# Knowledge Management Trends and Workspace Trends

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**Abstract:** *The full scope of knowledge management (KM) is not something that is universally accepted. However, KM is about making the right knowledge available to the right people. It is about making sure that an organization can learn, and that it will be able to retrieve and use its knowledge assets in current applications as they are needed. Adoption and engagement are key measurements of a knowledge management initiative's success, and yet most organizations struggle with this because they do not truly understand the failures of their platforms. The knowledge management problem is a "Big Data" problem: most organizations do not have a strategy, and so they store everything, amassing content and rich media, and are unable to tap into the collective knowledge they hold. The main purpose of this is provide information about how we approach knowledge management today, how the knowledge management is in 2017 and what are the surprising knowledge management workspace trends. And we are thronging light on 15 trends of knowledge management of today.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge Management, KM Today, KM in 2017, KM Action Wheel, KM Trends and Workspace Trends.

## I. How We Approach Knowledge Management Today

Knowledge management has changed dramatically over the last decade, and even now — with the rise of cloud-based content management and collaboration platforms merged with machine learning and social networking capabilities — the rate of change is outpacing organizational ability to keep up. Features are developed and released within days, rather than multi-year cycles, and organizations are trying to adjust.

The basic needs of knowledge management have not changed: the ability to capture and store knowledge assets and intellectual property, and provide simple yet powerful search capabilities so employees can easily discover and retrieve them. However, the sheer volume of content is making meeting both of these needs a difficult proposition. And the more difficult it is to locate and retrieve your content and business-critical data, the less likely end users are to embrace the platform.

The next generation of knowledge management platforms need to take into account the various methods through which we share our skills, knowledge and experience. We need the ability to capture or create knowledge in every form, from documents and process flows, to interviews, Q&A, video and audio recordings, and our various social activities and other indicators.

But that's the easy part: collecting information, in all of its forms. The hard part will be to organize it, to correlate disparate artifacts into meaningful streams of information. Through the automated classification and tagging of content — print, video, audio — and subsequent translation using data mining and machine learning techniques to identify patterns, our knowledge management systems will slowly begin to match the human brain's ability to discover deep insights into the knowledge we hold.

The good news is that we live in an exciting time for knowledge management innovation. Many of the core technologies that will make this next generation of knowledge management possible are becoming available through leading collaboration and KM platforms.

Companies such as Microsoft, Google, Facebook and others are working on social graph efforts, where the relationships between document artifacts and business processes are joined by and expanded upon by the relationships of readers, authors, team members, administrators, and anyone else who may interact with any single node, amplifying the relationships between nodes exponentially.

## II. Knowledge Management in 2017

After nearly twenty years of Knowledge Management Consulting, I've developed core themes to what I believe comprises good KM.

*"Knowledge Management involves the people, culture, content, processes, and enabling technologies necessary to Capture, Manage, Share, and Find information."*

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We supplement this with our KM Action Wheel. The wheel represents the many uses of KM:
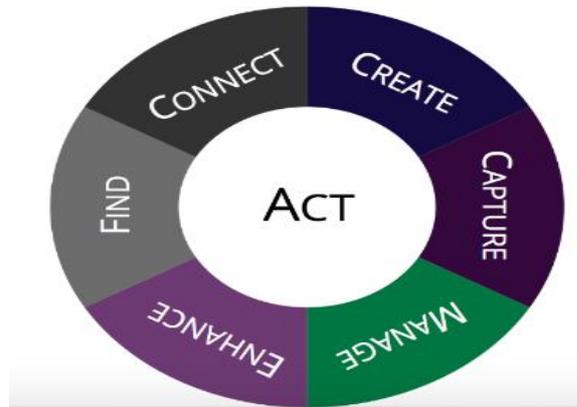


- Creation of knowledge and information; [KM Action Wheel]
- Capture of knowledge and information (from tacit to explicit, and/or into KM systems);
- Management of knowledge and information, often using an array of technologies including knowledge bases, intranets, content management, document management, and records management;
- Enhancement of knowledge and information, making it better over time through increased collaboration, adding tags to improve its findability, and linking it to other knowledge and information to tell a more complete story;
- Ensuring that the appropriate knowledge and information is findable by the right people in intuitive ways, maximizing its use and reuse; and
- Connecting, creating links between knowledge and information, between the holders of knowledge (your experts), and between your various repositories, resulting in a web of enterprise knowledge that builds on itself over time.

Most importantly, though, is the word ACT in the middle of the wheel. For us, effective KM doesn't happen for the sake of KM, it happens to enable specific actions and results. All KM efforts should be grounded in a deep and clear understanding of the results you're seeking and the actions you're attempting to enable.

Unfortunately, KM as a concept continues to be sullied by overly academic viewpoints and an unfortunate association with projects that are all talk and big ideas, but are unacceptably short on results and practical thinking. A look at Google Trends expresses this unfortunate reality all too clearly, with a steadily declining interest in the term since 2004.

### III.    3 Surprising Knowledge Management Workspace Trends

people's relationship to work *is* changing. And it isn't just about Boomers retiring and Millennials moving up the ranks (though that's one factor). Here are some of the broad trends.

1. **The physical settings where work happens are diversifying**. Two decades ago, the vast majority of knowledge workers were housed in traditional offices divided into closed offices and cubicles. Now, most organizations have more open, flexible environments that incorporate multipurpose, collaborative, and reconfigurable spaces. On top of that, an increasing number of people are able to leverage technology in order to work from anywhere.

2. **Virtual tools transform how we consume information and work together**. From document sharing to enterprise social networking, it goes without saying that technology allows us to work and collaborate in ways our grandparents couldn't imagine. And as cutting-edge tools like artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and wearable technology enter the mainstream, our working norms and habits will continue to evolve. In addition to changing how we access people and information, these technological shifts have deep repercussions concerning how we establish trust, learn, and build relationships.

3. **The decoupling of work from a physical location has profound implications for the human experience**. Obviously, there are huge benefits to technology that allows us to plug into our jobs from anywhere with a wifi connection, and today's workers enjoy more mobility and flexibility than ever before. But there's a catch. If there are no boundaries limiting when and where we can work—and if work messages flash across our phones 24/7—then it's easy to work too much and feel like work is impinging on the rest of our lives. The data backs this up: According to Gallup, 50% of American full-time employees work more than 40 hours a week, with the average workweek hovering around 47 hours.

## IV.　　15 Trends of Knowledge Management

### Trend 1: Social is Game the Name of the Game
Social networking sites are highly effective tools for marketing and communication, and they're also extremely easy to use. When social media elements are blended with knowledge management software, the workday becomes easier. Staff can communicate more intuitively and engage more effectively, since social elements are "second nature.

### Trend 2: Search Indexing Is Maturing
Social business applications like social intranet software and knowledge management software rely on robust search functionality to ensure peak performance. As search indexing continues to mature, users will be able to retrieve files and documents more rapidly, increasing productivity.

### Trend 3: Collaboration Will Get Easier
Collaboration enhances business processes, but connecting your team members can be a challenge. Fortunately, knowledge management systems are becoming more collaborative than ever, as seen in social intranet software, allowing individuals to work on documents and communicate with each other in real time.

### Trend 4: Mobile Technology
Mobile technology has become a primary means of accessing the Web for both personal and professional reasons. Staff members need access to an organization's knowledge management system while they're on the go. Vendors are making sure their software works on smart phones and tablets without issue in response to this demand.

### Trend 5: Visuals will Replace Lists
Early versions of knowledge management software featured long lists, elaborate file names, and spotty functionality. The visual aspect of knowledge management software has evolved, and current software increasingly relies on images to help users navigate more easily. Text-based lists will be all but replaced with images for searching files and documents.

### Trend 6: Integrated External Processes
Many professionals find themselves juggling numerous software applications to stay on track. External processes will always be necessary, but that doesn't mean they can't live in the same place as knowledge management. Social intranets eliminate the need to log into several different apps. Users can work from an integrated suite in one space.

### Trend 7: User Engagement Will Increase
Staff members want to share their insight and ideas. Knowledge management is shifting from control to cultivation, so that your team can share information organically. To encourage this engagement, knowledge management software permissions are becoming more and more flexible and inclusive.

### Trend 8: Content Creation
Organizations regularly generate new content to keep pace with increasing demands for information. Knowledge management software now allows you to tag, share, and organize content as soon as you create it. This helps to cut down on confusion and makes knowledge management a more interactive process.

### Trend 9: Segmentation of Spaces
Businesses often suffer from information overload, particularly during periods of rapid growth and success. Knowledge management software allows for segmentation of information into multiple community spaces. Your marketing team won't be overwhelmed with documentation that pertains to accounting or tech support.

### Trend 10: Friendly User Interface
The point of contact between your staff and your knowledge management system is the user interface, or UI. A well- designed UI will allow you to leverage your system properly. Software development teams are dedicated to creating increasingly intuitive UIs, and top-notch UIs are becoming a make-or-break element in knowledge management software.

### Trend 11: Vendors and Customers
As business processes become more holistic, knowledge management software is developing a more robust approach that includes vendors, clients and customers. Newer knowledge management software options allow for external integration so that internal and external parties can share information more easily.

### Trends 12: Automatic Updates
Automatic, consistent updates are becoming increasingly necessary as new challenges and solutions emerge in knowledge management. Social intranet software suites are always in flux, improving with each update, and the future holds even more surprising tweaks that will help to improve productivity.

### Trend 13: Customization and Scalability
You need a knowledge management software solution that fits you rather than something generic. Customization is essential to the success of your software implementation. As social intranet and knowledge management software evolve, they continue to become more customizable, offering scalability to match your organization's growth.

### Trend 14: Customer Support Integration
Customer support is vital. Since your knowledge management software houses your product and service documentation, it's the perfect platform for customer service. Integration of customer service is already here, and will always be one of the most important things for any organization to focus on.

### Trend 15: Issues are Easy to Track and Fix
Bugs and other issues will occasionally arise. The trick is to find and track problems as quickly as possible with ticket systems and customer support features. When employees, customers and vendors encounter bugs or issues, they'll be able to instantly open a ticket for administrators to review.

### Conclusion:
Knowledge management is a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing all of an enterprise's information assets. These assets may include databases, documents, policies, procedures, and previously un-captured expertise and experience in individual workers. The operational origin of KM, as the term is understood today, arose within the consulting community and from there the principles of KM were rather rapidly spread by the consulting organizations to other disciplines. The consulting firms

quickly realized the potential of the Intranet flavor of the Internet for linking together their own geographically dispersed and knowledge-based organizations. Once having gained expertise in how to take advantage of intranets to connect across their organizations and to share and manage information and knowledge, they then understood that the expertise they had gained was a product that could be sold to other organizations. A new product of course needed a name, and the name chosen, or at least arrived at, was Knowledge Management.

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