

1.0 Practice Guidance – Capability Area #1: Leadership and Strategy

Strategy Design

Tips for developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to managing knowledge as a critical strategic asset

What do we mean by a knowledge strategy?

Strategy can be defined as a systematic approach to working with knowledge as an asset. The strategy employed will depend on the context of the organization. Variables like the type of outputs produced, the environment in which the organization operates, and the relative predictability or complexity of the work should all influence the type of strategy to be undertaken. A strategy can include areas such as improved communications with staff; dedication of resources for activities such as a community of practice; and development of policies and systems that will enable the organization to better use knowledge to meet key business objectives.

Steps to the design of a strategy

- Consider the **context and purpose** of your organization or business unit. For example, do you do predictable work? Do you need to respond quickly to change? Do you need to consider the views of diverse stakeholders?
- Consider the **type of knowledge resources** you currently have and use to meet business objectives. For example, do you rely on the know-how of staff? Do you need access to external expertise and resources? Do you need access to a wide range of explicit knowledge assets such as research and discussion papers?
- Consider the type of knowledge you will **need in the future**. What are the future goals and objectives of your business unit or organization and how will knowledge contribute to those? What trends will impact your organization and how will knowledge support resilience?
- Identify **key risks and the potential impact of knowledge loss** to your organization. For example, if you rely on specialist knowledge, do you have the needed redundancy? Is knowledge stuck in silos and not being shared? Are explicit knowledge assets not accessible so people are duplicating work?
- **Identify key practices** that can support enhancing your current knowledge, reduce your risks and help you meet future objectives.
- Identify **short-term or quick wins** as well as **long-term actions**.
- **Design a realistic strategy** using your available resources that includes both short-term and long-term goals and objectives.

Pitfalls to avoid

- Developing a strategy that does not align with business goals
- Creating a strategy in a closed boardroom with little or no consultation
- Not thinking about future needs
- Not building on success
- Focussing scarce resources on the wrong knowledge assets. For e.g. if innovation is needed, focussing on a knowledge repository may not be as effective as stimulating networks to share ideas and practices
- Ignoring major risks and their impacts
- Focussing in only on short-term success and not considering long-term organizational development

When?

Early in the process

Revisit as implementation progresses

To learn more:

Rumzien, M. (2002). *The Complete Idiots Guide to Knowledge Management*. Madison: CWL Publishing Enterprises.
Bennet, A. (2004). *Organizational Survival in the New World: The Intelligent Complex Adaptive System*. Burlington: Butterworth Heinemann.
In the absence of early executive support: Gurteen, D. (1999). Evangelising Knowledge Management. *Knowledge Management Conference*. London: www.gurteen.com
Sinclair, N. (2006). *Stealth KM: Winning Knowledge Management Strategies for the Public Sector*. Burlington: Butterworth-Heinemann publications.
Allee, V. (2003). *The Future of Knowledge: Increasing Prosperity through Value Networks*. Burlington: Butterworth.