



Knowledge Management

Asia-Pacific

CAPITALISE ON YOUR INTELLECTUAL ASSETS

Culturing lawyers in knowledge management

The key function of a law department is to apply legal knowledge to the business objectives of its organisation. Its goal should be to provide that knowledge in the form of high quality, consistent legal advice in an efficient manner. This can be a challenge when the law department is large or geographically dispersed. Knowledge management has increasingly become the focus of law departments seeking to improve their performance.

For a law department, knowledge management is the identification, capture, dissemination and use of knowledge possessed by its in-house lawyers. Typically thought of in terms of technology, knowledge management also includes programs designed to facilitate knowledge sharing between lawyers. Beyond developing systems and programs, knowledge management also extends to building a culture and organizational structure to support and facilitate knowledge sharing.

For many years, law departments have used a wide range of technology tools to capture and disseminate knowledge, such as databases, matter management systems and document management systems. In recent years some law departments have implemented intranets to share knowledge among in-house lawyers and their business clients. Today, there are even more sophisticated new technologies available, such as enterprise information portals and context-based searching tools.

With a wide choice of technology tools available, the real work is now in addressing the development of a knowledge management culture and organisation. These areas, however, are often ignored – to the detriment of the law department's knowledge management initiatives.

The first step in knowledge management is to develop a knowledge management strategy that aligns with the law department's business strategy. Put simply,

A law department should not aim to document every nuance of a lawyer's experience, rather facilitate the human interaction between the expert and others

the knowledge management strategy should be to introduce initiatives that help lawyers deliver high quality, consistent legal counsel to the organisation in an efficient manner. The knowledge management strategy should define the scope of knowledge to be managed; address cultural issues; recommend an appropriate organisational structure to facilitate knowledge management; and describe the technology vision for the knowledge management system.

Once a law department has developed its knowledge management strategy, it should take a phased approach to implementation, starting with simple solutions that demonstrate high value to the law department and its clients, and lay the foundations for more sophisticated knowledge management.

The first part of this article reviews the elements of knowledge management – scope of knowledge, culture, organisation and technology. The second part

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Indian KM firm launches government workshops

Total Knowledge Management Pvt. Ltd. (TKM), a KM firm based out of Bangalore, India, has recently conducted two KM training programmes for the Department of Sericulture of the Government of Tamilnadu.

According to the company, the five-day courses, which were attended by 42 senior government officials, are the first KM training programmes conducted for an Indian government department. The programmes are being organised under the SERI 2000 project sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) in partnership with the Ministry of Textiles of Government of India and the State Departments of Sericulture. Charles Geiger, head of the Bangalore office of the SDC, commended all involved for the pioneering initiatives.

R. Girija, programme head of SERI 2000, hoped the training would help the Government of Tamilnadu cope effectively with the rapid changes in the external environment and serve as a model for sericulture departments in other Indian states to follow. TKM says that its KM programmes cover both the personal and organisational dimensions of knowledge generation, sharing and application. Considerable emphasis is also placed on facilitating behavioural change. Dr. Jagabandhu Acharya, Chief Executive Officer of TKM said: "Our training is unique in that it balances the provision of information on knowledge management with tools and techniques that can be applied by participants in their day to day work." TKM says that over the next year, it will carry out further KM programmes for Tamilnadu's government involving 450 officials. **KM**

Singapore e-business learning suite online

Knowledge Platform, a Singapore-based e-learning solutions provider, launched its E-Business 101 suite of online courses last month.

According to the company, E-Business 101 is a 12-hour self-study programme of five courses to be taken and assessed entirely online. It uses a uniquely visual style and an organic way of representing complex subject and processes, says Knowledge Platform.

"Managing the transition to the Knowledge-based Economy is a key priority for Singapore organisations," said Knowledge Platform's CEO Mahboob Mahmood in an interview on Channel NewsAsia. "That's why our flagship product is a suite of courses on e-business."

Patrick Lambe, Chief Learning Officer of Knowledge Management stated in *The Business Times*: "As e-learning develops – driven largely by the new economy demand for fast and pervasive change - it increasingly draws on knowledge management and performance support tools and techniques, with structured courseware playing the role of focus, stimulus and launching pad."

"E-business change poses great challenges. E-learning will not completely solve those challenges, because only determination, skill and focus can do that. But intelligently used, it promises to scale our people's capabilities far more than we can currently deliver," said Mr. Lambe. **KM**

Arriya to develop wireless access for Japanese business

Arriya Solutions, Inc., a Japanese provider of mobile Internet products, has announced a partnership with US-based ThinAirApps, Inc.

According to Arriya, it will use the ThinAir Server as a core component of the Arriya UBO 1.2 mobile applications platform. This will provide the first open, extensible solution for real-time wireless access in Japan to KM enterprise groupware such as Microsoft Exchange ServerR and LotusR Domino Server, and from wireless handheld, Internet-enabled mobile phones and even Internet-based car navigation systems, says Arriya.

Arriya also says that it is developing localised features, including coordinate-based mapping, print-to-fax, voicemail attachments and also applications for Java-enabled mobile handsets with the ThinAir Server. "Until now, wireless applications in Japan have been built primarily for entertainment and consumer purposes," notes Andrew Breen, vice president of business development at ThinAirApps. "Together, ThinAirApps and Arriya are building technologies to further the possibilities for Japan's mobile workforce."

"Our partnership with ThinAirApps represents a major step in our growth," says Punnamas Vichitkulwongsa, Arriya's founder and interim CEO. "ThinAir technology has been proven through deployments at so many major companies around the world, and their mobile email access application alone has more than 40,000 users. ThinAirApps has also been quick to understand the imbalance in the mobile enterprise marketplace in Japan. Demand among our existing network of systems integration and sales partners for these kinds of tools has been strong; we therefore expect to launch aggressively and quickly establish significant share in the enterprise market."

ThinAirApps, Inc. is a pioneer in wireless information access software with a focus on enabling mobile applications. ThinAir technology is being used by over 100 enterprises and is headquartered in New York City.

Arriya Solutions, Inc. focuses on key strategic vertical markets and horizontal applications for mobile business environments. It provides customized end-to-end mobile Internet solutions built on its Java-based Arriya UBO 1.2 platform. **KM**

Malay Senior Minister urges more knowledge education

The Malaysian education system must be revamped and revised to keep pace with the demands of the knowledge economy as the wealth creators of today are those with knowledge and the instruments to help translate that knowledge into wealth, according to Malaysian Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

"I'm not talking only about Malays, but about all our younger generation. If we don't keep pace, we will lose the lead position."

Mr. Lee remarked upon the marked progress made by the Malays in the last half century, and said that he did not see any falling back in the desire of young Malays to catch up in the world economy. He also observed that the Malay community's progress would not have been possible without its own effort.

However, he also noted: "As against that, there are signs that some parents want their children in madrasahs."

Indeed, according to figures provided by *The Straits Times* the number of pupils in Malaysia who enrolled for Primary one education at the Islamic religious schools has risen from 303 in 1996 to 502 last year.

Mr. Lee argued that it was better to send Malay children to ordinary schools and have the madrasah education in the afternoon as in the past.

"Whole day madrasah will not help them catch up with the rapid pace of change," he said.

The government could provide the facilities but the effort to meet the challenge must be made by the Malays themselves, he said. "The government just can't do it without the Malays' determination to succeed in education."

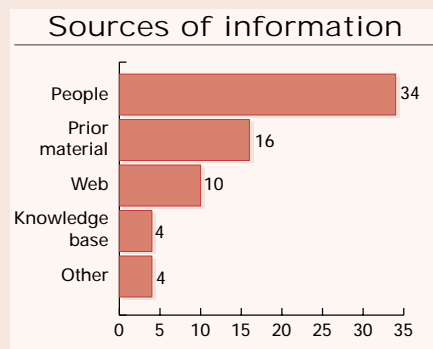
He attributed this determination to the rapid economic transformation and Malay parents realising that their children could not compete in the job market if they did not receive the same education as others.

Malays' interaction with neighbours of different races also played a part according to Mr. Lee. "If you see your neighbours getting a tutor, making their children do their homework and switching off the television, then you begin to ask yourself: What will happen to my son or daughter?"

"I think that was the best learning that could have happened, not by any campaign but by actual real-life interaction," he said. **KM**

Study: humans still the primary source for information

A recent US study has found that even in companies with highly developed knowledge management infrastructures, people first looked to other people for answers to everyday business problems.

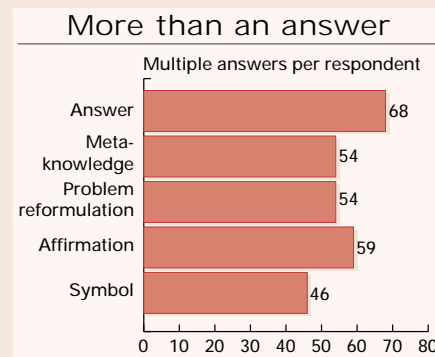


Robert Cross, of the Boston University School of Management, surveyed 40 managers from the business consulting branch of a large multi-national accounting firm to find out how these professionals sought solutions and what kinds of answers they received.

This sample was chosen specifically because it represented an extreme example with which to explore infor-

mation seeking behaviour. At the time of the study, industry analysts had declared this firm an exemplar in terms of internal knowledge management systems and initiatives with over 200 employees dedicated to continually updating its knowledge base.

Nevertheless, of the 40 respondents, 34 said that they had received critical information after having first approached other people, whereas only four said that the firm's extensive knowledge base provided such information.



Moreover, the study found that such personal contacts produced more than simply answers to queries. A significant

percentage of the study subjects were also directed to other sources for an answer ("metaknowledge"), given help in reformulating the problem, affirmed that they were on the right track and gained credibility and confidence from talking to a respected person ("symbol"). These four types of responses are unlikely to be captured explicitly in electronic documents which make up the heart of today's knowledge management systems.

"In contrast to the information processing literature's focus on transfer and assimilation of information, results show that when information is sought from people, benefits accrue that are important to both defining a solution and introducing the solution into diverse social contexts," noted Mr. Cross.

He concluded: "People need more than an answer in ambiguous problem domains and likely obtain such benefits from other people. This is not to say that technical solutions could not fulfill these needs – just that the current emphasis on declarative knowledge is over-placed." **KM**

Fuji Xerox tops in Japanese KM survey

In May, the Knowledge Management Society of Japan (KMSJ) announced the Fuji Xerox company as winner of Japan's Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises (MAKE) award.

The MAKE research programme seeks to identify organisations that are creating, sharing and using knowledge to become international leaders in the new e-business economy.

This was the first time that the MAKE study has been conducted in Japan. Knowledge management is a rather new concept to Japanese organisations, and according to the KMSJ there was no baseline for ranking Japanese enterprises. Therefore, based on the leading number of nominations and its composite score, the KMSJ declared Fuji Xerox the sole 2000 MAKE Japan Award Winner.

Fuji Xerox created policies, processes, systems and environments to facilitate a new way of knowledge working. The company's overriding intent has been to establish *ba* – places or opportunities that nourished people's optimal creativity, knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. This effort involved three elements.

First, believing that workers' knowledge is increased and their creativity inspired by interacting with

people different from themselves. The company offers employees at all levels paid social service sabbaticals and other chances to spend time beyond company walls.

Second, providing the first network and information systems equipped satellite offices in Japan to remove from workers' lives the stress of long commuting trips, to give employees more time to spend with their families and to encourage self-innovating work styles.

And finally, increasing the amount of direct interaction between workers and executives.

In 1988, Mr Yotaro Kobayashi, then president and now chairman of the board, hosted the first *talknade* sessions in which groups of about 250 employees met directly with Fuji Xerox senior executives. The employees frankly expressed concerns, asked questions and suggested creative changes to strategies, processes and policies; many improvements in such areas as communication and employee evaluation have emerged from these sessions. *Talknade* sessions now have been held many times throughout Japan, says the KMSJ.

From its origins in the "New Work Way" movement, Fuji Xerox's approach to knowledge has been

largely a strategic one focused on creating environments in which individual imagination and creativity gives birth to new knowledge that can then be shared among groups of workers – thus leading to group innovation. In fact, Fuji Xerox's new mission statement explicitly points to the role of knowledge in contributing positively to a diverse global community.

The knowledge performance dimensions, which form the MAKE framework, are found in all world-class knowledge enterprises according to the KMSJ. These dimensions included:

- success in establishing an enterprise knowledge culture management;
- support for managing knowledge;
- ability to develop and deliver knowledge-based goods/services;
- success in maximising the value of the enterprise's intellectual capital
- effectiveness of managing customer knowledge to increase loyalty/value.

These dimensions are seen as key drivers in creating and sustaining leading knowledge-based organisations. Besides Fuji Xerox, other top Japanese MAKE scale enterprises were Fujitsu, Kao, Eisai, Sony and IBM Japan.

For an executive summary of the 2000 MAKE Japan study, see: www.knowledgebusiness.com **KM**

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Culturing lawyers in knowledge management

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discusses the steps to successful knowledge management and some of the knowledge management initiatives that law departments could implement.

Part 1 – Elements of Knowledge Management

Scope of knowledge and Knowledge Management

In developing knowledge management initiatives that provide value to in-house lawyers and the organisation, the law department should first understand the knowledge to be captured and disseminated for re-use. This will help to define the scope and form of knowledge management initiatives. When first asked to define their knowledge needs, lawyers typically list case law, legislation, commentary, and precedent documents as their major requirements. Asking lawyers to take a wider view of the knowledge required to be well informed lawyers usually reveals the need for access to information about their organisation and the industries in which the organisation operates.

Explicit and tacit knowledge

In defining knowledge, lawyers should think in terms of explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is formal and systematic and can be easily communicated or shared – in procedures, steps and standards.¹ In a law department, this includes:

- precedents;
- best practice and model documents;
- legislation (and commentary);
- case law, commentary and interpretation;
- Business and industry information;
- checklists, methodologies and procedures;
- third party information, such as outside counsel, experts, judges and witnesses;
- financial information relating to matters.

In many law departments, the focus of knowledge management has been on the capture of explicit knowledge because it is easy to document. However, there has traditionally been little focus on facilitating the sharing of tacit knowledge.

Tacit knowledge is highly personal, hard to formalise and therefore difficult to communicate to others. It is knowledge that is so ingrained that it cannot be easily articulated.²

In a law department, this includes:

- skills and expertise of staff;
- client information;
- lessons learned from past matters and projects.

While it is hard to articulate, sharing tacit knowledge is the most valuable element of knowledge management to an organisation.

Technology or programme?

Once a law department has defined the different types of knowledge needed, it must consider the best means of delivering this knowledge. Technology tools, such as document databases, matter management systems and online services will be appropriate means of delivering a large amount of knowledge, particularly explicit knowledge. Specific technology tools used by law departments are discussed later in 'Knowledge Management Technology'.

Lawyers should also think beyond technology to human processes, particularly in the sharing of tacit knowledge. A law department should not aim to document every nuance of a lawyer's experience, rather facilitate the human interac-

tion between the expert and others. For example, technology can be used to provide a directory of expertise in an organisation (typically known as a "know-who" database). The real sharing of tacit knowledge will come through the human interaction between the expert and the person who has found that expert through the know-how system.

Developing communities of interest and training programmes are two examples of how to facilitate sharing of tacit knowledge among in-house lawyers. Common among large or global law departments, communities of interest are informal networks of in-house lawyers who may work in different practice areas or regions, but share an interest. The community of interest may focus on a business unit, an area of law or a region. The purpose of the community of interest is to enable lawyers to exchange ideas with their colleagues on a common topic. The result is that a law department harnesses its knowledge about that topic, enabling lawyers to take a consistent approach, eliminate duplication and ultimately, better serve the client.

Training programmes are also common among large law departments. Like the community of interest, the purpose is to ensure that lawyers take a consistent approach to legal issues impacting the organisation. Training programmes are an important means of ensuring that knowledge about the organisation and how the law department handles matters is transferred to new lawyers.

In deciding on the scope and form of knowledge management initiatives, the law department should consider the value of the knowledge to the organisation versus the cost of making the knowledge available.

The knowledge pyramid (*Figure 1*) describes the concept of varying levels of knowledge used by a law department and the level of effort associated with managing that

Rewards should not just be financial. Often, recognition by one's peers is a highly effective incentive for knowledge sharing.

knowledge. At the bottom of the pyramid is the large amount of information used by the law department that is available in the public domain. Because this information is easy to find, and the law department has not added any value to it, limited time and resources should be dedicated to managing that it.

The middle tier is knowledge that the law department has created. This knowledge includes best practice documents, and advice or research on specific areas of law. Because this knowledge is useful and is only available through the law department, it should be maintained internally.

The top tier is the knowledge that is so unique or critical to the law department and the organisation that it must be carefully maintained. Precedent documents and policies are examples of this type of knowledge.

The Knowledge Analysis Model (*Figure 2*) demonstrates the steps a law department should take in identifying the form that a knowledge management initiative should take. Once a law department has identified the category of knowledge, including whether it is tacit or explicit, it assesses the value of the knowledge to the law department and then identifies the most appropriate initiative to deliver that knowledge.

Knowledge Management Culture
Building a culture that is conducive to knowledge sharing is key to successful knowledge

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Setting up a law firm KM system in Asia

A knowledge management system is more than just a technological tool – it includes important processes, people, and behaviours that allow an organisation to capture, share, develop and apply knowledge to its business processes, argues Noeleen Farrell of Johnson Stokes & Master, Hong Kong.

Across the world, organisations are realising that in order to remain competitive and thus ensure their survival, one of the key assets that they must invest in is managing and controlling the organisation's intellectual capital. Those organisations that have already invested in knowledge management are already realising the benefits that a good knowledge management system can deliver. Apart from making work processes more efficient, such benefits include better decision-making, faster response time for key decisions, and better client service, which provide a significant competitive advantage in overcrowded market-places such as Hong Kong.

Much has been said and written recently about the practice and importance of knowledge management itself (see e-law asia November 2000 and January/February 2001 issues). This article looks at some of the issues and practicalities involved in setting up a knowledge management system within an Asian law firm.

What is a knowledge management system?

A knowledge management system is more than just a technological tool. It includes the processes, people, and behaviours that allow an organisation to capture, share, develop and apply knowledge to its business processes. The success of a knowledge management system essentially depends upon how all these components fit and work together.

Do you need a knowledge management system?

In this 'Information Age', knowledge is more valuable than ever. This is particularly true for law firms where a law firm's success increasingly rests upon its technical know-how, problem-solving expertise, innovation, and being able to find, combine and apply the best skills available to address clients' needs. As a result, those lawyers who are successful in sharing knowledge both efficiently and effectively are able to compete most effectively in the marketplace.

Do any of these problems sound familiar to you?

- Is your intellectual capital literally "walking out of the door" every time an employee leaves?
- Are you struggling to keep up-to-date with relevant legal updates or concerned that you are using out-of-date information?
- Are you suffering from information overload or too little information?
- Are you "reinventing the wheel" a significant amount of the time?
- Do you find it difficult and time-consuming to find relevant documents or information or to connect with people who have the requisite knowledge?

If you are still grappling with these problems, it is time to start investing in a good knowledge man-

agement system to make it easier to capture, find and re-use sources of knowledge.

Step 1 – prepare a plan

Any good knowledge management system should start out with a clear, well thought out strategy. Detailed planning is absolutely essential. Too many knowledge management systems have just sprung into being without proper planning or a proper strategy. Without well thought-out pre-development work and a thorough understanding of the organisation, its systems, people and processes, considerable expense is liable to be spent on a system which will inevitably fail to deliver the benefits that were initially promised.

Such a knowledge management plan should provide for and consider the following:

(a) The knowledge audit: As part of the knowledge management strategy, it is essential that there is a thorough review of what knowledge the organisation possesses, what knowledge the organisation needs to achieve its business objectives, and where knowledge gaps in the organisation exist.

Generally, lawyers have a wealth of information and sources of knowledge (precedents, letters of advice, research memos, handbooks, telephone lists, etc.) already in their possession which are lying round the office buried in databases, libraries, dusty old files and peoples' heads, together with existing investments in other online databases, CDROMs etc. from which knowledge management could help release added value. It is important that these sources of knowledge are captured, organised, classified and centrally available to maximise their value.

If the organisation does not have the information or knowledge it needs to achieve its business objectives, it needs to decide how it will plug the gaps. It may be that the firm has to retrain existing staff, hire new people with the appropriate expertise and knowledge, or buy in the information from external providers (e.g. online databases) depending upon the circumstances.

(b) Expected benefits and timetable for delivery: Knowledge management initiatives should be pursued as part of the organisation's business strategy, for clearly identified benefits and not merely as an end in itself. Buy-in from senior management is imperative to the success of the knowledge management project, and hence a strong business case for knowledge management systems should be made, setting out how the knowledge management programme supports the organisation's strategy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, and when realistically these can be achieved.

The plan should aim to deliver some 'quick wins' as well as longer-term objectives to pacify the sceptics (of which there will no doubt be many).

(c) Resources: All too often organisations believe that knowledge management systems mean technology. While technology has an important role to play and is a powerful knowledge management

enabler, identifying and recruiting the right knowledge management team is arguably more important. The size of the team will clearly depend on the size and nature of the organisation, and the scale of the knowledge management project.

Organisations are recognising the need for a senior manager who has a good understanding of the business and its knowledge management needs to lead the knowledge management team. The knowledge manager should be supported, in the legal environment, by a team of specialist professional support lawyers, other knowledge workers and librarians, as well as a number of IT personnel and administrative staff.

The knowledge management team are a key component in the knowledge management process of ensuring that knowledge is captured, organised, disseminated and stored in the right manner, and ensuring that the content does not go "stale". The knowledge management team are responsible for providing knowledge support services, developing the various knowledge initiatives, and in ensuring that the knowledge management system is delivering the expected benefits.

(d) Costs: Those responsible for footing the bill for a knowledge management project invariably and understandably will want to know how much the whole thing is going to cost. There is no doubt that knowledge management projects can be expensive and require a long-term commitment of funds. Knowledge management projects are on-going, evolutionary projects and not one-off "big bang" investments. It is not possible to simply buy and install a knowledge management system off-the-shelf which will instantly solve all your knowledge management needs. Each organisation is different, its needs are different and hence any knowledge management system will need to be customised accordingly.

As each knowledge management system is different, the costs can vary significantly.

The following costs, however, need to be factored in:

- time spent customising or creating any knowledge management software;
- time spent training the users to use the system;
- cost of technical support;
- the cost of updating the systems as the needs of its users change and evolve and as business practices change;
- salaries of the knowledge management team.

While often significant, the costs in setting up a knowledge management system should be viewed as an investment from which there is a considerable financial benefit. If the lawyers and other staff can save significant amounts of time every day as a result of the knowledge management system, thereby minimising unbillable time and write-offs and increasing productivity, then the benefits can far exceed the cost. Conversely, if you fail to invest in knowledge management, at what cost do you do

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management, yet this typically proves the greatest challenge to a law department. Lawyers are not generally viewed as great information sharers. Indeed, within law firms, building a culture of knowledge sharing is a fundamental issue. This is because career progression has traditionally been based on acquiring a unique knowledge base, acting as a disincentive to sharing knowledge with others. Another disincentive to knowledge management is the time-based billing system. Knowledge management requires a large amount of lawyer time to develop and contribute to initiatives, taking time away from client work. A law department where lawyers do not have to account for their time should not face these barriers, thus making it easier to develop the right culture for knowledge management.

Law departments should aim to create an environment where staff are expected to share knowledge and understand that knowledge management is key to meeting the business objectives of their organisation. The message about the importance of knowledge management must be continually reinforced

in the communication and actions of the law department. A knowledge management culture develops when:

- law department management demonstrates strong support for knowledge management;
- staff contribution to knowledge management is acknowledged and rewarded;
- contribution to knowledge management is considered to be part of a staff member's role in the law department.

Management consulting organisations provide a good example of how to build a knowledge management culture. These organisations spend a great deal of time motivating staff to contribute to the organisation's knowledge base, since their business is based on leveraging the knowledge acquired by their consultants. Consulting firms typically build knowledge management contribution into career progression and remuneration criteria. At the end of each project, consultants are expected to extract lessons learned, and identify opportunities to develop project methodologies for future reference. To accommodate this work, consultants are allocated time to build the knowledge base of their organisation.

Similarly, in-house lawyers should be rewarded for their contribution to knowledge management through time allowances, career progression and remuneration. Rewards should not just be financial. Often, recognition by one's peers is a highly effective incentive for knowledge sharing.

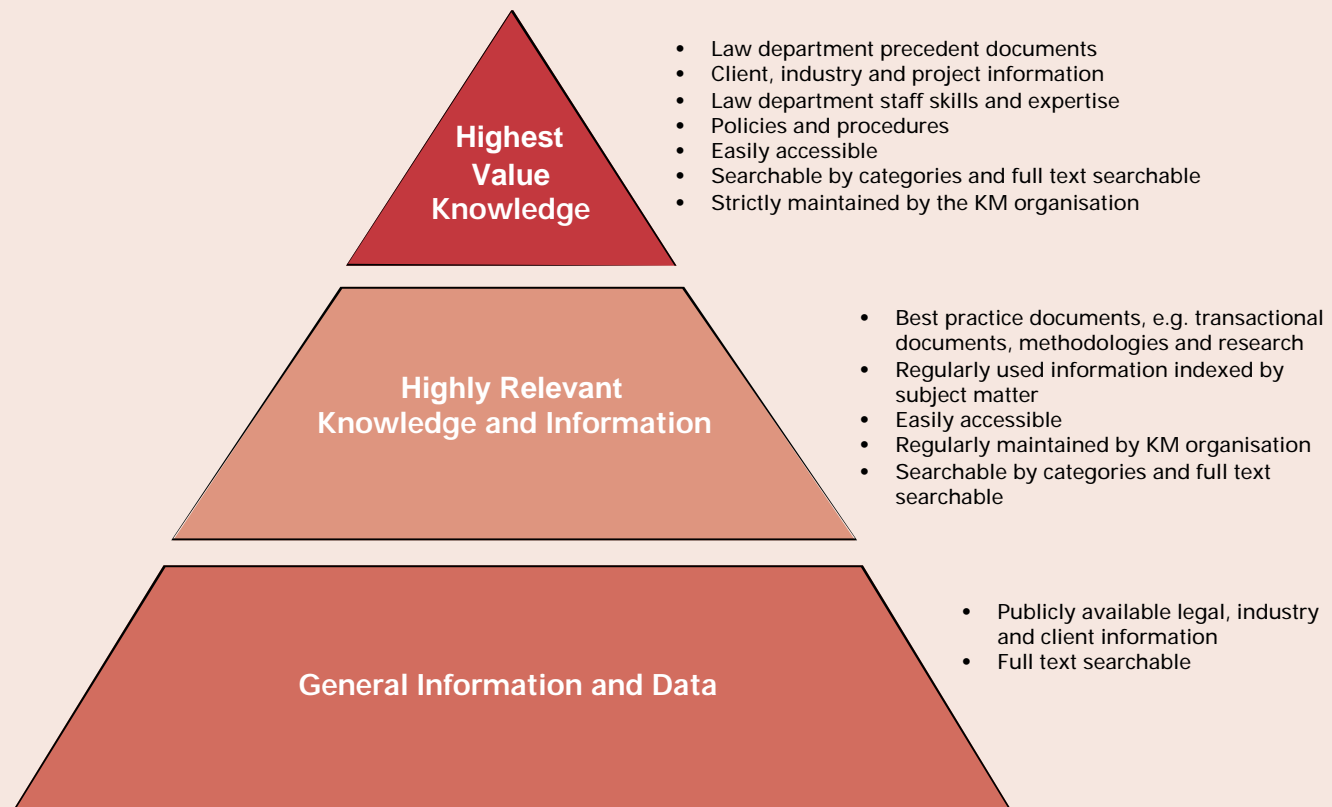
Holding a law department annual retreat at a desirable location is an excellent means of developing a culture of knowledge sharing. The social aspect of a retreat is crucial to developing relationships and thus encouraging knowledge sharing – especially among lawyers who work in different offices or practice areas.

Law department management should lead knowledge management initiatives through constant communication and commitment of resources. Successful law department knowledge management initiatives often rest on the assignment of well respected, senior lawyers to establish initiatives – sending a clear message about their commitment to knowledge management.

Addressing the cultural issues surrounding knowledge management also means

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Figure 1: the knowledge pyramid



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this? If a client can get better advice from another firm more cheaply and faster than it can get from your firm, then your client has little incentive to instruct your firm.

(e) Planning for obstacles and how to overcome them: Inevitably, various obstacles will appear during the course of the knowledge management project that will threaten its success. The plan should aim to identify these and provide for the possible solutions. The greatest obstacle is invariably people, as either the people who have the knowledge do not share it or contribute to the system, or the end-users do not use the systems created for them.

The first obstacle, lawyers failing to share their knowledge, is a common problem for which there is no quick and easy solution. It demands a culture change within the organisation to move from a knowledge hoarding one to a knowledge sharing one. It is generally resolved by incentivising and rewarding people for sharing their knowledge, and contributing to the knowledge base.

The second obstacle, users failing to use the system, is also a critical problem, as the organisation will have invested significant time, energy, company resources and costs in setting up the system and be seen to have got nothing out of it. It is therefore essential to make the system 'lawyer friendly' – whoever designs the system must understand what lawyers require and how they work to have any chance of the system being used.

Step 2 – develop the infrastructure

Once the strategy and key requirements have been identified, the next step is to decide whether the organisation's existing systems can be used to deliver the solution or whether it is necessary to invest in buying or creating specialised knowledge management software. At this point the knowledge manager should work closely with the IT department to identify the most appropriate way forward.

Before investing in any expensive new software, consideration should be as to whether the benefits will outweigh the costs (as discussed above).

A number of organisations have looked to intranets to provide the infrastructure for knowledge management systems. The advantage of an intranet is that it can provide an easy-to-use common interface that allows easy access to all types of information without having to know which database the knowledge is stored in or without having to learn different search techniques for each database.

Once the appropriate IT solution has been identified, the knowledge manager should work closely with the developers as the organisation's knowledge management system is built, as IT people will rarely have a full understanding of the environment in which it will eventually be used. The system should also be fully tested in terms of search logic, delivery of expected results, and its ability to cope with the expected number of users and volume of material to be stored.

One critical area to focus on is how a knowledge search will be conducted. The search engine must be sufficiently intelligent to rank documents by relevance rather than by the number of times a word appears so that lawyers be presented with the most relevant information first. Consideration should be given to the types of documents in the system (e.g. precedents and standard forms), how

the items in the system are structured, the search methods (e.g. 'Quick Search' and 'Advanced Search') and whether it will be necessary to build abstracts or identify key search criteria. Unless a system can be easily searched, you will find that most users will soon revert back to their old methods of storing and retrieving information.

Once the structure of the content has been decided, it can be added to the system during development for testing purposes.

Step 3 – Pilot the knowledge management systems

It is sensible to pilot the knowledge management system before full scale implementation in order to minimise risk and learn from mistakes, so that these can be corrected before full-scale implementation.

The following offers some guidance when trying to identify the pilot group:

- select a visible group, one that is strategically important for the group – a visible success for a key group within the organisation will encourage other groups to fully participate and contribute;
- identify groups which are knowledge intensive and where valuable knowledge is being lost – why lose knowledge when you are already in a position to capture it?
- consider the quality of the information held by the group, where it is held, and whether it is difficult to access – this could slow the pilot project down. Speed is important.
- look to work with the willing *i.e.* 'the knowledge sharers', not the 'knowledge hoarders' – not only are such people easier to work with, it is easier to win over the sceptics once you have a success.

Once the pilot group is identified, find out what information they would value and how they would use it.

Step 4 – Review and evaluate successes and failures

Having pilot launched the system, take time to review the systems, consult with the users to obtain their feedback and revise the system as appropriate. Having gone through the exercise, retest the systems and go through the same process again until you are satisfied with the quality of the product.

Step 5 – Roll out the implementation

Once satisfied with the product, the knowledge management system should be rolled out to the rest of the organisation in stages. This will ensure that effective marketing, preparation and training can be carried out, thereby ensuring a successful implementation.

Marketing of the knowledge management system is essential. This should involve a demonstration of the system during which the knowledge management team should focus on the attributes and benefits of the system. Not all user requirements will be the same, so in some cases it will be necessary to stress different benefits to different audiences.

Training on the systems and processes is essential. If the systems are intuitive and user-friendly this training can be minimal.

Step 6 – Post implementation review

Three-to-six months after the full scale implementation, the system should be reviewed to see if it is

delivering the benefits it was designed to deliver. This can be done through a brief questionnaire delivered to a sample of the users. If users do not feel the system is meeting their expectations or delivering the promised benefits, an analysis should be undertaken to understand the reasons, and remedial action taken wherever possible.

Critical success factors

There are a number of factors that should be considered in order to ensure a successful knowledge management initiative, including:

- focusing on key areas where the application and exploitation of knowledge provides the maximum business advantage;
- there must be visible commitment to the system from senior management, and the knowledge management initiative must be given a high profile, with its importance emphasised throughout the organisation;
- while the system must be designed from the users' point of view, there should be willingness on behalf of the users to actually use the system;
- lawyers should be motivated and rewarded for sharing knowledge and using the systems;
- continual training on and awareness of the system is essential if there is to be a maximum rate of return on the investment;
- everyone within the organisation should have access to the knowledge base. This should include remote access 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- focus on the quality rather than quantity of content. Integrate information from a variety of sources such as internal precedents, prior advice, training materials, online databases and websites.
- rubbish in – rubbish out. It is important to vet the knowledge that is being added to and which already exists within the knowledge management system. There should be a process to ensure that knowledge isn't added merely for the sake of adding knowledge (often an issue which arises if the correct incentive scheme isn't in place), that wherever possible knowledge isn't needlessly duplicated, and that the knowledge that exists within the system is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is still relevant and current. Out of date information is a liability!

Conclusion

Even those organisations with knowledge management systems have a long way to go. Knowledge management is never finished, and organisations will have to continue to invest in it at an ever-increasing rate as the demands on the systems grow. To some people, knowledge management is journey, while to others it is a race. What is clear, however, is that organisations which have knowledge management systems in place have already distanced themselves from their competitors who do not.

The question is how well placed are you? **KM**

The author is a partner and head of knowledge management at Johnson Stokes & Master, Hong Kong.

(continued from page 7)

ensuring knowledge management initiatives reflect the culture of the law department. Because the success of knowledge management relies so heavily on the contribution of the lawyers, they must feel that knowledge management initiatives reflect their work processes and attitude toward knowledge sharing. For example, if the law department is highly decentralised, knowledge management programs and systems should not take a one-size-fits-all approach. Taking this approach means compromise, often leading to failed attempts at knowledge management since initiatives do not meet the needs of lawyers in very different practices or regions.

Knowledge management organisation

Knowledge management requires dedicated resources to develop and maintain systems and processes. It also requires the ongoing contribution of management and all staff.

Many organisations have appointed Chief Knowledge Officers (CKOs) to direct and manage knowledge management at the organisation-wide level. Law departments should look to their organisation's CKO to provide direction on knowledge management.

The CKO is typically an executive position, filled by a strategic thinker with a strong background in information management, organisation management, staff development and technology. The CKO must possess the ability to build wide user support among staff and to be a persuasive advocate for knowledge management to the organisation's management.

While the CKO coordinates the development and maintenance of knowledge management, law departments also need knowledge managers or practice support

lawyers to identify and manage content. The role of the knowledge manager differs according to the specific knowledge needs of in-house lawyers. For example, where the law department produces a high level of similar documents, a practice support lawyer who develops precedent documents will be appropriate. On the other hand, where in-house lawyers need to keep abreast of a high volume of developments in the law, the appropriate knowledge manager is someone with an information management background. Ideally, this role should be full-time. Where a practising in-house lawyer is given the responsibility to spearhead its law department's knowledge management initiatives, in addition to a full case load, knowledge management tends to suffer. The most successful law department knowledge management initiatives are those that have been directed by senior lawyers, working full time on the development of knowledge management and the promotion of the benefits of knowledge management to law department staff.

While having a dedicated team of professionals managing knowledge management initiatives is critical, all staff must contribute knowledge management – from the design of systems and programmes through to the constant updating of content. Forming a knowledge management committee is an effective way to ensure that knowledge management initiatives are aligned with the law department's business objectives and meet the needs of in-house lawyers. In some organisations, the knowledge

management committee is in lieu of a CKO. If your organisation already has a CKO, it would be worthwhile to identify how the CKO may help your law department develop knowledge management systems and programmes.

Knowledge management technology

Building a technology infrastructure to support the capture and dissemination of knowledge is fundamental to the successful realisation of knowledge management. Technology is also the most tangible form of knowledge management. Law departments should aspire to

The knowledge management system is not one system – but is comprised of several systems to provide the wide range of knowledge a law department possesses

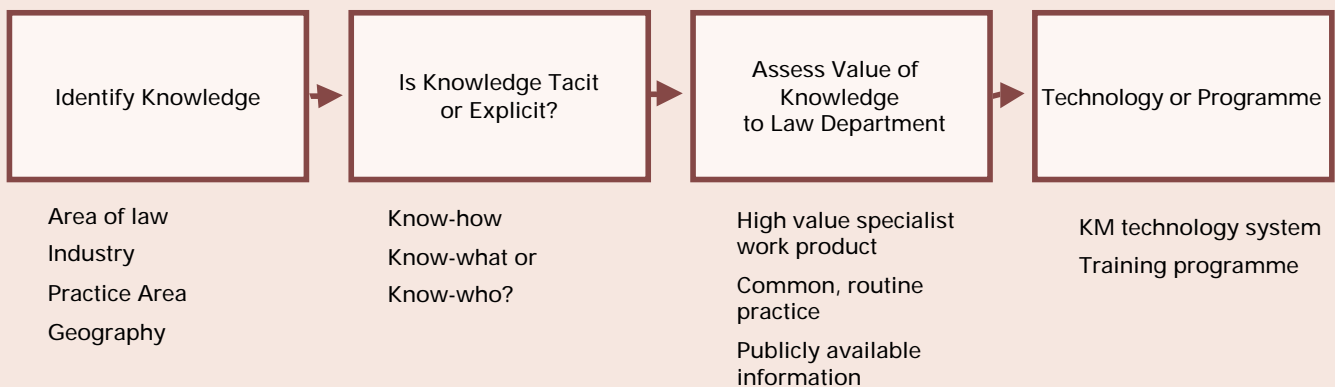
develop the "lawyer desktop" – a knowledge management system with a single user interface providing quick access to a wide range of knowledge stored in multiple applications.

The knowledge management system is not one system – but is comprised of several systems to provide the wide range of knowledge a law department possesses. For example, information relating to cases and matters is stored in the matter man-

agement system. Documents produced for clients, precedent documents and best practice documents may be stored in a document management system, databases or simply on the network. Legal research is available through online services, CD-ROM or the Internet. The law department may also have developed an intranet to store knowledge about the department and the organisation.

The goal of a knowledge management system is to allow a lawyer to search for knowledge across all these systems and

Figure 2: knowledge analysis model



applications through a single interface. The most common tool for knowledge management among law departments is the corporate intranet. The intranet is used to deliver information to the organisation about in-house lawyers and their practice areas, together with basic legal and policy information. Several law departments have also developed "private" intranets, accessible only to in-house lawyers for sharing precedents, best practice documents, legal research and sensitive client information.

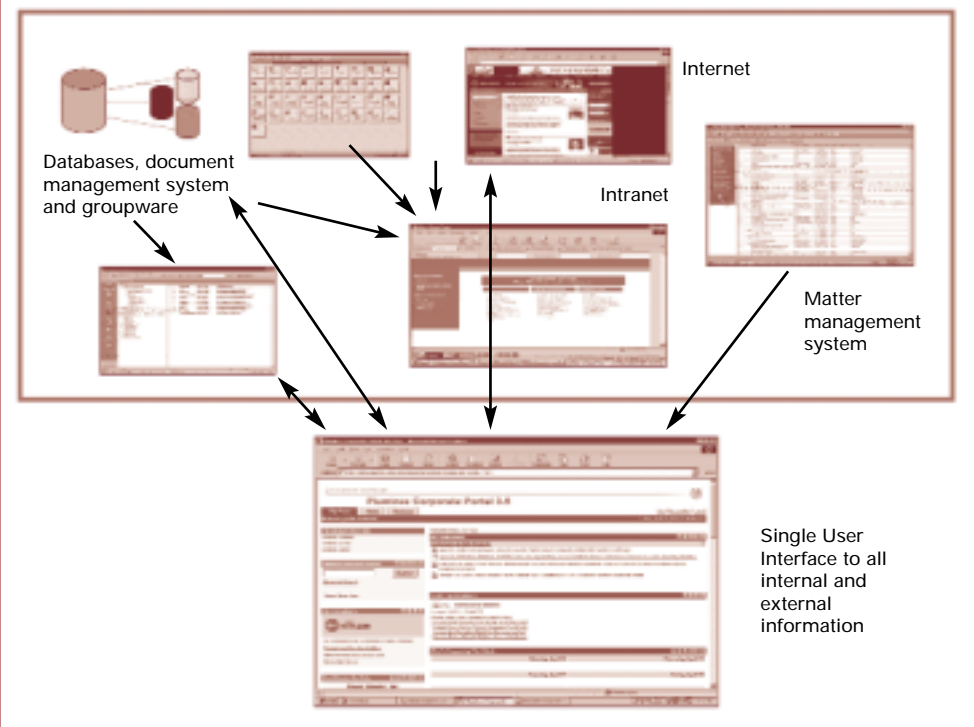
There is now a growing trend among organisations to implement enterprise information portals as the user interface, using a powerful search engine to search across all applications and repositories through a single search. With the enterprise information portal, lawyers can customise their interface to suit their individual needs. For a law department covering many different practice areas or regions, the enterprise information portal is particularly effective in enabling lawyers to develop knowledge tools that meet their specific needs.

Information stored in the knowledge management system is categorised based on its value to the law department. The value of the information should determine the type of repository used to store the information, as well as the searching and security features of the repository. The audience for the information should also influence the type of repository used. For example, where knowledge is only of value to a region, a regional database may be appropriate.

Developing a comprehensive knowledge management system is a large undertaking. Law departments should focus initially on improving the technology tools currently available

to lawyers to meet their knowledge management objectives in order to develop a focused understanding of knowledge management among staff. Once a law department is clear on its knowledge management technology needs, it can identify what the specific com-

Figure 3: the knowledge management system



ponents of the knowledge management system should be, and develop the single user interface to the multiple components of the knowledge management system.

Part 2 – The knowledge management strategy

Developing a knowledge management strategy that aligns with the law department's business strategy is the first step in building an effective knowledge management environment.

The key to successful knowledge management is understanding how it directly assists the law department in delivering a better service to its organisation

The knowledge management strategy should directly support the law department's objectives of efficiently providing high quality, consistent legal advice to its organisation and managing the legal risk exposure of the organisation. The strategy should address scope, technology, culture and organisation as described in Part 1.

Knowledge management will only succeed if it reflects the needs of in-house lawyers. Law department management should first consult with its staff (or a cross-section of staff if it is a large department) to understand current work processes and knowledge needs. This will help iden-

tify the opportunities for knowledge management and enable law department staff to begin to understand the benefits of knowledge management. In assessing opportunities for knowledge management, a law department should look at industry best practices and examine knowledge management initiatives within its organisation.

The knowledge management strategy should reflect the culture of the law department and the organisation. Similar to developing a good corporate knowledge management culture, if the law department is highly decentralised, the strategy should support a regional approach to knowledge management, rather than impose a large scale one-size-fits-all solution.

Implementing a knowledge management system

A phased approach to knowledge management will offer the best results. Law departments should identify "quick wins" – opportunities to demonstrate the value of knowledge management to the law department and the organisation in a short (three-to-six month) time frame. By proving the value of knowledge management initiatives at an early stage, a law department can build user support for more complex initiatives. Examples of "quick wins" may include

Figure 4: potential knowledge management initiatives

Legal documents – "We use standard documentation and could benefit from better precedents, best practice documents and clauses."

Develop a department wide precedent document programme.

Identify best practice documents (including letters of advice and agreements) and store in a centrally managed repository.

Develop a library of clauses for unique documents.

Legal research and practice information – "We rely heavily on current legal and industry information. Lawyers may feel overwhelmed by the amount of information they need to absorb."

Develop a centrally managed repository of law department area-related information (other than best practice documents).

Implement better delivery of industry, client and legal news.

Develop the intranet as the access point for legal research.

Examine how to overcome "information overload".

Organisation and industry information – "We need to know more about our clients and the industries in which our organisation operates."

Conduct regular seminars for business units.

Provide desktop access to key matter information.

Implement a programme for lawyers to spend more time in business units.

Interaction between practice areas and regions – "We could do a better job of educating others in the law department about our work. There are missed opportunities for practice areas and regions to work with each other."

Create "communities of interest" for lawyers in different practice areas and regions working in similar area of law matters or with similar clients.

Develop a staff skills and expertise database.

Develop a discussion database for specific topics of interest.

Hold an annual retreat for all in-house lawyers to develop relationships and share knowledge.

Interaction within practice areas and regions/lawyer training – "We could do a better job of training our lawyers."

Implement regular meetings for practice area interaction.

Develop a formal training programme for lawyers.

Initiate inter-office secondments.

enhancements to an existing database, development of high value precedents or creation of "communities of interest".

Apart from demonstrable "quick wins", the law department should focus in the short term on building the foundations for successful knowledge management. This often means addressing cultural, scope and organisational issues before investing in sophisticated technology systems.

In the mid term (six-to-twelve months), the law department can begin to focus on more complex knowledge management initiatives,

including developing training programs, drafting a complete set of precedents and planning for more sophisticated knowledge repositories, such as matter management systems or document management systems. Through this process, the vision for knowledge management will become clear, and typically lead to the law department refining its requirements for knowledge management.

In the longer term (twelve-to-eighteen months), law departments can implement sophisticated knowledge management systems, with the single user interface into the

multiple system components described under Knowledge Management Technology.

To ensure that knowledge management continually assists the law department to better perform its function, knowledge management initiatives should be measured against a defined set of criteria. Example criteria include "enables faster production of work", "supports delivery of consistent advice", and "enables law department to identify areas of high legal risk".

Knowledge management initiatives

Knowledge management can range from basic programmes and processes through to complex technology systems. Figure 4 provides some examples beyond those described throughout this article of the initiatives a law department may choose to implement.

Conclusion

The key to successful knowledge management is understanding how it directly assists the law department in delivering a better service to its organisation. Knowledge management initiatives should constantly be measured for their value to lawyers and the organisation. While technology is a major tool of knowledge management, a law department should examine its knowledge needs and focus on identifying a range of initiatives that will help it to achieve its objectives. **KM**

End Notes

1. Nonaka, I., "The Knowledge Creating Company", *Harvard Business Review on Knowledge Management*, 1998, pp 27-28.
2. Ibid.

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If these articles have piqued your interest on KM as it relates to the practise of law, you can find further informative articles on this subject in the November 2000 and January/February 2001 issues of our sister publication, e-law asia. Contact arun@pbpress.com for details.

KMAP interviews J Walter Thompson's regional Knowledge Manager Anya Wong

Knowledge management is becoming an essential new tool for businesses, particularly companies that rely on the creativity and innovation of their employees. In the world of advertising, where the key business asset is the ideas of an advertising agency's people, knowledge management has changed, and enhanced, the way business is done.

At J Walter Thompson, one of the world's leading advertising agencies, founded in 1877, a knowledge management system has been introduced over the past two years. Anya Wong, the firm's Knowledge Manager in the Asia-Pacific region, sums up its importance with the question: "Without knowledge management, what would happen to J Walter Thompson in five to ten years?"

Knowledge management is a difficult concept to define. Ms. Wong says that at J Walter Thompson, "we don't try to nail down exactly what knowledge is in the company", but they see knowledge management on two levels. "If you ask anybody [at a middle or junior level in the organisation] what is knowledge management, they will probably say that it is information systems. It is where I can get information from the computer system," she explains. "But from a more senior level, the management see knowledge management as not just an information system, but a process to encourage people to learn from different resources – colleagues, other offices, suppliers and clients. It helps expose us to a lot of different information. It helps us to be more innovative and accepting of ideas."

For an advertising agency, Ms. Wong adds, "creativity is very important". Two or three years ago, before it introduced knowledge management, J Walter Thompson advertising executives would prepare for a pitch to a potential new client by going out into the street and doing "ad-hoc" research. "They would ask people what they think about this brand, and what they expect the brand to provide for you," says Ms. Wong. "But you collect all this information locally, and you are actually looking at a market from a very narrow perspective."

But once the knowledge management system was up and running, Ms. Wong explains, the firm's operations became much more integrated. The knowledge management system has, she says, "changed the way we do our job". "Besides collecting consumer data locally, we can be more "strategic". "Now we know which



"Knowledge management is a very new concept, so I have to educate people, spread the message of the benefits of knowledge management. On the other hand, I have to develop a system to help people connect to each other"

office has handled similar industries [to our clients], what they have learned, what knowledge we can tap into and use in our market. It helps us to leverage our collective learning. We feel we are part of a worldwide network."

The linkage to other offices in the company is an essential feature of knowledge

management. "Now we actually know ourselves better. In the past we did not know which office was doing what, and what knowledge they have," Ms. Wong says. But now, offices are connected so, for example, "if Hong Kong and Indian offices have clients in the same industry," the team working on an advertising campaign for that client can check what other branches are doing for that client or that sector.

"In Hong Kong we are strong in the telecommunications industry," explains Ms. Wong, "whenever other offices want a communications plan for a telecommunications client, they can talk to the team here, and see what their insights are, and how we can work together as an international team to pitch for clients." When we know ourselves better, we work as a team and it helps us to leverage corporate, collective knowledge. We do not focus locally anymore."

Advertising in Hong Kong is, Ms. Wong believes, a very competitive business. The top 10 multinational advertising agencies are all active in the Hong Kong market, and there are many local agencies too. "What makes us competitive is the global resources we have, the ability to learn from other markets, and how we respond to other markets quickly," she argues. "If we can tap into the learning of different offices, it helps us to serve our clients better and respond to the market faster. Then we can actually plan our clients' brand launches more proactively."

Knowledge management has two aspects to it, reflected in Ms. Wong's job responsibilities. "My official title is Knowledge Manager, but I am not just doing the knowledge management side," she explains. "I look after our internal applications when they relate to knowledge management."

So is knowledge management an IT function? No, says Ms. Wong. "IT is very important. It is a tool for us to connect to each other, to know what is happening in other markets, what kind of clients other offices have." But knowledge management is more than IT. Ms. Wong also has responsibility for "the people side", and comes from a human resources background.

"Knowledge management is a very new concept, so I have to educate people, and spread the message of the benefits of knowledge management. On the other hand, I have to develop a system to help people connect to each other."

Ms. Wong has a regional role, covering J Walter Thompson's 26 offices in Asia which employ 4,000 people. The firm's presence in Asia includes countries as diverse as China and India, Nepal and Bangladesh, Hong Kong and Australia, Singapore and Thailand. J Walter Thompson globally has 250 offices and affiliates in 88 countries. She says that when the knowledge management system was first introduced, she went round to each office in the region to give presentations on the system. "There was some resistance."

"The first thing people said was 'I don't have time to come to the presentation'. But that was the only resistance. When people actually come and see the benefits, their view changes," she says. "So my approach is to go and present to the managing director and the knowledge officer in each office, and then, if the management is committed, they will launch their own local campaign. They will do their own local training, in the local language and local cases. If we get management buy-in, everything moves smoothly. They know how to resolve resistance locally."

Training was required for staff, but Ms. Wong says that "technical training is not that important". The more important training was "change of mindset", but as Ms. Wong points out, that is something that cannot be forced. "You have to do it slowly, present the concept, show them the benefits, take them through the system hand-in-hand. The best training is actually experience," she explains.

"If people have a good experience of knowledge management, they will buy in. So for example, when you have a problem to solve and you don't know where to ask for help, then we have knowledge officers who can help out. We help employees connect to

the other person." Then the next time the person has a question, they trust the knowledge management system because they know it works, she says.

In terms of technology, J Walter Thompson, like many large companies, uses Lotus Notes. "We leverage our worldwide infrastructure. We hired programmers, developed some small internal documenting systems, and created an Intranet and an Extranet out of Lotus Notes," Ms. Wong describes. "One advantage of Lotus Notes is that it can replicate the database of a local server. So for example, in Ho Chih Minh City or China or India, where they have very unstable and slow Internet connections, it is better for them to access all our corporate information through Lotus Notes directly, because it sits on their local server. So they don't need to worry about speed, about whether the Internet connection is down, or whether everybody is using the Internet and therefore one cannot see the television commercials designed by other offices."

On the J Walter Thompson system, there are three Intranets: a Global Intranet, a Regional Intranet and a Local Intranet. The Global Intranet is, says Ms. Wong, "very generic, relevant to every market but not specific to a particular culture". The Regional Intranet, by definition, focuses on material for a region, and the Local Intranet, which might be in the local language of the country, contains locally relevant information.

All the J Walter Thompson Intranets contain a variety of corporate and professional information from J Walter Thompson and its partners in the WPP group. There is a Global Creative Library and a Regional Creative Library, which contain all the advertisements designed by J Walter Thompson staff, details of award-winning

advertising, and information about competitors' advertising designs. "This is the most popular database," says Ms. Wong. For example, employees can view online television advertisements through the Intranet, at any time. Client presentations are available, and information on other parts of J Walter Thompson can be accessed, to see what kind of client other offices have served, what accounts they are working on. "Whenever we have got problems, we just check the directory and pick up the phone and talk to the person."

There are clear benefits in terms of corporate communications, sharing of ideas and information, and even competitive advantage. But as far as the bottom-line is concerned, Ms. Wong says it is difficult to perceive a direct impact. "Up to now, I don't think we can measure the tangible value of knowledge management. There are no direct measures related to the bottom line."

Knowledge management, despite its all-encompassing definitions covering both technology and people, and the difficulty of measuring its financial impact, is expected to take off in Hong Kong as it has already done in the United States. J Walter Thompson, says Ms. Wong, is not alone in the advertising world for introducing knowledge management – most of their international competitors, she acknowledges, have similar initiatives, and "the smaller ones are catching up".

And Ms. Wong says she expects to see further changes in knowledge management in Hong Kong. "The Hong Kong Knowledge Management Forum was set up three years ago, and at the beginning we only saw people from academic backgrounds – Hong Kong University and Hong Kong University of Science and

Technology – plus people from multinationals," she recalls. "But now after three years we are about to launch the Hong Kong Knowledge Management Society, and we see a lot of local companies sending members to our monthly gatherings. "Local companies are exploring what knowledge management can do for them." In the next two or three years, Ms. Wong predicts, "knowledge management will become very popular in Hong Kong". **KM**

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The Hong Kong Knowledge Management Society

The newly formed Hong Kong Knowledge Management Society (HKKMS) is a professional body for managers and professionals, and serves the growing community of knowledge management practitioners.

Started as an independent and informal network of professionals three years ago as the Hong Kong Knowledge Management Forum, the network attracted senior managers from all industry sectors in Hong Kong including the banking, accountancy and legal communities. As the Forum grew, the need became apparent to offer more services and a better communication infrastructure for members. This led to the forming of a full-fledged professional body – the HKKMS.

Why a society?

As a new discipline emerges people who share an interest come together, usually starting as an informal interest group. These networks often grow into more formal structures, when there is a need to develop some professional standards. From a knowledge sharing point of view, a network's strengths lies in the dynamic, informal knowledge flow between people, whereas a society or associations tends to develop a defined, explicit body of professional expertise and practice. Networks are ever changing depending on the actors involved, associations formalise their scope and purposes in statutes, which remain when actors/members leave.

Societies serve as focal points or as a kind of a portal for the combined knowledge of its discipline. This know-how is often well documented and available to members of the society through an information centre, newsletters, websites and other channels. The knowledge is also embodied in the individual members of the organisation, and the larger the number of visible and active members in the society, the more likely a society will be able to influence professional development in a field and establish strong credentials among the profession or user community.

The HKKMS helps professionals to connect and learn from each other, provides thought leadership and serves as an information exchange for know how about knowledge management. Academic institutions, public and private corporations as well as

The HKKMS helps professionals to connect and learn from each other, provides thought leadership and serves as information exchange for know how about knowledge management

individuals contribute to ongoing knowledge management discussions touching all sectors of the Hong Kong business and academic spheres.

Society members

HKKMS members have been working in the knowledge management field for many years, and will contribute with their expertise, experience, and know-how to support those who want to learn and apply knowledge management ideas in their organisations. Independent, well versed in knowledge management theory and practice, HKKMS members have strong links with the international knowledge management community and have built a dense network of information and support over the years.

Most members of the HKKMS tend to regard another profession as their primary profession; the knowledge management function is an additional role in their jobs. This gives the HKKMS is very diverse and varied membership with a myriad of multi-disciplinary skills.

Why Knowledge Management?

Another challenge for a society such as the HKKMS is to maintain momentum. Some people will regard knowledge management as just another management fad that nobody will talk about in a couple of years. However, the development of knowledge management so far shows that the discipline has evolved throughout the years and the interest is growing.

The evolution of knowledge associations

and societies worldwide itself is an interesting case of the institutionalisation of certain knowledge. In the early phase KM took an IT-based approach. The second phase discovered the "human factor" in all knowledge initiatives. The current phase is about to adopt the idea that all knowledge processes are social processes.

Knowledge Management in Hong Kong and throughout the Asia-Pacific

While companies in Hong Kong have been thriving on a predominantly service-based industry for many years, few organisations explicitly dealt with the driving force that service industries are built upon: knowledge embedded in business practices and relationships.

A survey conducted by the Poon Kam Kai Institutes of Management at the University of Hong Kong (1999) among Hang Seng listed companies showed that few of the major companies actively manage the processes of knowledge creation, distribution and utilisation.

HKKMS is proud to be associated with a publication such as *Knowledge Management Asia-Pacific* and to be at the forefront of an important and growing field.

Even the basic foundations of managing information and knowledge assets and flows as a corporate resource were often not in place. Looking at the development of knowledge management in the Asia Pacific Region (excluding Australia), the picture is similar.

However, there has recently been increased interest in many countries, and it seems

that knowledge management has gained a higher level on the agenda of managers. Throughout the region, there are a growing number of professional networks and associations, notably in Japan, Korea, India, Singapore, and Hong Kong that have started to respond to the challenges of knowledge-based societies and the implications for managing organisations.

As a result, we believe the time is now for KM in the Asia Pacific region. The HKKMS is proud to be associated with a publication such as *Knowledge Management Asia-Pacific* and to be at the forefront of an important and growing field. **KM**

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KMAP events calendar MAY – OCTOBER 2001

date	name	location	organiser	contact
May 23/25	Call Centre Management Symposium	Hong Kong	HK Productivity Council & The Call Centre Association	Tel: (852) 2788-6381 or Email: millau@hkpc.org
June 22/29	Knowledge Management Framework Seminars	Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane – Australia	Standards Australia	www.knowledge.standards.com.au or email: belinda.sparks@standards.com.au or tel: (02) 8206-6782
June 7	Hong Kong Knowledge Management Society Launch	Hong Kong	HKKMS	Email: w-ritter@attglobal.net or: arun@pbpress.com
July 18-20	KM Asia 2001	Singapore	Ark Group	www.kmasia.com or email: kmasia@ark-group.com
Oct 20-22	Supporting Organisational Learning 2001: KM and CBR	Tokyo – Japan	INAP Organising Committee & Prolog Association of Japan	www.ifcomputer.co.jp/sol2001
3rd Q 2001	KM: The Marriage of IT & People to Meet Business Objectives	Sydney – Australia	knowledgemanagement.com.au	www.knowledgemanagement.com.au

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