

welcome!

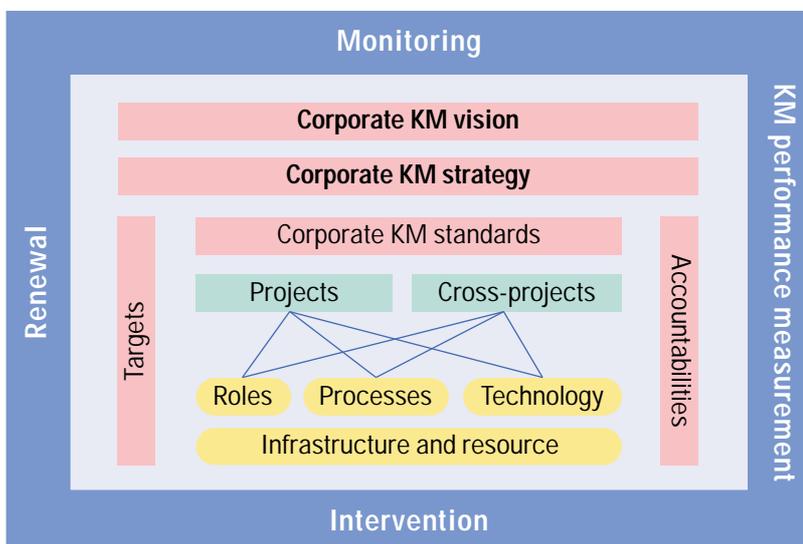
In this edition, we will bring you up to speed on some new areas in KM we've been exploring with clients. KM is still evolving and we're still learning as Knoco explores the application of KM in many different environments and cultures.

Does KM need a management framework?

From October 04 to January 05, we were hard at work supporting the 'KM for Upstream Major Projects' initiative in BP. (An Upstream Major Project might be the construction of a pipeline across the Caucasus, a deep-water platform in the Gulf of Mexico, or a floating production unit offshore Angola). The foundation for this work was an assessment we ran on the blockers and enablers for knowledge flow within the organisation, with a view to building a sustainable KM system. Out of this came the recognition of a need for a **Strategic Management Framework for KM**.

This recognizes that even though a holistic KM system of processes, skilled roles, and technologies may be in place, people will not necessarily use it unless there is a management framework in place to ensure that they do.

While the BP framework is client-confidential, some generic elements are shown in the diagram. Of course, each organisation will need a custom-tailored framework to fit their own individual corporate structure, including: [>> continued on page 2](#)



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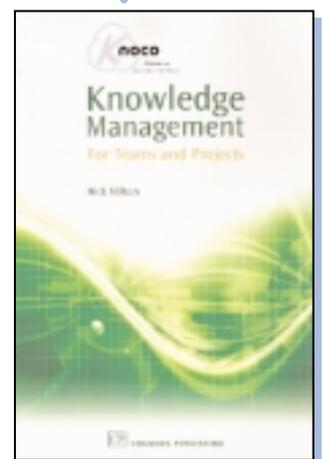
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KM for Teams and Projects our latest book offering

Autumn sees the release of Nick's new book – *Knowledge Management for Teams and Projects* (Nick Milton, published by Chandos). We have long realised that a KM can thrive in a project framework, but there was little published literature covering this topic (compare this with the dozens of books on communities of practice!). Drawing on our wide experience in this practise area, Nick's book shares some approaches we have been developing and using with clients. Old favourites such as Peer Assists, Retrospects and After Action reviews are covered, together with newer approaches such as KM plans, Assessments, and Business Driven Action Learning. Copies of the book can be obtained directly through Amazon (www.amazon.com).



Hot topic

When knowledge walks out the door

A hot issue facing many clients is: When key individuals leave, how can an organisation retain their critical knowledge? In petrochemicals, for example, workforce demographics are heavily skewed to the 40+ to 50+ age-group, with engineers leaving the industry far faster than new graduates are joining. In other businesses, the challenge is retention of new hires. One of our retail clients noted an annual staff turnover of 16% to 40%. And in South Africa, the turnover of staff due to AIDS and to required changes in workforce demographics, is posing a massive Knowledge problem.

One analyst company reckons it costs 2.5 years salary to recruit and train a new person. If you think of the rate of change in your industry, 2.5 years is a very long time to have a less than fully effective person on the payroll. KM can accelerate the 'time to effectiveness' process. We are finding we are being called in to intervene in several ways.

Firstly, setting up a good KM system can help avoid the problem in the first place. It has been demonstrated that employee turnover decreases as networking, and communities of practice, are introduced. And if knowledge is routinely captured and shared, stored and kept current in Knowledge

Assets, and embedded in work processes and practices, then the loss of an individual doesn't mean the loss of knowledge or the loss of business!

But until such a system is in place, knowledge may need to be captured in one-off exercises as people move on, and there is an increasing demand from organisations who want to learn how to be able to do this for themselves. Although we are offering training courses in Knowledge Capture, we find the best way to train is on-the-job. Knowledge capture is a skill that, while not hard to describe, is not particularly easy to pick up. Currently, (for example) we are capturing and packaging crucial knowledge from a lead engineer, working in conjunction with that company's internal KM team in order to transfer through demonstration, coaching and practising the skills that they can utilise in the future.

Sometimes, however, the knowledge capture exercise really is seen as a one-off, and in those cases we are often brought in to do the whole thing. But ideally, any organisation should develop a routine process, and the necessary skills, to retain knowledge from all departing individuals, in support of the good KM system described above.

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- A corporate vision and strategy for KM, to set direction
- A set of internal standards, targets and accountabilities for KM, set by leadership and monitored through normal business

These standards and accountabilities need to be clear within internal projects, and also within internal functional and support areas. The nature of the standards and accountabilities will also change by group.

A system is also needed for measuring and monitoring the KM system's performance. This will enable and inform interventions to continuously improve the system, and renew it completely as and when required.

With all these elements in place, then KM would be truly sustained and embedded, and would become a fully supported internal management discipline. We hope to be able to co-publish the BP framework at a later date, but in the meantime if you are interested in the idea of a management framework, give us a call.

Knoco and the Archbishop

One of the great things about a people-centred approach to KM, is that it can work anywhere! Or at least – that's what we hope, because this year we take KM into an area we have never tackled before: the Church of England. We have been invited by the Archbishop's Missioner to see how the Knoco approach to knowledge management can enhance the effectiveness and growth of the Archbishop of Canterbury's 'Fresh Expressions' project. The aim of the project is to help churches all over England develop imaginative new forms of church life. Initially we are helping the core team explore how knowledge management principles can be applied to the massive task of learning how to do this in many different contexts.

Knoco profile

Ian Corbett

Ian Corbett is Knoco's man on the ground in Africa. Based in Cape Town, Ian is introducing southern African leaders and businesses to the benefits of Knowledge Enabled Performance™. So far, his experiences show that Knoco's dialogue-rich approach is well-suited to a continent that is characterised by diversity. We caught up with Ian by MSN and asked him a few questions.



Ian, tell us a bit about your background in KM

I got interested in KM through working with some highly successful teams in De Beers. I began to wonder why some teams succeed where others fail, and accessing knowledge proved to be a key factor in success. As I was known to have an interest in this area, De Beers asked me to head up a strategic initiative to explore what 'Intellectual Capital' might mean to a mining company. At the time, the organisation was running a major strategic review – there were almost a hundred initiatives, but when I looked at them in detail, nobody was looking at organisational learning and knowledge management.

What attracted you to the topic?

I realised that it would be crucial to address this area when my research (*at the Advanced Management Programme at Templeton College, Oxford*) began to show that organisations which change successfully do so by learning for themselves.

The second thing that attracted me was the ability to work at a deeper level with people. I get real fulfilment from using KM to help people realise their full potential. It's great to watch people experience true pleasure on realising they can achieve amazing things whilst contributing hundreds of millions of Rands worth of organisational value.

What are the special challenges and opportunities for KM in Southern Africa?

I am excited by the diversity we have available – as a facilitator it presents a huge opportunity. We are

also faced with the less enviable challenges created by HIV/AIDS and the loss of experience and expertise through the drive to change the employee profile.

The real difficulty right now is capacity – with our economy growing, the key question has to be 'how can SA use the resources it has available most effectively?' We have a huge imbalance in the intellectual capacity available to support growth at the rate that is currently being projected. Knowledge Management can make an enormous contribution to performance improvement in business as well as in government at national and provincial/regional level.

A further factor that should be of concern is the experience loss that is occurring through the need to redress the past through employment equity and affirmative action. Organisations are losing many of their people in middle and senior management with 10 to 15 years experience – I know of very few, if any, who are fully harnessing KM's potential to capture and transfer this knowledge base – are strategies being put in place? By integrating KM with Action Learning, Knoco South Africa has dynamic and creative processes that can make this happen across generations and race groups in an exciting and powerful way.

You have travelled extensively in Africa – what top travel tips have you heard?

My most memorable piece of advice in this area came from a visiting American clergyman – his advice to people visiting central Africa was to carry a clean rubber glove. It sure as heck stuck in my mind!

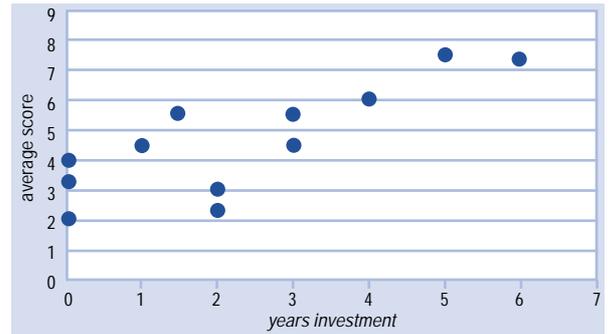
Benchmark data *a pattern emerging*

Increasingly, we are being asked to run Assessments of Knowledge management capability for teams, functions or organisations. Clients appreciate a detailed, external and impartial overview of the current status of Knowledge management, to tell them where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and to allow them to plan out a series of interventions to 'close the gaps'.

However, after running a number of these assessments, we began to see a pattern emerging. OK, it's a pretty obvious pattern: the more time you spend implementing KM, the better you get! But with the addition of a couple of control points from clients we knew well, the pattern got even clearer.

This plot shows the average score from all of the ten assessment components, against the maturity of the relevant KM program. It tells us a number of things:

- The longer you spend on KM, the better you get.
- Some companies may take 4-5 years to reach a 70% to 80% level, others (using a strategic focused approach) can do it in 2 years.
- There is also a range of starting points, and those organisations that already have a good open



culture, who are used to networking, and who have a good technology infrastructure, can complete the KM journey far more quickly.

We also saw some common themes arising from the details of the assessments themselves. Technology is usually a high-scoring component, and few companies are held back from sharing their knowledge through lack of technology. On the other hand, relatively few organisations have a robust approach to owning and maintaining knowledge assets, and 'learning during' is a consistent area of weakness. These are areas where strategic intervention is often needed.

What's coming?

11-12 October

London, UK

Training course on Practical Knowledge Management, covering KM tools, techniques, and implementation strategies

Register via <http://www.unicom.co.uk/km> and check the box that says you heard about the course from the presenter himself!

20-22 September

London, UK

Ark group conference on 'Measuring and developing the value of knowledge management'

Nick will be chairing the conference, and running a post-workshop seminar based on our ever-popular Bird Island exercise.

28 November

London, UK

Ark group conference on 'Harnessing the power of collaborative working'

Nick will be running a pre-workshop seminar on Launching and Sustaining communities of practice.

Knoco website gets a new look www.knoco.co.uk

If you haven't been to our website recently, come and have a look round. We have revamped it to make it easier to navigate, and hope that it will give you some more background about us, and the services we offer. There are also a couple of freebies on there for you! We would appreciate feedback – nick.milton@knoco.co.uk – on what they helped you to achieve.

The Knoco Maximi\$er™ *your online resource*

One of the resources you can find via the website is the suite of online reference material we call the Knoco Maximi\$er™. These resources provide detailed reference knowledge on the principles and application of KM, supported by slide sets, case studies and video clips. They are now available through individual subscription licences, and a taster can be found at <https://www.in2itive.biz/knoco>