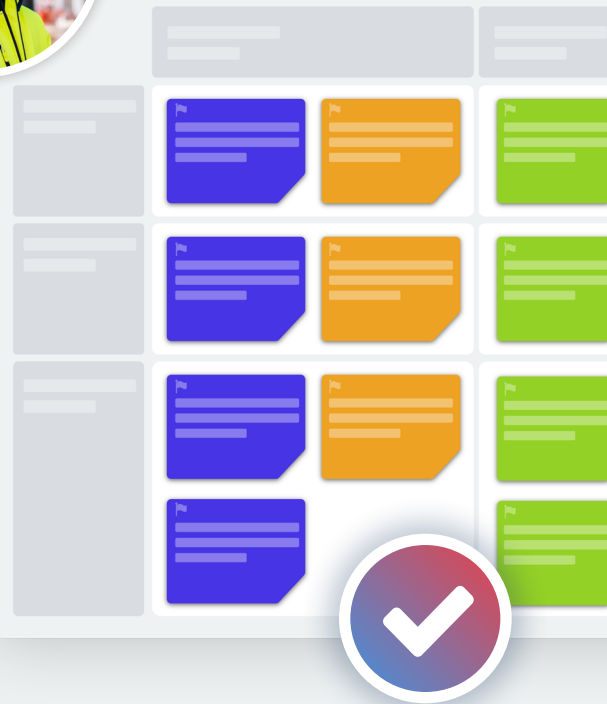




What is knowledge management? A beginners guide

Knowledge management methodologies have been advanced by digital technology, enabling businesses to manage operations, and their knowledge assets, more effectively than ever before.

If you're looking for a streamlined, efficient and quality-assured way to handle your organisation's knowledge, then a contemporary knowledge management system (KMS) will unify and enhance your working practices.



What is knowledge management?

Knowledge management is a process that involves identifying, gathering, organising, sharing and analysing information in a methodological way. This practice is often used by organisations to effectively disseminate knowledge to employees and other relevant parties. The aim is to build and embed a culture of collective learning.

Using knowledge management tools facilitates the means for operations to run much more smoothly, saving time, money and reducing risk. Knowledge is, after all, an asset that must be treated valuably and managed with vigilance and transparency.

Individual knowledge

Holistic Knowledge Management

Corporate Knowledge

What is a knowledge management system?

A knowledge management system (KMS), put simply, provides a platform in which to manage organisational knowledge. This management system harnesses knowledge across a business, providing a single repository of information where people can easily access relevant information whenever they need it.

Whilst knowledge management is not a new concept, a knowledge management system can be seen as a more contemporary solution. Often a digital platform enriched with intuitive features, a knowledge management system provides one centralised source of knowledge.

Defining knowledge

The term knowledge, in this case, refers to any intellectual property: service methodology, tools, templates, guidance documentation, customer data, market data and project collateral, to name a few, owned by a business. This definition can also include insights from and lessons learned by staff.

In the field of knowledge management, there are three types of knowledge that encapsulate the nature of the information retrieved and stored.

Explicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge is the most widely known type of knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be easily codified and consumed in order to educate, transfer and disseminate information.

This is information that can be articulated into formats such as:

- ✓ Guides
- ✓ Reports
- ✓ Documents
- ✓ Manuals
- ✓ Structured service methodologies and frameworks
- ✓ Tools and templates
- ✓ Books
- ✓ Videos, Etc.

Tacit knowledge

This is the knowledge that is obtained through experience. Whilst it can be intuitively understood, it's more difficult to articulate this knowledge into a documented format. Tacit knowledge is a deeper kind of knowing, that can at times be difficult to share with others. Examples of tacit knowledge include language, intuition, humour, leadership skills and having a 'knack' for something, sales for example.

Implicit knowledge

Implicit knowledge is sometimes considered the same as tacit knowledge, but there is a difference between the two. Implicit knowledge is essentially tacit knowledge that can be articulated. It's knowledge that exists but has not yet been written down. Implicit knowledge may also be referred to as embedded knowledge as it is know-how that often comes from embedded experience.

The benefits of a knowledge management system

The gathering, documenting and centralising aspect of knowledge management presents knowledge in an accessible and digestible format. This, ultimately supports businesses in meeting important use cases.

Managing knowledge, and effectively assigning tasks can be particularly difficult for organisations taking on large, complex projects. It's especially important for businesses that operate within more controlled environments, such as those in construction and engineering.

This is because their projects are typically associated with higher risk, as they must comply with specific standards and regulation - making a good KMS incredibly necessary for project and operational success.

Below you can see some specific benefits to having a knowledge management system solution.

Constructive decision-making

Every enterprise has its own decisions to make, decisions that have the power to elevate or negatively impact them. A KMS enables a more transparent, data-driven approach to making project-based decisions.

Quality assurance

Through an effective knowledge management system, organisations can make sure work is meeting legal, industry and quality standards. Every product, service, task and process can be monitored and evaluated, ensuring you and other employees are aligning with best practice.

Improve communication and collaboration

A knowledge management system is a medium that encourages workplaces to collaborate towards one mutual goal and build a channel of open communication. The transparency that a knowledge base offers helps to establish a sense of trust between employees. It allows teammates to share lessons learned from previous projects, and helps shed light on any risk areas (potentially before they become problems).

By improving communication, organisations breed continuous improvement, reduce risk, and foster best-practice service delivery.

Strengthen organisational knowledge

Through a knowledge-sharing platform, employees, clients and other relevant parties can establish a durable organisational memory.

It ensures one person isn't entirely responsible for one source of information; if someone leaves an organisation valuable knowledge has not left with them, for example. It also helps in supporting a structure for employee training, ensuring new hires are exposed to all the information they need.

Drive accountability

Offering a standard of visibility, a KMS makes it incredibly clear who has, or has not, carried out what task. Assigning people to tasks can assist with holding certain people or parties accountable. This is especially important in cases where any misconduct, malpractice or any kind of accidents or incidents have happened.

Similarly, restricting access or notifications for tasks that aren't personally relevant helps individuals prioritise their duties.

Increase efficiency

Having a single source of information for people within an organisation, program or project to go to when they need certain resources means information can be obtained much quicker. Without the need to extensively track down and question numerous individuals or disparate data sources, a knowledge management system optimises operational efficiency and productive communication.

A KMS that keeps that knowledge in a consistent, structured, readily searchable, sharable and accessible way will ensure that the most efficient practices can be maintained from project to project.

What are the key components of knowledge management systems?

Below you can see some of the key features you will find in a modern, purpose-built knowledge management system.

Ability to easily build (and keep current) service assurance frameworks

Based on best practice, build structured project-specific assurance frameworks that you can return to every time.

Multi-resource capture

People consume knowledge in many different ways. A KMS needs to capture a rich array of knowledge resource artefacts: text guidance, images, file uploads, file links, videos, task lists etc.

Expert tagging

A KMS should facilitate the inherent human aspect of KM (people-to-people connections). A KMS should allow knowledge to be tagged to best-placed colleagues to support in relation to the topic in hand.

Task scheduling, tracking and auditing – for live assurance of your services

Keep on track of tasks and assurance checks by assigning, monitoring and auditing overlays.

User feedback

The information within a knowledge base may lose relevance over time. Understand how your knowledge is being received – and keep it continuously-improving - with user feedback features.

Permission and viewership control

An effective KMS will have editorial controls, ensuring knowledge remains accurate. Structured user and role management will make sure only the right people have access to valuable information.

Visualisation

User experience, engagement and ease-of-use can all be enhanced with high-quality visual features to help bring knowledge to life.

Analytics dashboard

Monitor productivity, task status, knowledge base visitor count, and use metrics to support future decisions with KMS analytics.

Integrations

A contemporary knowledge management system will easily integrate alongside other applications, such as BIM or ERP systems, for example.

Customisation

A KMS can be tailored to align with your business, offering customisable features to suit your use cases.

Learn and build on knowledge with clarity

Having a designated system that stores business knowledge in an organised manner, elevating collective insight and action, will enable your organisation to deliver in the most beneficial way.

A tech-empowered knowledge management system can be advantageous for enterprises of all sizes, from small businesses to large corporations. They are essential to any organisation with a breadth of knowledge that needs sharing both internally and externally.

A knowledge management system will facilitate your business by:

- ✓ Bridging gaps in organisational knowledge
- ✓ Building on best-practice methodologies
- ✓ Facilitating continuous process improvement
- ✓ Maintaining data confidentiality
- ✓ Providing a directory of who-knows-what
- ✓ Offering an optimised cycle of knowledge development, retention, delivery and improvement

Want to know more about knowledge management solutions?

If you're looking for a more effective way to manage your organisation's knowledge, tasks and operational responsibilities, then **get in touch with us today.**

We're happy to discuss our tech-enabled knowledge management system solution with you, provide a demo, and answer any further questions you have.