

Assessing Knowledge Management

Description:

This tool provides an overview of knowledge management, a template, and an organizational checklist.

How it can be used:

Knowledge management is about getting the right knowledge to the right person at the right time. It enables people to improve the way they work through capturing, sharing, and using knowledge. Building on the organizational knowledge about what works well leads to better strategy, policy, and practice.

In order to be successful, effective knowledge management requires an open culture that embraces change and rejects competition. It also requires a strong commitment from leadership. Use a phased-in approach to raise awareness, gain commitment and demonstrate the value of knowledge management in your organization.

Enablers of Knowledge Management

There are some key conditions or enablers that support embedding knowledge management within an organization:

- Organizational – The processes, support systems, structures, and teams directly affect the level of collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Managerial/Leadership – The strategies, policies and implementation style demonstrate whether or not there is a supportive focus on knowledge management.
- Cultural – The organizational culture influences how people interact and the context within which knowledge is created and shared. For example, competitive cultures will not support effective knowledge sharing.
- Technological – Appropriate systems, tools and technologies are properly implemented and training is provided.
- Political – The Band, Health Board, or Health Committee provide support to implement and sustain initiatives related to knowledge management.

Knowledge Exchange

An example of a knowledge management practice is a knowledge exchange. A knowledge exchange aims to recover valuable information from employees before they leave. Although many organizations have informal processes in place, the best efficiency comes from a formalized structured knowledge exchange process. Consider assigning someone as a facilitator who is responsible for this process.

1. The facilitator prepares the template, adding any additional questions specific to the organization.
2. Two days prior to the knowledge exchange, the outgoing employee responds to the knowledge exchange questionnaire.
3. Based on the feedback, a 'relationship map' is established to clarify the key contacts and roles.
4. Package the information in an 'easy-to-read' and 'easy-to-access' format.
5. Consider adding this information to current team orientation processes and the intranet for future reference.

Knowledge Exchange Template

1. What do you consider to be the most valuable and/or unique knowledge that you hold in your current role?
 - a. Do you have any specialized or valuable knowledge that you would consider to be difficult to replace?
2. What has helped you learn what you know, such as on-the-job training, work assignments, previous jobs, educational background, mentors, other people, etc.?
3. With whom do you interact most frequently during the course of performing your job?
 - a. Is there anyone for whom you are the main or only point of contact? (Include internal contacts and external stakeholders)
4. Who are your key contacts, both inside and outside the organization?
 - a. Are others on your team aware of the key contacts?
 - b. Do you have any useful contacts who are particularly helpful in getting things done?
 - c. Do you have a relationship with specific stakeholders?
 - d. Is there anyone you go to for expert advice, decisions, or permissions?
 - e. Was anyone particularly helpful or difficult?
5. What are the key factors that contribute to the successful performance of your job?
6. Is there any key documentation that has been useful to your role?
 - a. Are these readily available to others?
 - b. Is there anything you feel was missing and which would have made your work life easier? (e.g., procedures, manuals, software, reference materials, websites, e-newsletters, subscriptions, etc.)
7. Are there any immediate issues specific to your role that in your view need to be urgently resolved?
 - a. Consider any decision, threats and opportunities.
8. Are there any long-standing or dormant issues specific to your role that you feel need to be resolved in the longer term?
 - a. Consider any decision, threats and opportunities
9. In your position, what is generally likely to go wrong and how do you usually respond and resolve the issue?
 - a. Do you have any specific skills you use for troubleshooting or diagnosing how to resolve the issue?
 - b. How have you identified and managed potential risks or problems?
10. How do you feel difficult situations could be avoided in the future?
11. Are there any potential improvements or innovations that you feel are worth mentioning?
12. Are there other roles that you perform within the organization, officially or unofficially?

ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Read the statements below. Evaluate your organization's performance and circle the number that best reflects your organization.

(1) not done (2) occasionally (3) usually (4) always

	Evaluate	Comments
Knowledge Management Process		
1. Knowledge gaps are identified and processes created to close them.	1 2 3 4	
2. An ethical intelligence gathering mechanism has been developed.	1 2 3 4	
3. Staff recognize the value of traditional sources of knowledge.	1 2 3 4	
4. The process of transferring best practices has been formalized.	1 2 3 4	
Leadership in Knowledge Management		
5. Managing organizational knowledge is a key part of our strategy.	1 2 3 4	
6. Core competencies are supported by ongoing learning.	1 2 3 4	
7. Knowledge development is one element of employee evaluation and compensation.	1 2 3 4	
Knowledge Management Culture		
8. Our organization encourages and facilitates knowledge sharing.	1 2 3 4	
9. Our organization has a climate of openness and trust.	1 2 3 4	
10. A major objective of knowledge management is to improve client care.	1 2 3 4	
11. Flexibility and a desire to innovate drive the learning process.	1 2 3 4	
12. Staff take responsibility for their own learning.	1 2 3 4	
Knowledge Management Technology		
13. Technology links the staff together and with relevant stakeholders.	1 2 3 4	
14. Technology creates an organizational 'memory' that is accessible to all in the organization.	1 2 3 4	
15. Technology brings our organization closer to clients and the community.	1 2 3 4	
16. Our organization incorporates information technology that meets our community's needs and capabilities.	1 2 3 4	
17. Our organization integrates technology that supports collaboration.	1 2 3 4	
Knowledge Management Measurement		
18. Our organization links knowledge to improvements in quality care.	1 2 3 4	
19. Our organization has indicators related to knowledge management.	1 2 3 4	
20. Our organization allocates sufficient resources for efforts that increase its knowledge base.	1 2 3 4	

Total Score _____ out of a possible 80

Notice how many ones and twos you have identified. Are there any trends or key gaps? Identify areas which could be improved and strategies that would accomplish the improvements.