The Knowledge Management Fieldbook

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

All the tools and techniques you need to organize, manage, and exploit world-class knowledge management systems in your organization.

- A practical, real-world KM framework from two of the world's leading consultants.
- Covers the entire KM lifecycle: information gathering, knowledge sharing, metrics, and more.
- Assess your KM strengths and weaknesses with the authors' exclusive Knowledge Management Diagnostic!

The Knowledge Management Fieldbook is the hands-on guide for every manager who wants to implement knowledge management — and reap the full rewards. Presented within a comprehensive, yet easy-to-use framework, it offers techniques to streamline every stage of the knowledge management deployment process, from information gathering to knowledge sharing, to measuring the organization's knowledge assets, and beyond.

The book contains case studies based on the authors' original interviews with more than 50 world-class organizations; as well as a structured process for thinking about knowledge management, designed to help managers build a detailed action agenda. The authors' Knowledge Management Diagnostic is an invaluable tool for identifying organizational knowledge strengths and weaknesses; the book also contains extensive practical exercises and action agendas for transforming KM from theory into practical competitive advantage.

For every manager and strategist concerned with generating organizational knowledge and using it more effectively.

About the Author

Wendi R. Bukowitz and **Ruth L. Williams** are recognized leaders in the field of knowledge management. They founded The Next Generation Research Group at Arthur Andersen, conducting pioneering research on how knowledge management affects leadership, innovation, collaboration, performance measurement, and organizational structure. Their research partners included such leading organizations as Motorola, Shell Oil, The Mutual Group, and The Dow Chemical Company. They are now Directors at PriceWaterhouseCoopers' Intellectual Asset Management practice.

Preface

It was the late spring of 1999, and the manuscript for *The Knowledge Management Fieldbook* was well along in the editorial process. We'd been writing about knowledge management—trading ideas, arguing strenuously, and experiencing occasional epiphanies—for more than a year. We felt pretty confident that we'd got it all hashed out, organized, and articulated, but we knew we were chasing a moving target. We just

didn't know how fast everything would change and how soon we were in for another intellectual shakeup. By the end of the summer, we had both joined PricewaterhouseCooper's Intellectual Asset Management practice and we found ourselves in the midst of heated conversations about the terminology we had used to talk about knowledge management. It's been a sobering lesson in just how important language can be.

Intellectual asset management is a subcategory of knowledge management which is concerned with a specific class of organizational knowledge. Not surprisingly, IAM practitioners, many of whom interact regularly with both attorneys and financial professionals, are rather particular about how they define the term "intellectual asset." We realized, in looking back over what we had written in *The Knowledge Management Fieldbook*, that our own treatment of the term was less than rigorous. We are taking this opportunity afforded by the second printing of the Fieldbook to set things right.

In the first printing of the *Fieldbook* we used the term "knowledge-based assets" to refer to all those intangibles from which the organization derives value. You will see in this edition that we have very consciously replaced this with the terms "knowledge capital" or "intellectual capital." In the accounting and legal professions—disciplines from which KM practitioners borrowed the term—"asset" refers to something owned by the organization. As we note throughout the book, many of the most important sources of value for organizations—namely people and the knowledge they have in their heads—can never be owned by the organization. In fact, one of the greatest challenges of the KM practitioner is to find ways of deriving value from a resource that is not only not owned, but often ephemeral.

In this revised edition, we reserve the term "intellectual assets," or IAs, for those forms of knowledge that the organization has defined, codified, described, or otherwise articulated. Examples of IAs include computer software, business processes and methodologies, contractual customer or supplier agreements, knowledge bases, data, reports, and presentations, as well as patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets. IAs are also often referred to as "explicit knowledge" because they have been transformed from individual knowledge into something more concrete, such as a paper or electronic document or a set of rules or code. But there is an additional distinction between IAs and intellectual capital (IC)—organizational ownership. An organization owns its IAs, even if it doesn't own the knowledge that produced them. For example, organizations own software code written by employees, but they do not own the brains of those employees. Sometimes, as in the case of patents and other legally protected forms of IAs known as intellectual property (IP), the organization actually does own the underlying knowledge, or at least its application or expression.

This brings us to one of the core differences between KM and IAM, both of which seek to derive value from knowledge. First, KM is concerned with all forms of knowledge including knowledge which is unarticulated and uncodified. KM looks at the full spectrum of intellectual capital available to the organization. For example, KM might facilitate communities of practice—informal groups within organizations that are often responsible for the transfer of knowledge through tacit, or at least uncodified, means. Knowledge management requires an enormous cultural change component designed to create an environment in which information is shared freely within the organization.

IAM, on the other hand, deals almost entirely with articulated and codified knowledge and is therefore concerned with the conversion of IC into IA or IP. Not all IC can or should be converted into IA. Tacit knowledge is one example, which is one reason why tacit knowledge is almost impossible to transfer on a broad scale. When knowledge is articulated or codified, it often loses nuances of meaning that rely on individual interpretation and use. Furthermore, from a strategic . perspective, some knowledge may not be worth articulating and codifying. Identifying which IC should be converted into IAs is one of the main tasks of intellectual asset management.

Converting IC into IA has several advantages:

- It is easier to transfer articulated and codified knowledge from one individual to another or from one to many.
- The organization is better able to retain knowledge in the event that its creator departs.
- The organization is able to trade or sell IAs irrespective of the individuals who originally developed them.
- The organization can claim ownership rights to articulated and codified knowledge and is in a better position to protect that knowledge legally should it decide that this is desirable.

KM is also concerned with codification of IC into IA, but the rationale for doing so is to achieve the first two objectives—transfer and retention. IAM takes another tack—it homes in on ownership and safeguarding of knowledge in order to extract value. However, achieving such organizational IAM nirvana often requires broadscale behavioral changes, and this is where KM approaches work hand in glove with those of IAM.

Like the knowledge management process presented in this book, IAM examines the alignment of an organization's entire portfolio of intellectual assets, acquiring, divesting, and leveraging these assets to achieve strategic goals. In fact, IAM is an intriguing place for organizations to begin their KM efforts for several reasons. First, IAM borrows a wide spectrum of tools and techniques from the practice of IP, which deals with the most concrete form of intellectual capital. Patents, trademarks, servicemarks, copyrights, and trade secrets are legally defined assets. As a result, their boundaries have been delineated and value can be placed on them. Even brand and corporate reputation are generally understood among business people as important levers for creating and sustaining value with stakeholders, and techniques for arriving at a financial valuation are in use. IP measurement and valuation approaches suggest a set of tools that help IAM visualize, measure, and manage assets that are currently outside the traditional scope of IP, bringing the same level of methodological rigor and value assessment to these important, but elusive assets.

IAM can also be an easy way to begin "selling" KM to senior management. While KM programs often struggle over how to bring home the bacon, IAM presents the organization with a series of early wins. Donating a languishing patent to an educational institution can yield a significant tax benefit; going after delinquent licensees can add dollars to the bottom line; being able to articulate a portfolio of technology assets can improve competitive position in joint venture or partnership negotiations; preventing employees from walking out the door with know-how that is essential to the business and setting up shop with a competitor fences off desirable markets for a longer period of time.

Finally, attention to ownership of intellectual assets is on the rise as organizations come to grips with the true locus of value creation. Many are seeking ways to legally protect assets, such as business processes and methods, that were once considered outside the realm of IP. Visualizing, organizing, and otherwise articulating this intellectual capital are first steps on the road to legal protection, and IAM provides the tools for moving the process along.

The Knowledge Management Fieldbook is a book about KM, not IAM. It is aimed at helping business people understand the implications of this new world in which we live, where we are required to manage what we cannot see. Throughout the book we ask people to look through a new management lens, one that we hope will encourage them to see their opportunities in an altered light. But KM is a field that is still finding itself—looking for sure footholds in a strange landscape. We believe that IAM is one of those footholds.

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PricewaterhouseCoopers

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Youngblood:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for all of us. The book The Knowledge Management Fieldbook seemed to be making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The book The Knowledge Management Fieldbook is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to get your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship while using book The Knowledge Management Fieldbook. You never sense lose out for everything when you read some books.

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