

A manager is responsible for the application of knowledge

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Module Ten: Tips for Success

You need all the help you can get when trying to create a change as great as the one involved with implementing knowledge management within your organization. Items that help to increase success may include a person in charge of knowledge management at your organization. This is just one example. In this module, you will learn the tips to successful implementation of knowledge management at the workplace.



About the Chief Knowledge Officer

Giving someone a fulltime job in knowledge management is a definite advantage. If your company is serious about knowledge management, they may like the idea of a Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO). CKOs will keep knowledge management in the forefront of the business. They are in touch with the business strategies on a day-to-day basis. The role of a CKO in the industry is not clearly defined so their role may change from company to company.



The role of a CKO can be temporary until the knowledge management is fully in place. Remember that this could take several years to achieve. Their role may be permanent and oversee areas like learning and education.

If the organization decides to hire from the outside, the new CKO will have the knowledge about systems, but will not have the cultural understanding, increasing implementation time of the knowledge management project. Internal promotions to CKO address the cultural aspect and can exploit established connections with senior management. On the other hand, being internal could leave the CKO blinded by culture and unable to see their faults.

Hiring an external resource and pairing them with an internal employee could resolve this problem and move the project forward. Of course, they would have to get along well.

Here is a quick list of what a CKO does:

- Identify gaps
- Benchmark performance standards
- Integrate need throughout the organization
- Manage resources from various areas within organization
- Develop strategies
- Build support
- Collaborate
- Leverage strengths within the current culture
- Create sharing and learning environment
- Practice change management
- Demonstrate results
- Recognize and champion success

Knowledge Management Skill Checklist

Here is a brief list of skill needed to manage a knowledge management project.

- Must have a passion for knowledge management
- Must be able to constantly share the message of knowledge management
- Must have an entrepreneurial spirit and own the program
- Self-starter
- Risk taking
- Create new capabilities
- Change the way people think
- Change the way people work



- Must be able to persuade
- Excellent written and verbal skills
- Must be IT savvy

These skills apply to whoever is leading the knowledge management project. These skills are critical to the success of the project.

The Knowledge Management Imperative

Presenting a plan or strategy without any energy or reason for change may get your project on the stove but on the backburner. There must be a healthy level of urgency to getting this project underway. Here are a couple of steps you can take to create a burning platform.



- Get your stakeholders to a healthy level of survival anxiety. Avoid over dramatizing the point as you may raise skepticism. Present information and facts that point to a choice that has to be made. Let them come to their own conclusion. Here is an example:
 - If we continue on this path we will lose X amount of dollars.
- Make knowledge management the choice for a solution. Here is an example:
 - If we go with knowledge management, we will increase profits by X percent.

In any case, the burning platform formula is this:

- Present the realistic dilemma
- Provide facts and figures
- Present the choices
- Pause and let them think it about it
- Be prepared to answer questions

The Hype Curve

The hype cycle consists of five phases.

- **Trigger phase** is when something new is introduced, it creates a buzz, and there is a high level of interest in the item.
- **Peak of expectations** is when the hype is build up to the point where the employees will start generating unrealistic expectations.
- **Trough of disillusionment** is when the employees are disappointed because the item did not meet their inflated expectations.
- **Slope of enlightenments** is when employees experiment with the item and understand the benefits and practicality of the item.
- **Plateau of productivity** is when the benefits of the item are generally accepted. The item stabilizes and is ready for enhancements and evolution.



Understanding these phases will help to manage the unrealistic peaks and the depths of the trough. Here are some things to think of when marketing your knowledge management project.

- Avoid sensationalizing it or making big promises you cannot keep.
- Set expectations ahead of time. Let them know this will be a work in progress and will take time to perfect.
- Communicate often and collect feedback.
- Publish the benefits to help push the employees to the plateau phase

Barriers and Helpers to Success



The biggest challenge you will face is the culture. If your culture is open to change and embrace learning and sharing this will help you move your project along. On the other hand, if your culture is closed and resistant to change, you will find it challenging to implement your project. Here are some things to consider as you navigate your culture and change:

- Organizational culture is tacit and deeply rooted
- Culture is not easily changed
- Culture is complex and difficult to define
- Analyze your culture and determine the tolerance for change

- Defining knowledge management could be a challenge in certain cultures

Here are some ways to overcome those barriers and achieve success.

- Learn to understand your culture and work within it
- Review the organization's history from a member's point of view
- Listen to the stories told within the organization. This will give you a sense of what the culture tends to assume
- Approach middle management. They are the gate to the general employee population
- Create a reward system for knowledge management
- Champion success stories throughout the organization
- View change as three stages
 - Current, transition, and future state
- Develop a plan for the transition state and cater to how the organization adapts to change
- Provide training early in the change process

Case Study

Joanna had too much on her plate. Her to-do list had grown a mile a minute. Joanna needed help to implement the new changes. Michael saw her struggle and offered to lighten her load. "What do you need?" He asked. Joanna gave him the condensed version of her dilemma. Michael nearly toppled over at the sound of her words. Michael had an 'aha moment' and drew out a plan that would save the day. Michael declared that they needed reinforcements. Joanna and Michael gathered their personal army of coworkers. Michael laid out the plan. Joanna watched all of the pieces come in place. A complete change had been made in no time flat. Michael and Joanna had accomplished their mission and crossed the finish line with coworkers at their sides.