
Five Things You're Doing Right

Building a collaborative Knowledge Management system can be challenging. Like a puzzle, all the pieces have to fit together just right. In many of our environments, the pieces belong to different organizations within the company, and are not necessarily targeted to KM.

No matter how confusing the process may be, we know you're doing plenty of things right. For example:

- 1 Building a collaborative foundation.** By creating a secure infrastructure that takes advantage of VPN and includes servers, PCs, and access to outside resources (such as Active Directory or other directory services), you are building a foundation for collaboration with your customers, clients, employees, and suppliers. This necessary first step positions your company to take advantage of collaborative technologies securely.
- 2 Creating business process workflows – knowing where your “knowledge” resides and how it gets there.** The most difficult part of any Knowledge Management initiative is determining how the information – or “knowledge” – flows through your organization. Analyzing and documenting these business processes should be the first step in any technology project. Identifying duplicate information or redundant processes will help determine what technology tools will solve business problems.
- 3 Determining quick wins.** Changing the way information is gathered may cause
- 4 Changing your view of systems from vertical to horizontal.** Traditionally, information has been entered and presented **vertically** into application silos. In order to complete any business process, most information workers had to move between multiple software applications. Entering a new client or case might have required several different screens. Current technology permits a **horizontal** view of these tasks, allowing entry or retrieval from multiple applications on one screen or in multiple portals.
- 5 Your portal view extends beyond the Web.** While the term “portal” is generally used to describe a web interface, it can also describe a gateway to information and applications. Current portals include not only web applications, but the ability to enter and retrieve information in word processing documents, e-mail applications, and other places where information workers “live.”

Knowledge Management is more than a software solution – it's a strategic process. You are likely doing many things today that will impact your KM return on investment – identifying these as a part of the whole will help you move along!

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