



Knoco wishes all our clients, friends, and colleagues the compliments of the (northern hemisphere) winter season. The theme of this issue is Knowledge Management roles - what KM roles are needed, and what do they entail?

Knowledge Management Roles

Knowledge Management, like any other management system, involves roles and responsibilities. People need to know what is expected of them in KM, and there will be some people with specific roles and accountabilities they need to deliver against. In a mature Knowledge Management framework, we see three chains of accountability (see picture), each with associated roles.

Ownership, and maintenance of the company knowledge base is the accountability of the functional organisation (red). The functional organisation looks after the communities of practice and is home to the subject matter experts.

The line organisation (blue) is accountable for application of the knowledge in the work of the business, and for creation of new knowledge. In the line organisation we find the Knowledge Managers and Knowledge Engineers.

The central KM team, (green) is responsible for implementing and operating the Knowledge Management framework.

The KM team

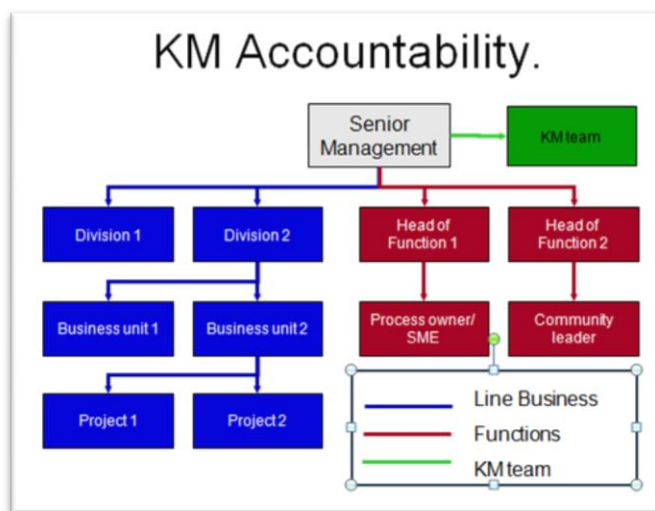
During the implementation stage, KM is a project, set up to implement change in the organization, and to move the organisation to a state where KM is embedded as part of the business. Like any project, there are roles and accountabilities associated with delivering the project objectives. These include the following;

leads the implementation team and manages the budget. Their accountability is clear. They are accountable to deliver the project objectives, within the agreed time frame and to the agreed cost and standard. Choosing the right person for this role is also very important. The KM project leader needs to be a respected member of the organisation, with a history of delivering organisational change.

In anything other than a very small company, the KM project leader will need a **KM project team**.

The size of the team, and the specific roles within the team, will vary from company to company. You may need somebody on the team with a communication role, accountable for making sure that communications to the wider organisation are timely and relevant. You may need somebody on the team accountable for coordinating a KM

community of practice. You may need somebody on the team accountable for ensuring the technology suite is complete. If you are looking to implement



KM project leader, or Chief Knowledge Officer.

The role of the KM project leader is an absolutely crucial one. This person delivers KM implementation,

through the use of pilot projects, there will also be clear accountabilities related to pilot project delivery. It all depends very much on what you need to do, to get knowledge management up and running.

Sponsor. The sponsor is the person to whom the KM project leader reports. The sponsor acts as the internal customer for KM implementation, on behalf of the organisation. They set the agenda for change, they give the mandate for change, and they represent the project at the decision-making level of the organisation. They are accountable for providing the budget, for agreeing the objectives of the project, and providing guidance and high level support so that these objectives are delivered.

The sponsor can make use of a **steering team** of senior players, whose role is to ensure that the knowledge management framework that the implementation team designs is fully compatible with existing business structures. For example, you might have the head of IT, the head of HR, and the head of operations on your steering team. Their accountability is to steer the final KM framework so that it fits seamlessly with existing business structures.

When implementation is over, the role of the KM team changes. They now monitor and maintain the KM framework, updating it if necessary, providing support to knowledge workers in the business and the communities.



KM roles in the business and projects

If the business units and the projects are accountable for delivering against company knowledge management expectations, then somebody has to drive or manage that. Ultimately the business unit leader or project manager is accountable for KM, just as they are for any other discipline, but they usually delegate this to a specific role.

This could be the role of the **KM champion** or knowledge manager for a business unit, to promote, facilitate, guide and measure the application of knowledge management within that particular business.

Or in a project, it could be the role of the **project knowledge manager**, or learning engineer, who owns and manages the project KM plan, tracks actions against the plan, and facilitate and quality controls the use of existing knowledge and capture of new knowledge

KM roles in the functions and CoPs

The functions and the communities work across the business units and are accountable for looking after the corporate knowledge. Again, the heads of the functions have overall accountability, but they usually delegate knowledge management to the subject matter experts and the community leaders.

Each **subject matter expert** (SME) maintains the corporate knowledge base for their particular topic, making sure that the organisation is competent in the topic. Ideally they look after training, reference material, best practices and company standards related to the topic.

The **community of practice leaders** work with the SMEs to build the learning and sharing networks through which good practice is identified, shared, improved and applied. They do this through coaching, through influence and through networking.

Building a KM team

By Ian Corbett

Collectively, the Knoco team has been involved in many KM implementations spanning a wide variety of business sectors and types of organization, and the common denominator to successfully sustaining the basis for KM lies in adding value. Without it, a KM team will struggle. Commonly however, people assume that implementing KM is "so simple that anyone can do it" and as a result, pick the wrong team.

In our experience successful KM implementations are driven by sponsors who take a fundamentally different view. From the outset their focus is to build their KM team with the right capabilities and skills to identify and deliver learning opportunities that add value. This demands more than simply understanding the business or operating environment.

KM is commonly seen as a much needed change process, but teams commonly do not bring the level of experience and skill in change management that

one might expect because of the perception that "anyone can do this". However, even more crucially this simplistic perspective often results in the team lacking an even more fundamental capability – that of creative problem solving.

Sadly when this is encountered it heralds an all too familiar scenario:

1. An inability to properly understand the users learning needs
2. A lack of capability to creatively design innovative learning processes to find solutions
3. The delivery of limited KM value
4. Progressive loss of buy-in and support
5. Failure and ultimate collapse of KM strategy
6. Ineffective change management
7. Dissolution of the KM team.

Building the right KM team to drive a KM implementation is one of the most critical tasks a project leader must deliver on. Frequently Knoco are brought in and asked to advise on building a KM team only to find that appointments have either already been made or people have been earmarked for a

key role (often for the wrong reasons). This makes it harder for us to help.

From experience, successful KM teams thrive on diversity. Bringing together an appropriate mix of work style preferences to enable creative problem solving is critical to success. Ideally this means that a team should have people with the ability to identify critical questions, people who can research and understand the knowledge needs, people who can translate ideas into very practical, efficient learning solutions, and people who with the skill to execute them.

As KM teams are commonly small, project leaders and sponsors need to seriously consider which of these aspects is critical to identifying and delivering value to the organization, and then make sure that these form part of the core capabilities of the team they put in place. In the case of less experienced teams, this will require specific training and development to nurture the much needed skill set. We can help with this training, or can advise beforehand on KM team selection.

Welcome to Knoco Hungary

We wish a warm welcome to our new Knoco franchise colleagues from Hungary. Tibor (left) and Balint (right)

work with Poziteam.hu, and have taken a franchise which will initially focus on training, but ultimately will extend to other aspects of knowledge management consultancy in this thriving and growing business region.



Welcome to Knoco Denmark

We also wish a warm welcome to our new Knoco franchise colleague in Denmark. Jens Øjvind Nielsen.

Jens Øjvind has been consulting in HR and organizational learning for many years, and sees an increase in interest in knowledge management within Danish organizations.

We look forward to working with Jens Øjvind to build and serve the Danish KM market.



KM in Egypt A report from KM Egypt, 2010

In September, we took part in KM Egypt 2010, a major conference in Cairo sponsored by the Egyptian government. This very well

attended conference was also streamed live on the Internet. Topics included the knowledge economy, KM implementation, and talent management. Nick spoke on KM pilots, and "what KM can learn from air conditioning".

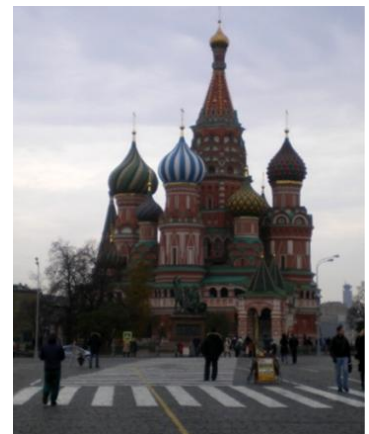
[Contact Nick](#) for copies of his presentations.



KM in Russia A report from KM Russia, 2010

Knowledge management is in the early stages in Russia. We were privileged to be invited to speak at KM Russia 2010 – one of the first KM conferences in the country. There was considerable interest from all

participants, and some stories of early success from companies such as Lukoil, Rosneft and SpareBank. The attending companies agreed to set up a KM forum in Russia, and hopefully this will foster the development of KM in this exciting region. We hope to remain in touch with our new Russian friends as the KM industry develops.



KM in NATO A report from the NATO lessons learned conference

Our third conference this season was the [NATO lessons learned conference](#) in Lisbon in October. Here, 200 lessons learned practitioners from NATO and the NATO member countries met to discuss the thorny

topic of "Lessons Identified to Lessons Learned".

This is an issue that many organizations, in public and private sectors, are grappling with. We heard some excellent stories of tactical learning from the military, but still a challenge in getting the more strategic lessons into action and embedded into processes and procedures.

Material on the NATO Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre can be found online at their [website](#), including the excellent [Lessons Learned handbook](#).



Push and Pull in KM

One of our core approaches in Knoco is to address both Push and Pull in Knowledge Management - push being the transfer of knowledge driven by supply (eg speculative publishing, or loading material to a database or wiki), and pull being the transfer of knowledge driven by demand (eg asking a question on a forum, or searching an Intranet).

The ideal KM system runs push and pull in parallel, though many companies make the mistake of planning their sharing (push) in more detail than planning their pulling.

That's why we were pleased when we recently saw a

Who can I learn from?	What can I learn from them?	How can I learn it?
Me	What I know from my own experiences	Reflection Journaling Blogging
My friends (personal network)	What they know from their own experiences	Informal conversation
My community of practice	Collective experience of a practice area	Q&A forums Community k-base (wiki?) Community blog
My project team	Collective experience of a task or project	After Action Review Retrospect Team k-base Team blog
Company SMEs	Company recommended practices Distilled company experience	Coaching Training Company k-base (wiki?)
Whole company	General company experience	Lessons database Peer Assist Knowledge Handovers Case study/history/stories

table in [this blog post](#) on KM at Goddard, which focused on identifying the sources of knowledge, and how these might be accessed. This acts almost like a Knowledge Management Plan for an individual.

We have built on the Goddard table to produce a

table of our own, shown above. You will almost certainly have to customise this for your own context, but you will find this a useful table when driving and structuring Knowledge Pull in your organisation.

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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