

Knowledge Management Foundations Course Outline

Learning Outcomes

- Use a framework and a clear language for knowledge management concepts;
- Describe how valuable individual, group and organizational knowledge is managed throughout the knowledge management cycle;
- Define the different knowledge types and explain how they are addressed by knowledge management;
- Describe the major roles and responsibilities in knowledge management implementations;
- Identify some of the key tools and techniques used in knowledge management applications.
- Identify and evaluate major KM issues such as ethics, knowledge ownership vs. authorship, copyright, intellectual property and knowledge sharing incentives.

Textbook Readings

- Sept 9 Chapter 1: Introduction to Knowledge Management: introduction to the study of knowledge management (KM), brief history of KM, lack of consensus over what constitutes a good definition of KM and the concept analysis technique, multidisciplinary roots of KM, the two major forms of knowledge, tacit and explicit, importance of KM today, for individuals, for communities of practice and for organizations are described together with the emerging KM roles and responsibilities needed to ensure successful KM implementations.
- Sept. 16 Chapter 2: The Knowledge Management Cycle: description of the major phases involved in the knowledge management cycle, encompassing the capture, creation, codification, sharing, accessing, applying and reuse of knowledge within and between organizations. Four major approaches to KM cycles are presented from Meyer and Zack (1996), Bukowitz and Williams (2000), McElroy (2003) and Wiig (1993). A synthesis of these approaches is then developed as a framework for understanding how information becomes a valuable knowledge asset for a given organization.
- Sept. 23 CLASS CANCELLED
- Sept. 30 Chapter 3: Knowledge Management Models: A robust theoretical foundation is required as the basis of any knowledge management initiative that is to succeed. The major KM activities described in the KM cycle in the previous week require a conceptual framework to operate within otherwise the activities will not be coordinated and will not produce the expected KM benefits. Knowledge management models are

presented from Choo (1998) and Weick, Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995), Wiig (1993), von Krogh & Roos (1995), Boisot (1998), Beer (1984) and Bennet & Bennet (2004). The models all present different perspectives on the key conceptual elements that form the infrastructure of KM.

- Oct. 7 Chapter 4: Knowledge Capture and Codification: the first phase of the knowledge management cycle, knowledge capture and/or creation. Major approaches, techniques and tools used to elicit tacit knowledge, to trigger the creation of new knowledge and to subsequently organize this content in a systematic manner (codification) are presented e.g. knowledge acquisition for the development of expert systems, instructional design techniques for course content creation and organization, task analysis techniques used in the development of performance support systems and taxonomic approaches that originate from library and information studies.
- Oct. 14 STUDY BREAK – NO CLASS
- Oct. 21 Chapter 5: Knowledge Sharing and Communities of Practice: the social nature of knowledge, knowledge sharing and communities of practice, knowledge sharing groups such as communities of practice are situated in a historical context and their evolution in organizations is described with particular emphasis on the development of social capital. Techniques and technologies such as social networks are presented as means of visualizing and analyzing knowledge flows during knowledge sharing activities and some common barriers to knowledge sharing are described.
- Oct. 28 Chapter 6: Knowledge Application: the final step in the knowledge management cycle when the knowledge that has been captured, coded, shared and otherwise made available is put to actual use, understand which knowledge is of use to which set of people and how best to make it available to them so that they not only understand how to use it, but believe that using this knowledge will lead to an improvement in their work. The use of learning taxonomies, task support systems and personalization or profiling techniques can help ensure the best possible match between user and content. Expertise location systems and other collaboration aids can help groups of people find and apply valuable knowledge and know-how. Content management systems can be designed to optimize knowledge application on an organization-wide basis.
- Nov. 4 Chapter 7: The Role of Organizational Culture: the role played by organizational culture in more detail. Different types of organizational cultures are described with a view to better understanding the key dimensions of the different micro cultures that thrive in organizations. Cultural enablers and obstacles to knowledge sharing are presented together with a discussion on how to institute desired organizational changes to better accommodate knowledge management. Finally, the long-

term nature of organizational culture dimensions is addressed by presenting major organizational and KM maturity models.

Chapter 8: Knowledge Management Tools: overview of KM tools, which are all too often treated as black boxes (data goes in and knowledge magically comes out the other end). Knowledge management implementations require a wide range of quite diverse tools that come into play throughout the KM cycle. Technology is used to facilitate primarily communication, collaboration and content management for better knowledge capture, sharing, dissemination and application. Major categories of KM tools are presented, as new ones are being developed at a rapid pace.

Nov. 11 Chapter 9: Knowledge Management Strategy: the common building blocks that are developed in order to be able to apply and gain benefits from KM applications. The major steps involved in developing a KM strategy are presented. Innovation and reuse are discussed in terms of how best to balance creativity with organizational structure.

Chapter 10: The Value of KM: how do we know that KM objectives were met? A discussion of the commonly used techniques to assess the return on investment of KM: benchmarking, the balanced scorecard method and the house of quality and results-based management (RBM).

Nov. 18 Chapter 11: Organizational Memory and Organizational Learning: the processes involved in how an organization can continually improve over time by learning from its successes (best practices and innovations) and its failures (lessons learned). How to document milestone events and “remember” them through access to an organizational memory. Organizational memory models are reviewed and a three-tier approach (individual, group and organizational levels) to knowledge continuity to ensure there is no loss of knowledge or “organizational amnesia.

Nov. 25 Chapter 12: The Knowledge Management Team: overview of the professionals who form part of the KM team. The key skill set required to carry out KM responsibilities are described using a variety of frameworks. The different types of KM jobs that exist and potential KM employers are outlined and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the emerging KM profession and some of the ethical issues involved in its practice.

Chapter 13: Future Challenges for Knowledge Management: Some issues facing knowledge management such as political issues regarding Internet search engines, the shift to knowledge-based assets and how to provide incentives for knowledge sharing to successfully incorporate KM into organizations are discussed.

Dec. 2 Student *Presentations* (may have to have some in Week 12 as well depending on class size).

Required Readings

Textbook: Dalkir, K. *Knowledge Management in Theory and Practice*. Second Edition. Boston, MA: MIT Press.

Method

A combination of lectures, guest lecturers, group discussions, videos, webcasts, in-class exercises, and demonstrations will be used in this course.

Evaluation

Concept analysis of knowledge management key concepts	25%
Individual assignment: Knowledge Management case analysis	35%
Group assignment: Knowledge Management Application	35%
Participation/Attendance	5%

Office Hours

Please make an appointment.

Contact Information

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<http://ww2.mcgill.ca/studentshandbook/chapter1.html>