

Successful Knowledge Leadership: Principles and Practice

EDITED BY HELEN ROCHE



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Executive summary

MANY ORGANISATIONS nowadays run effective knowledge management (KM) programmes, yet others still struggle to demonstrate measurable benefits from KM initiatives. What is the difference between these organisations? The simple answer lies in the individuals leading knowledge management within them.

While effective leadership is not the solution to all KM issues within every organisation, competent leaders can certainly improve the success of KM. It may seem obvious, but effective knowledge management demands equally effective leaders. Although the range of KM job titles and the level of leadership roles varies drastically depending on the organisation (Chief Knowledge Officer, knowledge manager, or head of information and knowledge are just some examples), the principles of good knowledge leadership and the challenges it poses remain the same. Knowledge leadership can come from any part of the organisation, not just from the top.

The global financial crisis placed increasing pressure on the budgets of many organisations both in the public and private sectors, and continuing economic difficulties pose challenges for organisations to operate more efficiently with less resources. Demonstrating a return on investment for all initiatives, including KM, has placed extra pressures on leaders to ensure their teams perform, innovate, and even exceed expectations. Against this

backdrop the knowledge leader needs to ensure that they themselves are performing to the best of their capability in order to support both their team members and the desired goals of the organisation.

So, what exactly is an effective knowledge leader? What are the attributes and skills needed? What are the challenges that knowledge leaders face and, importantly, how do they overcome them? These questions are addressed in this report. The report explores the principles of good knowledge leadership and shares advice on the skills, experiences, and behaviours which knowledge leaders need in order to be successful.

The report contains advice from respected KM experts and some of the top KM influencers. Each contributor shares their advice on different aspects of knowledge leadership. The articles discuss how good leaders can improve the success of KM, as well as stressing the importance of leadership and enabling change. The hurdles for knowledge sharing in a big organisation are covered, and advice is shared on establishing a results-oriented approach. The report also contains advice on facilitating human interaction, improving knowledge sharing, and keeping up with the overall business or organisation strategy. The contributors draw on their experiences within organisations such as HP, SAP, the BBC, and the European Commission to provide in-depth advice on knowledge leadership in practice.

Social media has a vast influence on business and organisations nowadays, and this report covers the importance of social media and the challenges and opportunities it presents for KM. Articles cover the importance of social media in the role of the modern knowledge leader and a proposed approach for KM through social media is provided along with a checklist for deployment of a social media model. Connected leadership is also discussed, along with the importance of learning and sharing.

There is no single approach for effective knowledge leadership and as such the report also contains advice on leadership styles and the different knowledge jobs and the attributes associated with each. Knowledge leaders can assess their own approach to leadership against these and will be able to identify possible changes they can (or possibly need to) make to their role or leadership style.

As well as the expert articles and the knowledge shared within them on well-known and global organisations, case studies have also been included to share insight into how knowledge leaders have succeeded in their roles and faced various challenges in practice. The case studies have been shared by AstraZeneca (a global, innovation-driven biopharmaceutical company), Meyer Vandenberg (an Australian commercial law firm), Severn Trent Water (a UK-based water company), and by the Department for Communities and Local Government in the UK.

These case studies share information and advice, for example on embedding knowledge leadership as an accountability within an organisation and on achieving cultural change for the benefit of KM. One case study shows how a KM repository was established and how the

knowledge manager responsible worked towards encouraging staff and improving contributions. The case studies also show how leadership and accountability makes a difference in the success of projects and the overall KM strategy.

There is no single secret to the success of KM but effective leadership is an important starting point. Successful knowledge leaders encourage people to learn, to work together, and to support the desired goals of the business. They create an environment of engagement in which people feel comfortable to share. Above all, the successful knowledge leader understands that learning and sharing is also something required of them and not just their teams.

This report will help knowledge leaders to understand the skills, attitudes, methods, and behaviours they need in order to drive the success of KM within their organisations. In the words of John C. Maxwell: 'A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.'

About the authors

Stan Garfield is a community evangelist in Deloitte Global Knowledge Services. He leads the communities programme for Deloitte, promotes communities of practice, enterprise social networking, and social media, and he helps practitioners to plan, launch, and lead communities. Stan was previously retail & consumer knowledge domain manager at PricewaterhouseCoopers and he spent 25 years at HP, Compaq, and Digital Equipment Corp. Within those companies he held a wide variety of field and headquarters management roles in presales, consulting, and systems integration. He launched Digital's first knowledge management programme, helped develop the corporate KM strategy for Compaq, and led the Worldwide Consulting & Integration Knowledge Management Program for Hewlett-Packard. Stan was ranked #4 in the MindTouch 2013 Top KM Influencers and he is the author of *Implementing a Successful KM Programme* (Ark Group, 2007). He has been invited to present at numerous conferences including APQC, KMWorld, KM Australia, Midwest KM Symposium, and E2 Social, and he leads the SIKM Leaders Community, with over 500 members. Stan's website is: <https://sites.google.com/site/stangarfield>.

Alison Jones is knowledge manager at Meyer Vandenberg Lawyers in Canberra, Australia. Responsible for all aspects of the firm's library service and legal templates, Alison's role also includes promoting a culture of knowledge sharing and developing knowledge resources within the firm. In a firm encouraging of innovation, Alison works collaboratively with staff to create customised knowledge management tools to meet the firm's needs. She has regularly presented to the wider library and information management community on the use of SharePoint in libraries. Alison's background includes reference librarianship positions in the Australian Public Service and working in the education and training section of the Australian Library and Information Association's National Office.

Athanasios Karagrounas is head of information & knowledge management for the International Olympic Committee (IOC). He is a Certified Knowledge Manager (CKM) from the International Knowledge Management Institute (KMI). In the last 15 years, he has been involved in the organisation of two Olympic Games (Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004) in the areas of marketing, fundraising, and volunteer management. Since he joined the IOC in 2005 he has been heavily involved in the IOC's Olympic Games Knowledge Management Programme. He has followed and supported the information and knowledge activities of seven Olympic and three Youth Olympic Games Organising Committees. Today he is responsible for the development and management of IOC's internal information and knowledge management activities.

Nico Keppens is knowledge and communication officer at the European Commission (EuropeAid). Nico studied communications (journalism, PR, and marketing) and has been a freelance journalist for almost 30 years. Prior to joining the European Commission, he was formerly the press officer

at Vlaamse Dienst voor Agro Marketing. During almost 20 years within the European Commission, communication has been an important aspect of his role. In more recent years, the focus has been more on knowledge sharing and participative leadership, and on activities to engage staff and to encourage them to use their abilities in order to make the European project a success to the benefit of its citizens.

Tushar Kulkarni is a marketing and HR professional with more than eight years of rich and diverse experience. In marketing, he specialises in social media marketing and in HR he specialises in organisational learning and development. Tushar has successfully managed critical business functions such as knowledge management, learning and development, social media, customer service, market research, and key account management for reputed companies in India. Tushar has hands-on experience of working in virtual and multicultural teams. He has interacted with executives and clients across all levels of corporate hierarchy. At present, Tushar is working with Wipro Technologies, based out at Bangalore, India.

Alice MacGillivray is an independent consultant based on Gabriola Island in western Canada. She first encountered the field of knowledge management in the 1990s through her interests in leadership and complexity, and it quickly became a passion. Her clients have included public, private, and not-for-profit sector groups. Alice worked with an advisory board at Royal Roads University to develop the first MA in Knowledge Management, which launched in 2002. Although the programme had technical elements, it emphasised strategic, social, and cultural elements of knowledge work. The programme also included the first full course on Communities of Practice, which dovetailed with the international www.cpsquare.org foundations workshop. In 2005 she returned to studies and completed a PhD in Human and Organizational Systems from Fielding Graduate University in 2009. Alice is currently a consultant (www.4KM.net), is programme head for the MA in Learning and Technology at Royal Roads, co-chairs the Fielding Alumni Council, is a Fellow with the Institute for Social Innovation at Fielding, and she is on the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Complexity in Leadership and Management*.

Margaret McNaull is head of the Project Management Centre of Excellence, AstraZeneca. Margaret has 20 years of experience in global drug development during which she has held a range of technical, line, project, and programme management roles. Margaret played a key role in the team that delivered AstraZeneca's first novel anticancer agent IRESSA which is now licensed around the world for the treatment of lung cancer and has led many large scale change programmes. Margaret currently heads the Research and Development Project Management Centre of Excellence, a group tasked with creating and driving project management excellence across Research and Development in AstraZeneca. Margaret leads a global team with team members based in the UK, Sweden, and the US.

Angelo Mohanan is a knowledge management professional with close to eight years of experience in offering strategy, implementation, and off-shoring support to global teams. He currently works at KPMG, leading a team of knowledge analysts and promoting innovation and collaboration as a culture. In prior capacities and a career spanning 13 years, he worked with renowned global organisations such as NIIT, Accenture, and Impetus Technologies handling their instructional designing,

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Euan Semple is a speaker, writer, and consultant on the social web for business. Twelve years ago, while working in a senior position at the BBC, he was one of the first to introduce what have since become known as social media tools into a large, successful organisation. He has subsequently had seven years of experience working with many organisations including BP, The World Bank, and NATO to help them try to do the same.

Dr Arthur Shelley is a capability development and knowledge strategy consultant with over 30 years of professional experience, and is an awarded tertiary educator. He has performed a variety of professional roles including managing international projects in Australia, Europe, Asia, and the USA, and stewarding virtual Communities of Practice. As senior industry fellow at RMIT University, he facilitates courses on Knowledge Management, Project Leadership, and Applied Research Practice in the MBA and Master of Project Management programmes, and KM through Open Universities Australia. Arthur is the author two books: *Being a Successful Knowledge Leader* (Ark Group, 2009) and *The Organizational Zoo, A Survival Guide to Workplace Behaviour* (Aslan Publishing, 2007) and has written chapters for edited books, articles for academic and professional journals, and has a regular blog providing insights from his research about metaphor and behaviour. Arthur is regularly invited to international conferences to speak or facilitate workshops on his books and articles or to share experiences as the former global knowledge director for Cadbury Schweppes. He is founder of The Organizational Zoo Ambassadors Network (a professional peer mentoring group), leader of the RMIT MBA mentoring programme, and co-facilitator of the Melbourne KM Leadership Forum. Arthur is founder and CEO of Intelligent Answers (IA) a small specialist consulting firm with the vision to 'build capabilities and productive relationships through fun learning'. IA supports businesses to enhance knowledge succession and application, capability development, organisational relationships, and performance through creative interactive learning.

David Smith is assistant director of Corporate Records Management and Information Assurance Services for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in the UK. He has

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Dave Snowden is the founder and chief scientific officer of Cognitive Edge. His work is international in nature and covers government and industry, looking at complex issues relating to strategy and organisational decision-making. He has pioneered a science-based approach to organisations drawing on anthropology, neuroscience, and complex adaptive systems theory. He holds visiting Chairs at the Universities of Pretoria and Hong Kong Polytechnic University as well as a visiting fellowship at the University of Warwick. He is a senior fellow at the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies at Nanyang University and the Civil Service College in Singapore. His paper with Mary Boone on leadership was the cover article for the *Harvard Business Review* in November 2007 and won the Academy of Management award for the best practitioner paper in the same year. He has previously won a special award from the Academy for originality in his work on micro narrative. He is an editorial board member of several academic and practitioner journals and is an Editor in Chief of E:CO. In 2006 he was Director of the EPSRC (UK) research programme on emergence and in 2007 was appointed to an NSF (US) review panel on complexity science research. He previously worked for IBM where he was a director of the Institution for Knowledge Management and founded the Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity. He is the main designer of the SenseMaker® software suite, originally developed in the field of counter terrorism and now being actively deployed in the health sector to handle issues of impact measurement, narrative based knowledge management, strategic foresight, and risk management.

William (Bill) Stockton brings over two decades of international experience in the financial services industry to his role as co-founder of Klever. Keenly interested in ensuring change 'sticks' when a company transitions to a knowledge sharing organisation, Bill works closely with clients to develop and translate strategies into specific goals, tactics, and deliverables to achieve the desired results. During his distinguished career at Deutsche Bank, Bill managed business-critical, globally deployed, and complex application support utilising internal and external managers and staff. His innovative approach helped project leaders and support managers successfully adopt and implement knowledge management processes across Deutsche Bank's entire IT arena worldwide. Recognised by Deutsche Bank for his expertise in knowledge centred support (KCS) methodology, Bill also successfully deployed ITIL training, ITIL-aligned support services, and service improvement functions.

Bill graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in psychology and was both selected for, and completed, the executive education and leadership programme at London Business School. He is also a member of the Micro Finance Club of New York.

Emily Timmins joined the UK Midlands-based water company Severn Trent Water Ltd 15 years ago as a graduate having completed an MSC in Water Management. She first found her way into knowledge management after being continuously frustrated that they were not learning from their mistakes out in the field. Her continued calls to arms around this issue saw her move into a brand new role supporting the capital delivery programme through capturing and making available design-related lessons, and so her journey with knowledge management began. In her current role as innovation and skills manager she has built on this and is now accountable for the knowledge and information strategy and for leading the teams who support the related activities which focus on capital delivery supply chain partners and internal teams (called the One Supply Chain).

Glynys Thomas is the senior knowledge manager for The Parthenon Group, a leading advisory firm focused on strategy consulting with offices in Boston, London, Mumbai, San Francisco, and Shanghai. During her eight years with Parthenon, she has implemented the global company intranet using MS SharePoint technologies, designed and implemented the security, process, and platform for client case information and document collection, and has created an interface to enable search for all offices globally. She is currently managing the firm-wide effort to incorporate older case knowledge into the existing knowledge management processes. She is a member of and occasional speaker for the Boston KM Forum and a founder, with Katrina Pugh, of the SIKM Leaders Boston group, and has blogged for the Women in SharePoint Boston group. Prior to joining Parthenon, Glynys was the first knowledge manager for the global integrated advertising agency Digitas (now a member of the Publicis Group).

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