



Adoption of Knowledge Management



Adoption of Knowledge Management

“ Knowledge Management (KM) is the set of professional practices which improves the capabilities of the organization’s human resources and enhances their ability to share what they know. ”

To succeed in your KM strategy and to meet the business objectives of the implementation, it is imperative that the project team ensures adoption of the system within the user base. The focus of the implementation should be on increasing and maintaining the usage of the system in terms of number of users participating, increasing the number of transactions on the system and improving the quality of the transactions.

Failure in meeting adoption translates into slow growth and an underutilized and ineffective knowledge management system. This white paper focuses on two key areas (a) key adoption challenges faced by organizations (b) and a framework to guide project teams to overcome these challenges.

Key Adoption Challenges

Typically, the adoption challenges faced during the life time of the KM system are:

- Unclear KM strategy
- Lack of personal ROI
- Lack of organizational culture
- Lack of organizational commitment
- Failure to communicate effectively
- Poor maturity of tool deployed

Unclear KM strategy: Every new strategy or tool needs to have a vision and implementation strategy that would align all involved in the same direction. The strategy for KM must provide more than an outline of top-level goals such as “need to create a knowledge sharing organization”, and instead must identify the core issues that need to be solved by KM within the organization.

Lack of personal ROI: A user needs to derive value from the system in order to return to use the system and to adopt it. The value delivered to a user can be different for different users, as a result personal ROI becomes difficult to calculate as users might return to the system for various different reasons that range from the issues resolved by the system to the knowledge sharing needs of a user.

Lack of organizational culture: To foster knowledge culture, the organization needs to align itself to promote proactive knowledge sharing within users. Implementing a knowledge management system is about a cultural change and users need to be encouraged to contribute to knowledge activities as part of their core responsibilities.

Lack of organizational commitment: One of the common reasons for a KM strategy to fail or not meet the set expectations has been found to be the management dedication and commitment in the long term towards the solution. A Long term commitment and active support across the organization is critical.

Failure to communicate effectively: It has been hypothesized that a person needs to hear the same message at least three times before it registers in the brain. As KM brings about a cultural change within an organization, unclear communication or no communication results in proper information about the system not being disseminated.

Poor maturity of tool deployed: The use of technology serves as a platform for the KM system and it needs to be technologically robust, easy to use and feature rich. The capabilities of the system need to be in line with the user expectations, business objectives and integration requirements of your organization.

How to Incorporate Adoption in KM Project Management

To ensure adoption and usage of KM system, the implementation strategy should be people centric rather than technology centric. The key activities that are critical during KM project management are discussed below:

- **Project discovery** is a structured and analytical approach of assessing the business value that the KM tool would deliver and also to develop an implementation strategy for the KM tool.

Discovery involves:

- Develop use cases to identify how employees will use the system and how value will be delivered
- Develop implementation strategy based on the organization’s use case scenario, assessment of barriers in connecting and collaborating, recommendations for measuring the value delivered and tactics for driving usage and adoption
- Leadership and cultural assessment questionnaires to identify leadership interest and organizational culture support in making KM a success.

- **Business objectives and success metrics** is a pre launch activity that determines the metric tracking, reporting and success guidelines of the project:

- Identify your corporate objectives and business objectives that help achieve your corporate goals.
- Determine project tracking metrics based on business objectives and identify suitable ranges. Metrics should be measurable, actionable and quantifiable. Examples of metrics are: knowledge transactions, reuse of knowledge content and expertise search & location

- **Champion program:** The role of a champion is crucial for long term adoption strategies as they will evangelize the system within their respective user groups and directly impact usage.

- Recruit champions across the organization (by location, function and community) who can positively influence the adoption within their user segments
- Create a structured champion program to motivate, manage and provide incentives to champions



■ **Community development and pre-population strategies** should be developed based on the feedback gathered during the project discovery. Communities can be based on technology or business disciplines, departments, functions, products, business process, or special interests. During community development, ensure that the communities are not more than 3-levels deep; they are pre-populated and have an active champion identified.

Pre population focuses on ensuring a great first experience to the user of the system. The strategies are to be aimed at building user profiles, expert profiles, bringing existing content by integrating content repositories such as file shares or emails with the KM system.

■ **Integration** involves integrating the KM tool with other existing tools and resources within the organization. Integration coupled with pre-population ensures that users are able to use the system to its fullest potential right from the start and are also able to access the other resources made available to them earlier. A highly integrated environment ensures that the tool is better used and also easier to use.

■ **Marketing and communication** is a critical ongoing activity that is aimed at creating awareness and spreading the system benefits to the end user. A high impact and effective marketing campaign should be included in the project plan both during and after system launch.

Marketing will help create a buzz about the KM system and also help in showcasing the success that has been achieved. Marketing strategy should ensure that all user segments and stakeholders of the project are impacted.

■ **Training** users to utilize the system helps the users in using the system more effectively and it has also been seen that a trained user is more likely to return to the system. Training sessions will also help in showcasing the benefits & use of the system and drive user acceptance.

■ **Incentive management** involves driving usage by encouraging participation through the use of rewards, performance reviews, and other motivators. Incentive management in itself becomes crucial, as an incorrect program would impact the usage of the system. While implementing an incentive program identify all possible incentives, get key stakeholder buy-in and publicize the incentive plan.

■ **Tactics for culture change:** To promote KM culture within an organization, the project team must use the KM system to its fullest and evangelize the system. The culture change can be brought about by maintaining a rewards and recognition program for KM adopters, by gathering feedback from early adopters in terms of high personal ROI and sharing broadly, and in some cases by undoing the organizations past history of unsuccessful attempts at KM. The project team also must work to get full commitment and support from key executives at the organization.

■ **Metrics measurement, reporting and ROI:** As an ongoing exercise metrics, need to be monitored and reported in a formal manner by the project team. The objective of this exercise is to ensure that the system is being used as per expectation and if there is any deviation the project team is able to preempt it by taking corrective course correction.

Many KM implementations are unsure of how to link KM efforts to ROI. This should be addressed by identifying a set of metrics that best correlate to business impact that can be traced to actions taken by users on the KM system such as time taken to solve problems, project execution times, new product ideas or feedback gathered, time taken to solve customer issues, reduction in manufacturing related defects etc.

■ **Usage optimization** is a continuous exercise to measure and enhance the value of a KM implementation and to monitor the health of the system. Usage optimization process should:

- Gather, Analyze and Report actual usage and adoption metrics against expected metrics
- Root cause analysis of the usage and adoption issues
- Develop a set of tactics to impact these root causes
- Set goals and timeline for next optimization exercise

Conclusion

KM project execution and management is a science that requires the right methodology, right strategy and an experienced team to guide the project. It must strike a delicate balance to incorporate organizational objectives and dynamics, culture change tactics, feedback from end users and stakeholders and marketing strategies in the project plan. Further it should continuously measure the progress of the implementation and take corrective action as needed. To compliment this implementation approach, it is equally important to select a KM solution that is mature and proven, integrates with existing infrastructure and supports the latest standards and advancements in technology.

Contact Your CCH Account Representative at **888-CCH-REPS** to discuss your KM project and get free advice.



4025 W. Peterson Avenue
Chicago, IL 60646-6085
888-CCH-REPS
CCHGroup.com