



**May 2014**

## **5 things you didn't know about Knowledge Management**



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### Other News

#### **Order the full report**

Visit our website to order a pdf copy of the full report findings.

During the past couple of months we have been running [a global survey of Knowledge Management](#), in order to understand how the discipline is being applied across the globe.

We have received nearly 400 replies to the survey, and have created a report of the results, available for sale through the Knoco website (survey participants have already received a free copy).

The report contains some really interesting insights - some brand new, and others that we always suspected but never had the data to confirm.

5 of these insights are presented here for your interest.

[Click here to buy the survey report](#), or read on for 5 fascinating KM factoids.

Factoid #1; KM maturity and organisational size are very closely linked

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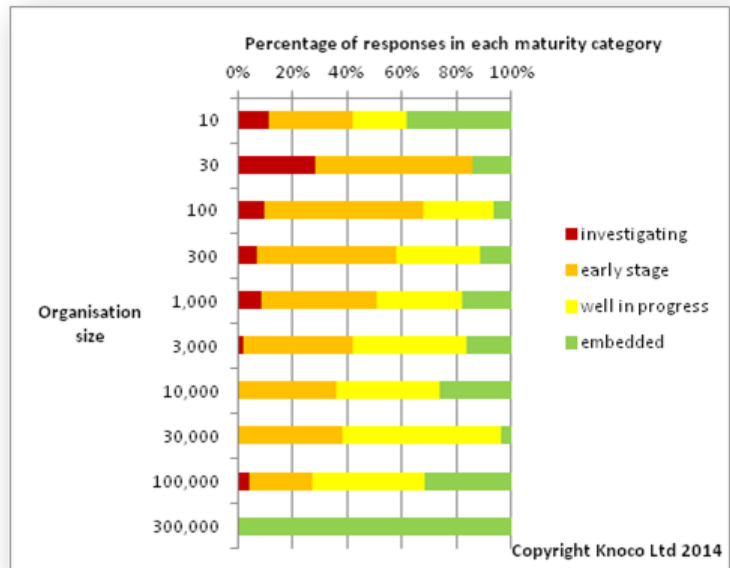


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Among the data collected through the survey was a subjective assessment of the maturity of knowledge management, described as "We are investigating KM but have not yet started", "We are in the early stages of introducing KM", "We are well in progress with KM", and "KM is embedded in the way we work".

The picture above shows how this maturity level varies with company size.

It is clear that there is a very close link between size and maturity, and the larger organisations are the most mature. Knowledge Management has historically been a big-company activity, and early starters in KM were the big multinationals. However many smaller companies are in the early stages of implementation, and KM is no longer solely for the big multi-nationals.

An exception to this size trend is the smallest category of company, many of which are niche consultancies for whom Knowledge Management is business critical.

For an assessment of your own KM maturity, use our quick [online survey](#) or book a [detailed assessment](#).

**Factoid #2;** There is a non-linear relationship between the number of years spent doing KM, and the value delivered.

Length of time doing KM	Average value delivered through KM
0 years	Zero
0.5 years	Zero
1 year	\$32 thousand
2 years	\$1.2 million
4 years	\$3 million
8 years	\$25 million
16 years	\$280 million

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Among the data collected through the survey was a subjective assessment of the value delivered to date through knowledge management, in US dollars, with respondents choosing the most representative value figure from a list. This was an optional question and a total of 64 respondents quoted a value number.

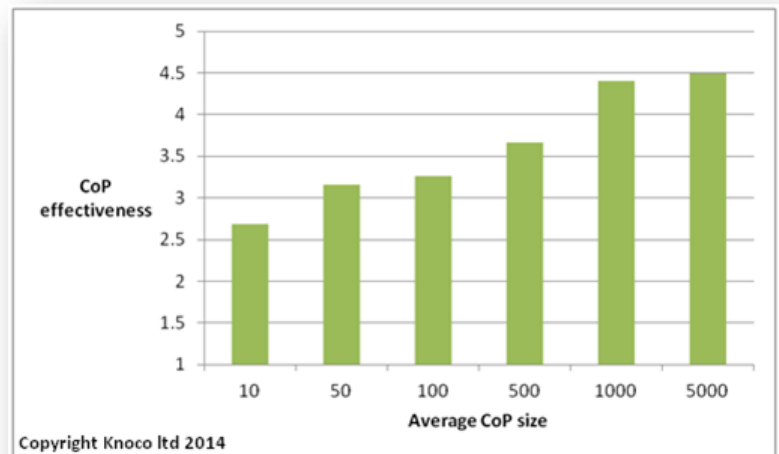
The table above shows how the average delivered value varies with the length of time the organisations have been involved in Knowledge Management.

It is pretty obvious that the longer an organisation is involved in KM, the more value should be delivered. However you would expect there to be a linear relationship, which is not what the table shows. The table suggests that the delivery of significant value from Knowledge Management will take at least 2 years, and shows that, after 4 years, a doubling of the time is associated with a far larger increase in value.

This is partly because the companies with a longer history are also the larger companies, and the larger companies deliver the most value from KM, as shown in the full survey report.

We can aid you in [valuing your Knowledge Management activity](#).

**Factoid #3. Size matters in Communities of Practice**



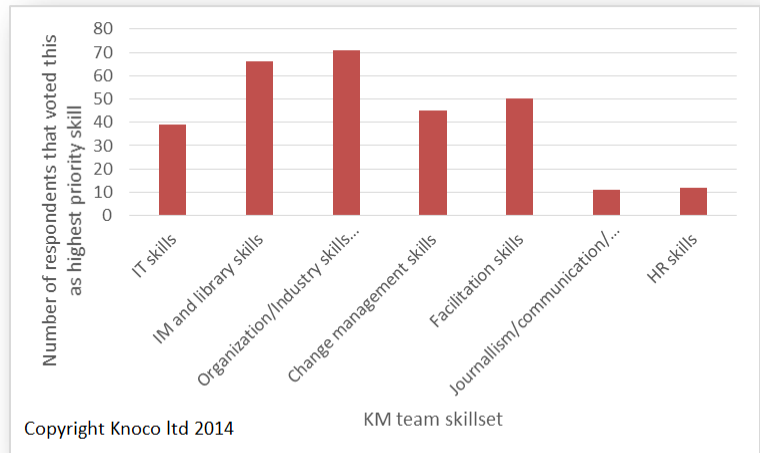
Participants were asked whether [Communities of Practice](#) (CoPs) formed part of their KM approach. Organisations who answered Yes (and therefore who incorporate CoPs in their KM programme), and who quoted a value delivery figure, delivered on average \$145 million in value from Knowledge Management. Those who answered No delivered on average \$9.4 million.

133 people continued to answer supplementary questions about their CoPs.

One of these questions covered the average size of CoPs, and another was a subjective assessment (marks out of 5) of Community effectiveness in delivering value. From the plot shown here, there is a very close link between CoP size and perceived CoP effectiveness. Larger is better, and the largest CoPs were ranked as the most effective. However the survey showed that the majority of CoPs are small - the modal size being 10 people, the median 50 and the mean 200.

Contact us for [Community of Practice support](#).

Factoid #4. There are 5 core skills in a KM team



The survey contains a section on KM team size, reporting links, and skillsets. We offered participants seven typical KM skillsets, and asked them to rank the make-up of their KM team against these skills, giving highest priority to the skills most common in their teams.

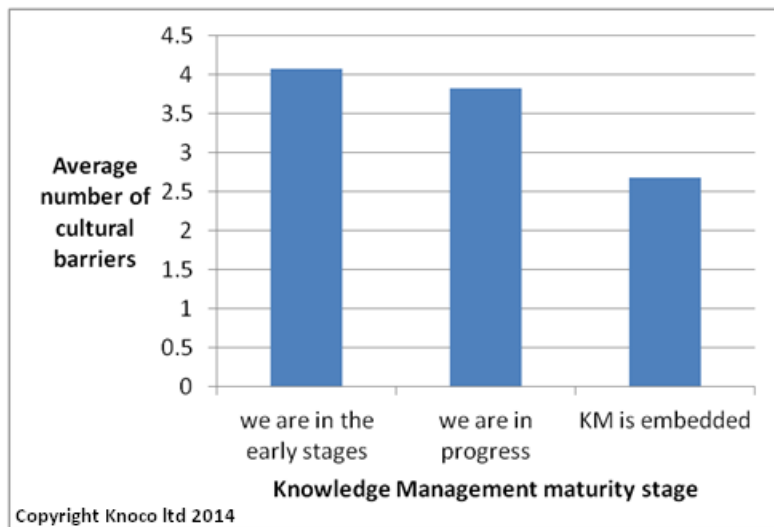
The bar chart above shows the number of times each skillset was chosen as "highest ranking". 5 skills are ranked highly, and are common across most of the organisational sectors. These skills are

- Information Technology skills,
- Information Management and Library skills,
- Change Management skills,
- Facilitation skills, and
- The basic skills of the organisation itself (legal skills for legal firms, military skills for military organisations, and so on).

These five skills can be considered the core skillset of a KM team, even though the relative priority of the five changes from one type of organisation to another.

We can help [build](#) and [train](#) your KM team. [Contact us](#) to find out how

**Factoid #5. Embedded KM means a supportive culture**



The survey contains a section on the [cultural barriers](#) and enablers to Knowledge Management, and in one question the participants were asked to identify, from a range of possible cultural issues, those which have proven to be barriers. The number of identified barriers is a rough measure of the complexity and difficulty of the organisational learning culture.

The survey looks at how these barriers vary with geography and with other factors, and the plot above shows the link between the number of cultural barriers, and the maturity of Knowledge Management. The plot suggests that the barriers are fewest where KM is most fully embedded.

This may be interpreted in three ways: either KM is easy to embed where the culture is most supportive, or embedding KM requires culture change, or embedded KM acts to change the culture.

[Learn more about the cultural barriers](#) in your own organisation.

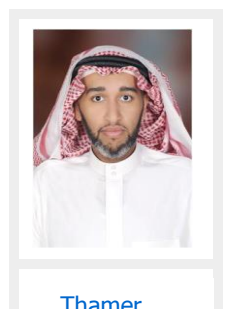
## What else does the survey tell us?

As well as the 5 results discussed here, the survey report contains an additional 44 charts and 29 tables of data. These show the following results:

- The maturity of KM across the world, across business sectors, and by company size.
- The length of time it takes to reach KM maturity.

- The main reasons why people give up on KM.
- Typical KM budgets and how they vary with company size.
- Typical KM team sizes and how they vary with company size.
- The skills within KM teams, and where they report.
- The focus areas, business drivers and strategies for KM across business sectors.
- The benefits delivered through KM, in dollar terms, and intangibles.
- Business metrics impacted by KM.
- How KM is embedded, and the impact on value.
- KM technologies, their function, use and value.
- Enterprise content management.
- KM processes, their function, use and value.
- The main KM governance elements in use.
- The most common barriers and enablers for KM.
- The effectiveness of various KM metrics and incentives.
- The main cultural issues and where they prevail.
- The popularity and effectiveness of Best Practice approaches, how they work, what value they add.
- The popularity and effectiveness of Lesson learned approaches, how they work, what value they add.
- The popularity and effectiveness of CoP approaches, how they work, what value they add.

## Knoco KSA



Thamer

We are pleased to welcome [Knoco Saudi Arabia](#) to the global Knoco brand.

[Alabbadi](#)  
Knoco KSA

Knoco is represented in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by LE; a limited liability company established with the aim of being the leading Saudi Intellectual Capital Development Organization.

Thamer Alabbadi is the LE CEO, who focused his career in executing the Saudi Arabia National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan (NSTIP) communication and information security tracks. During his years of experience, he participated, managed and led multiple strategic initiatives to Research, Develop and Commercialize (RDC) NSTIP outcomes. These enabled him to build capacity in the areas of customer and international relationship management, strategy planning and execution, policy formulation, portfolio, programs and project management, market analysis and organization development.

Alongside his outstanding national achievements on Intellectual Wealth management and investment through building and sustaining a Culture of Innovation and Organization Excellence, he is able to draw on global expertise and methodology from Knoco Ltd in delivering innovative knowledge management solutions to accelerate the movement of Saudi Arabia organizations towards a Knowledge Based Economy

Contact Knoco Saudi Arabia at [thamer@knoco.com](mailto:thamer@knoco.com) to learn about the knowledge management consulting services available to you in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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