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Something Different - 7 unusual KM case histories



In This Issue

• [**Designing the KM framework while the company is still under construction**](#)

• [**Sorting out disfunctional ECM**](#)

• [**Outsourcing lessons capture**](#)

• [**How mature are our CoPs?**](#)

• [**Learning How to Innovate**](#)

• [**Finding the message hidden in your lessons**](#)

• [**The Collaboration Toolkit**](#)

Other News

Take our cultural

What if, instead of the normal way to introduce Knowledge Management, you tried something different?

The standard approach to [Knowledge Management Implementation](#) is well understood. You start with an [Assessment](#) of the current state, develop a [KM Strategy](#) and a draft [KM Framework](#), put an [implementation plan](#) together, then [pilot](#) the key elements of the Framework until you are sure it is robust. After that, you roll out the Framework across the organisation.

However some organisations may take a different approach, depending on their circumstances.

This newsletter gives you a selection of 7 fresh approaches to KM, which may differ from the usual standard. Let's see if they give you any ideas!

Designing the KM framework while the company is still under construction

This client was a power utility company, commissioning the first power station of its type to be built in their country. There was no existing organisation, no existing processes, and no existing in-country knowledge to draw on.

However they realised that Knowledge Management is a critical component of good practice, and needed to get KM ready for when work started and the organisation was put in place.

The first item on the agenda was to construct the high level process



[Tom Young,](#)
[Knoco UK](#)

Find out how you stack up against the 10 dimensions of a learning culture.

[See here to take the survey.](#)

Coming Soon

The Knoco global KM "state of the art" survey - measuring how KM is being applied across the globe.

Watch out for this opportunity!

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flow for knowledge management, and then to define the individual processes within that flow.

Each of these processes were then broken down into individual tasks, which were mapped on a flow chart to describe the different steps within the knowledge management process, and the different people are accountable for each step. These flowcharts were accompanied by detailed documentation, so that every person involved knew what they had to do.

Once the procedures and processes were documented, we put together a [knowledge management policy](#) for the organisation, so that when work started on the Power Station, knowledge management would be afforded the same level of [governance](#) as any other management activity,

Sorting out dysfunctional Enterprise Content Management

The client had been using an ECM product for 4-5 years to help them share documented knowledge and collaborate. During this time the company had grown and expanded as had the use of the platform. Users were generally dissatisfied with the usability of the platform, response times were slow, support was inadequate in some geographical locations, and the user interface was confusing. The company hoped to further expand the use and acceptance of the platform by improving response times for users and by improving the taxonomy used to structure the user interface.

The company asked us to review and align their technology implementation with business processes and objectives. We

- provided technical support for the testing of the installation of a solution to address the technology responsiveness and availability issues,
- reviewed the existing taxonomy and provided a mapping from the old taxonomy to a new one and



[Stephanie Barnes, Knoco Canada](#)

[Stephanie's blog](#)
[Vedalis blog](#)
[Knoco on YouTube](#)

- provided a roadmap for other knowledge management activities for the company to execute as the organization grew and became increasingly global.

In all project activities user input was sought in order to ensure the technology improvements, both hardware and software, would meet user needs and objectives as well as align with the business processes that the users were executing.

The full implementation of the improvements took 6 months after the end of the collect, analyse, and resolve steps of the project. At the end of that time, use of the platform had increased from approximately 800-dissatisfied users to 1200-satisfied users (virtually the whole company).

Outsourcing lessons capture

One of our clients was building a systematic approach to [lesson learning](#) within their organisation. They had a high level of commitment to organisational learning, and realise that they didn't have the skilled resources for facilitating the lessons identification and lessons capture meetings that were needed.

Rather than develop the skills in house, they took the alternative approach of outsourcing the service. Therefore, when a project is reaching the point where lessons need to be captured, we help set up a meeting, facilitate the meeting, take extensive notes, and document the lessons in the client format. This frees up their own (very busy) project staff - all they need to do is turn up to the meeting, and the lessons are documented for them.

It also provides quality control and standardisation for capturing this business-critical knowledge. By using professional facilitators with a full understanding of the lesson learning process, the client can be sure that the lessons will be of highest standard.



[Nick Milton,](#)
[Knoco UK](#)

How mature are our CoPs?

One of our clients had been working for a while with knowledge-sharing networks, and had the feeling that these could be delivering far greater value. They contacted Knoco and asked if we could help them to [measure the maturity of their networks](#), and look for ways to help them develop further.

We set up a series of workshops where we discussed the theory and practice of knowledge sharing networks and Communities of Practice, and then took each network through an exercise of determining their current state of maturity, using a standard maturity template.

Once the current state was mapped, we discussed the state of maturity that they wanted to achieve in a years time, and the actions they would need to take as part of the network development plan. These plans were then fed back to senior management for review and challenge.



Jens Øyvind
Nielsen,
Knoco
Denmark

Learning how to Innovate

A European client was looking for radical and innovative solutions to some of their pressing business problems. They came to Knoco looking for a robust [innovation process](#), which would allow them to think outside the box.

We used an adapted version of our Business Driven Action Learning process, to help set up an Innovation Think-Tank. This involved

- A set-up process for the team, to ensure that the team working styles were fully aligned with the complete innovation cycle,
- A workshop to fully deconstruct and understand the issue
- A workshop to generate innovative and creative ideas
- Combination of the ideas into potential solutions sets
- Fieldwork, to see the solutions sets applied by other organisations, and



[Ian Corbett,](#)
[Knoco South](#)
[Africa](#)

- Selection of a way forward.

The client was very pleased with the process, and with the ideas they created, several of which are now in implementation.

Finding the Message hidden in your Lessons

[Lessons Analysis](#) is a process that any company with a lesson-learning system can undertake.

A Lesson learning system collects observations and lessons from operations, and stores them, often over a period of many years. Hidden in those lessons are a whole set of common trends, "weak signals", and other information that you do not see until you view the lessons as a whole, rather than treating them one by one.

Through Lessons Analysis you can, for example, identify some of the underlying organizational or structural issues which lie behind repeated failure.

In the British Army, we conducted an analysis of over 2000 lessons from Afghanistan, collected over 3 years. Each lesson was given a taxonomy code, capturing the type of issue at its heart and the functional areas wherein solutions might be found. A simple count of recurrent codes enabled us to identify candidate root problems to which higher-leverage solutions might be found (e.g. many lessons seeking updates to pre-deployment training indicated the need to review feedback mechanisms and tighten adaptive loops).

We also assigned several keywords to each lesson, which enabled us to identify what kinds of issues were increasing in impact and which were reducing. Whilst this historical review did not help current efforts, the way the needs of the campaign unfolded has now been captured and this knowledge can be used to inform planning for future operations, in places as yet unknown.



[Rupert Lescott,](#)
[Knoco UK](#)

The Collaboration Guidebook

One of our global clients had set themselves the target of becoming more collaborative, and had acquired an IT toolkit of collaboration tools. However they realized that technology alone would not drive collaboration, and came to Knoco to help them understand how Collaboration worked, and what structures needed to be in place.



[Sapta, Knoco
Indonesia](#)

We worked with the client to define the different styles of collaboration (virtual teams, virtual work groups, communities of purpose, communities of practice, crowdsourcing, jams and wikithons, and other styles), and to write guidance for how these might be applied within the client context. The client has now expanded beyond collaboration into a complete knowledge management approach.

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