, creative conversation on a topic of mutual interest, and to gather input from a wide and diverse range of sources. It can be organised in a meeting or workshop format, but the emphasis should be on flowing dialogue that allows people to share ideas and learn from each other. It encourages people to explore issues that require discussion prior to building a product such as a strategy.

"Crowdsourcing" techniques such as surveying, polling and online brainstorms are used to gain input from a wide range of people, and enable global organizations to tap into the wisdom of the crown when looking at strategic issues. The IBM "Ideas Jam" is an excellent example of this form of collaboration.

Welcome to Knoco Chile.

This month we say hello to Javier Martinez, our representative in Chile. Javier is resident in Santiago de Chile, and is the KM Manager at Catenaria, a consultancy specialized in learning, KM and collaboration. Javier holds a law degree from the University of the Basque Country and Master degree in Management by the Catalan Institute of Technology. He consults for the World Bank in the area of Knowledge Management and for the Inter-American Development Bank in the field of Communication and Learning. He is a founding member of the Knowledge Management Club in Chile.

Welcome to the Knoco family, Javier.

Knowledge Management and Social Media

Stephanie Barnes

Is social media part of knowledge management? Unequivocally, "yes!" Knowledge management is all about finding the knowledge you need when you need it and learning from previous mistakes whether they are yours or someone else's. Social media is about making connections to other people, and sharing knowledge. Now, granted some of the knowledge that gets shared on social media is more noise than knowledge, but noise can be knowledge if your colleague tweets that they are stuck in traffic, you know they are going to be late for that 9am meeting, so it's all a matter of perspective and context, a classic knowledge issue.

I recently read three social media books, and took a social media course because social media often comes up in the KM consulting that I do and I wanted to have a better understanding of it and how it can be used, other than what I had figured out on my own. One of the books I read, "The Executive's Guide to Enterprise Social Media Strategy," by David B. Thomas and Mike Barlow, identified that knowledge management has been given short shrift, but argued that social media was on the verge of revolutionizing and transforming KM because of the direct access that people have to each other through social media, this can be employees inside the organization or customers

and business partners outside of the organization interacting with the organization; all as a means of getting their jobs done.

The books were great, very enlightening about how to use social media and the kinds of things to do or not do, like not putting a twenty-something in charge of your social media strategy just because they "use it all the time." Social media is another channel for communicating and interacting with your staff, clients, business partners, other stakeholders, and in some cases the general public (if we're talking about tools like Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook), having someone with an understanding and appreciation of the magnitude of that responsibility is a good idea.

Better than the books was the course. It provided a model based on work done by Advanced Human Technologies. Their model, which is available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License, allows for the creation of a comprehensive social media plan for an organization. The framework takes a thoughtful look at

what an organization wants to achieve with social media, whether inside or outside the organization, and provides the questions that must be answered in order to engage the audience, develop capabilities, and measure success.

The activities and questions asked by the model are much like the questions we ask of knowledge management initiatives. In the end, social media is just another way of finding out who knows what and asking them to share it or sharing what we know and hope that others learn from our experience, which is what KM is all about.

Welcome to Knoco Australia East.

Knoco Australia (East) is headed by Ian Fry. Based in Adelaide, Ian's background of over 40 years in IT gives him a broad experience across many industries and both private and public sectors. Over the past 7 years he has been integrating IT and KM into projects - some winning awards. He has also supplied Lessons Learned and other Organisational Development projects to clients including Emergency Services. Welcome to the Knoco family, Ian
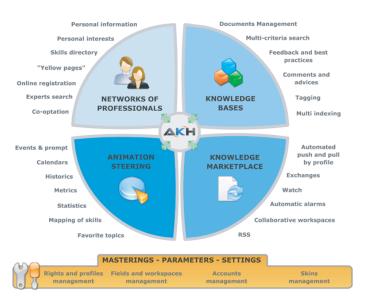
VEDALIS
Empowering networks to leverage knowledge

VEDALIS is the software editor of AKH™ (Agora Knowledge Hub™) specialized in Social Knowledge Management (Social KM)

VEDALIS is teaming up with Knoco to expand internationally in order to address the dynamic *Social Knowledge Management* market and will be representing Knoco in France.

In today's *Knowledge Driven World*, the productivity and innovation challenges that everyone in business is facing can be achieved by sharing and capitalizing on **high-value knowledge**…

- ► Do you know **who your experts are** and how to leverage their knowledge?
- ► How can you be sure that your **knowledge, know-how and best practices** are well-identified, capitalized and shared?
- ► How can you **dynamize**, **coordinate** and **efficiently manage your networks**?

VEDALIS can answer these crucial questions thanks to its 100% web **AKH™** *Social Knowledge Management* software.

- *AKH™* (Agora Knowledge Hub™) enables companies to increase **performance** and **competitiveness** while developing the loyalty of the companies' key people: those who hold the **knowledge capital** of the organization, who produce and apply **best practices** and are involved in most of the **decision making**.

- AKH™ is an integrated platform which combines **Knowledge Management functionalities** and **Social Technologies**.

- AKH™ creates *Knowledge Market* connecting members of **networks** or communities (of interest, of practice, etc.) with all the **experts** and **knowledge** making up this network.

Thanks to its wide range of tools and innovative functionalities, our Social KM solutions can help your organization to:

- ⊕ **Capitalize, disseminate, share and transfer** best practices, knowledge, know-how and experiences,
- ⊕ **Develop skills** and "human capital",
- ⊕ **Breakdown information silos**, etc.

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Visit our website

at www.knoco.com for ideas, resources, publications and **free downloads** such as newsletters, slide sets, white papers, self-assessment tools, and video

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