

Creating the Future: "Managing Knowledge" Newsletter No. 4: March 2001

The Creative World

Innovation and creativity, and information and knowledge management will be at the core of business, government and society in the 21st century

1. Introduction

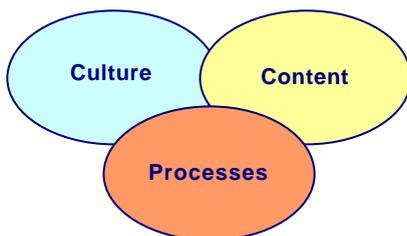
At a recent national conference for Information Professionals, both information and knowledge management were considered. Some of the major points presented were:

- Information is a commodity with "information users" readily able to access it
- Information users themselves are becoming knowledge providers
- Work is continually moving from "manual-to-mental" work
- Knowledge is both explicit and tacit - tacit knowledge (information "stored by the individual") can be captured by organisations for their benefit
- Knowledge is a combination of information, experience, skills and attitude ie Knowledge equals Information + (Experience x Skills x Attitude)
- Information professionals in organisations will facilitate the access to useable knowledge that "provides answers" - an outcomes orientation.

2. Key Links in the Knowledge Management Chain

Organisations that are focusing on effective knowledge management will consider at least two drivers: *an urgency to innovate and short time frames to respond to marketplace changes.*

Three core elements will be critical for the effective capture and application of knowledge:



Culture:

The skills needed to manage knowledge include technology literacy and relationship management. Knowledge can be used as an influencer on cultural change.

Content:

There are three types of knowledge that people will require to undertake their roles: i) internal organisation knowledge, ii) supply chain knowledge and iii) market knowledge eg business intelligence www.ewatch.com.

Processes:

These are the business processes, knowledge management practices and information technologies used by the organisation.

3. Building Knowledge Management

Creating the knowledge environment will require effective working interdependencies between functional areas eg different groups working together on a project (project based organisations) and cross-functional teams addressing business process improvement.

Building "personal electronic libraries" may become a preferred method of knowledge management. Some organisations are linking knowledge sharing with performance management.

Information service providers in medium-to-large organisations ie Libraries and Information Centres, will be reinventing themselves as information counsellors, information consultants and knowledge therapists.

These providers will think and behave differently in the future, focussing on the organisation's outcomes, and the provision of information solutions to assist in the achievement of those outcomes.

They will understand both the business and cultural landscape of the organisation. They will package their information and knowledge products differently.

4. Tapping into Tacit Knowledge

Clare Hart, CEO of the US based Factiva Company (a Dow -Jones and Reuters company www.factiva.com) and a keynote speaker at the conference, commented on the creative economy concept and the associated tapping into "the stuff inside peoples' heads".

There are several US organisations currently using software (*automated profiling with e-mail*) that captures and filters knowledge that is shared by individuals who are using the organisation's e-mail facility.

The software is installed on the e-mail system and can index the person (*expertise source*) and the profiles (*topics*) involved in the electronic communication exchanges. This enables the bringing together of common areas of expertise to support an organisation.

There are, for Australasia at least, both privacy and cultural impacts that would need to be addressed with the implementation of such a system.

Key Points

- Knowledge is both explicit and tacit
- Knowledge equals:
Information + (Experience x Skills x Attitude)
- Knowledge Management is the interaction of:
 - Culture
 - Content
 - Processes
- Critical for effective knowledge strategies and processes will be the alignment to the organisation's strategies and processes