



Welcome to the July 2010 issue of our newsletter.

The main theme this issue is the link between Knowledge Management and Corporate Social Investment, as illustrated in our lead article below from Ian Corbett, Knoco South Africa

### KM and Corporate Social Investment

2010 is a landmark year for Knoco South Africa in terms of corporate social investment (CSI). This article reflects on our experience and examines the potential that applied knowledge management in the CSI arena could open up for corporates, their employees, and the communities they seek to uplift.

As a "micro-enterprise" the requirements placed on Knoco SA in terms of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE) are minimal. It has taken time to develop a CSI strategy to ensure that we are positioned to make a sustainable contribution. Like any organisation we have three resources at our disposal for CSI; money time, and know-how. We have opted to apply our know-how to make our contribution, through a non-profit trust called SASDI (SA Sustainable Development Initiative). Our partnership with the University of Cape Town (UCT) enabled us to apply our KM expertise to develop and pilot an

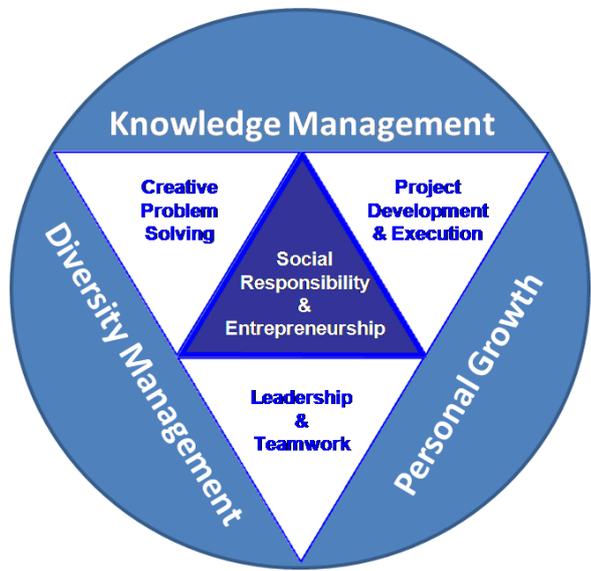
intensive, high-impact "Experiencing Entrepreneurship" course during the first semester of 2010. The course was designed to accelerate learning and development of a team of international students through practical exposure to a wide variety of tools and techniques and outcomes (see below).

the City of Cape Town's Social Development team.

Carol Gorelick (KnocoNY)'s work in the education sector in South Africa suggests that KM at best is fragmentary, which means that the return on CSI in this sector could potentially be significantly improved by effective KM – especially as CSI is becoming increasingly collaborative as more complex challenges are targeted.

From our SASDI perspective we know that corporate employees increasingly want to be involved in the CSI projects in which their organisations are investing. Our experience in the design and execution of the UCT course has shown that application of Knoco best practice KM methodologies can be used to create CSI projects with mutually beneficial opportunities for personal growth and capability development.

One CSI expert estimates that CSI in South Africa is well on its way to R35bn (approx. £3bn). Imagine the impact that effective KM applied to CSI could have in optimising the return on this significant corporate investment!



The goal was to deliver best practice solutions for real SASDI social development projects. The knowledge and best practices captured by the student teams is being compiled by KnocoSA into a knowledge asset on Early Childhood Development for

## Knowledge Management Reference;

### a new section on the Knoco website

The Knoco website to date has been our "Shop Window" to the world, explaining Knoco and our services to potential clients and customers around the world.

Increasingly, though, we have been asked to share some basic educational content about Knowledge Management itself, for the benefit of those starting off on the KM journey.

In response, we have put together a [section of the Knoco Website](#) which contains some reference material for you on the topic of Knowledge Management. This includes

- A Frequently Asked Questions section
- A section describing, in diagram form, 6 of the key Knowledge Management models
- Descriptions of the main KM processes
- Descriptions of the main KM roles
- Descriptions of the main KM technologies
- Descriptions of the main KM governance aspects

We hope this will be useful to you. Please share this resource within your organisations. If you have any feedback or questions on any of this, please contact us.

### Excerpts from our [Knowledge Management FAQ](#)

#### What is Knowledge Management?

There are many definitions of Knowledge Management, but the one we prefer is the simplest - "Knowledge Management is the way you manage your organisation, when you understand the value of your knowledge". In other words, it is the management framework (of Roles and Accountabilities, Processes, Technologies and Governance) that you put in place to maximise the value and application of your knowledge, and which provide a managed approach to building, developing and retaining know-how, in service of business goals.

Knowledge Management is about systematically making use of the knowledge in the organization, and applying it to YOUR business problem; tapping into 'What your company knows' to help you deliver your business results. It consists of never making the same mistake once (let alone twice), and making every decision in the light of the full knowledge base of the company. The management of knowledge needs to be part of your business practices, just like the management of finance and the management of safety.

#### What is Knowledge?

Knowledge is the ability to make effective decisions, and take effective action (based on a definition by Peter Senge).

Part of the confusion between Knowledge Management and Information Management is almost certainly the lack, in the English language, of any distinction between Know-How, and Know-What. We use the word "knowledge" for both of these forms of knowing.

However Knowledge management has always delivered its real value when applied to "Know-How" - to improving the competence of the organisation by giving people access to the knowledge they need to make the correct decisions.

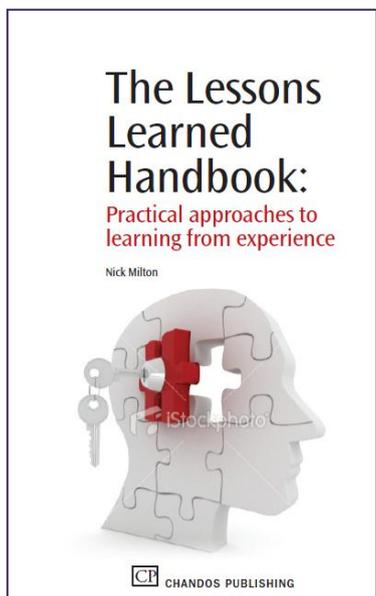
The implication of this definition, is that it allows you to align Knowledge Management with Decision Support. At a recent KM planning workshop, for example, the project leader asked that the KM plan be focused entirely in the upcoming decision to select the project concept. We then had a great discussion as a team about "what do we need to know, to make an effective decision on concept selection?" The knowledge needs inventory that emerged from this discussion was then used to plan the project learning actions.

## Nick's Book hits the bookstalls

Nick's new book, "The Lessons Learned handbook" has now been published, and is [available from the publishers](#).

This book looks at the issue of Lessons Learned, and how an organisation can put in place an effective lessons learned approach.

Based on results from the Knoco Lessons Learned



survey, and from experiences working with some leading organisations in the field of Lessons learned, the book presents the topic under the following chapter headings;

- Elements of a lesson learning system
- Lessons learned Approaches
- Lessons identification principle
- Lessons identification processes
- Writing down the lessons
- Taking action
- Process ownership and process update
- Ensuring lessons and updated processes are reapplied
- Technology to support lesson learning

- Sharing and seeking the unwritten lessons
- The governance of lesson learning
- The principles and processes of safety investigations, by Johnny Martin
- Learning lessons in networks at Mars, Inc, by Linda Davies
- Wikis as part of a learning system; a conversation with Peter Kemper
- How not to learn lessons.

One of the key messages in the book is that a lesson is not learned until something changes as a result. There is a big distinction to be made between a lesson identified, and a lesson learned (see text box)

### Definitions

#### Lessons Identified

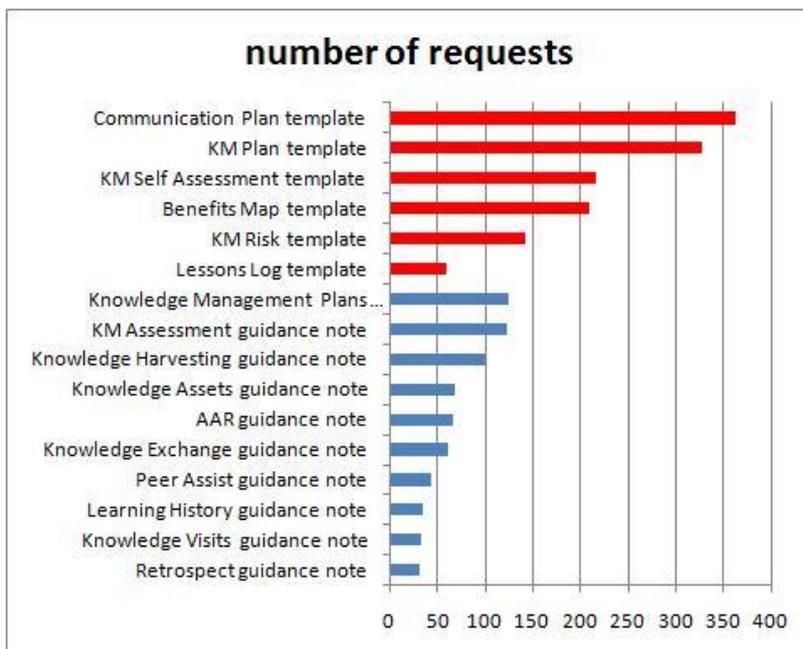
A lesson identified is a recommendation, based on analysed experience (positive or negative), from which others can learn in order to improve their performance on a specific task or objective.

#### Lessons Learned

A lesson learned is a change in personal or organisational behaviour, as a result of learning from experience.

## KM templates - what's popular?

One of the things we offer on [the Knoco website](#) are a set of free reference papers and KM templates. It is interesting to look at the frequency of requests for the various reference papers (blue) and templates (red), to see what people are interested in. And it seems like Communication Plans and KM Plans are clear winners, followed closely by KM Self Assessment.



## Outlawing "not invented here"

"Not invented here" is one of the most difficult barriers to overcome in knowledge management. Basically "not invented here" is a symptom of an unwillingness to learn, and there is absolutely no point in creating the best knowledge sharing system if your organization has a learning problem.

Now there are various ways of discouraging "not invented here", or subtly encouraging the reuse of knowledge, but if you are looking for a lasting and sustained culture change, then ultimately "not invented here" has to be outlawed.

It has to become unacceptable behaviour.

It has to become as unacceptable as risky behaviour in a safety-conscious organisation, or is unacceptable as discriminatory behaviour in a diversity-focused organisation.

One way to address this, is to refuse to sanction any project or investment which has been "only invented here." As an example, BP Exploration would not sanction any project if it had not held a Peer Assist to bring in knowledge from other parts of the organisation. They are now taking this further, by verifying that the knowledge shared at the peer assist has been acted upon.

Another leader refused to accept "only invented here", by introducing what he calls "no single source solutions". It is a stated point of

principle within his part of the organisation to have no single source solutions, solutions which have been worked up by one person with no input from other parts of the business. Single-source solutions represent "only invented here", and by refusing to accept these, he gives the message that solutions have to be based on multiple input and external knowledge. "There were no single source solutions. We did not allow that" he reports.

These are two examples where "not invented here" is a recipe for failure within your own organisation; failing to acquire funding, and looking stupid in front of the manager.

Two examples where "not invented here" has been outlawed.

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