

# What is Knowledge Management?

## The next generation of knowledge systems



*Your documents. Your knowledge. Always current - and at your fingertips.*

---

### **Question: What is Knowledge Management - and what does it do for organizations?**

**Whether** it's operational, product, or organization knowledge; knowledge is a company's most important asset. And, as that knowledge continues to grow, organizations are finding it more and more difficult to manage.

**As a growing number of companies** are finding, the ability to effectively manage and distribute knowledge among employees and with customers is fast becoming a powerful tool in today's competitive marketplace.

### **Problem #1: Capturing & Retrieving Data**

**Capturing** data is a complicated and difficult task since information resides in a variety of:

- ▶ **FORMATS** – Paper, electronic documents, messages, relational data, Internet/intranet content, video and multimedia, etc.
- ▶ **SYSTEMS** – Core processing, CRM, human resources, document storage, etc.
- ▶ **LOCATIONS** – enterprise data and file servers, departmental network/shared drives, and employee desktops and laptops

**Retrieving** stored data such as policies, procedures, forms, product fact sheets, phone numbers, office information, etc., is often confusing and time consuming. Employees must remember where a needed document is stored; what drive is it on? which folder? what's the filename? Is it in the operations manual or the customer service manual? Additionally, the content in these documents is static and often out-of-date. Employees lose confidence in its' relevance and usefulness. Most often, it's just quicker to ask someone.

### **Problem #2: Capturing & Sharing Knowledge**

**Employees** are the main source of knowledge in a business. Employees rely regularly on their co-workers to assist them, especially newer employees. There is often no effective way for companies to capture the extensive knowledge of employees.

**Each and every time** that an employee walks out the door of a company, the knowledge that employee has about products, about services, and about procedures may not be returning. Thus, knowledge erodes over time and businesses find themselves continuously re-creating the wheel.

### **Problem #3: Sharing Information with Customers**

**Today**, most companies utilize multiple delivery channels to communicate with their customers. But how effective are those delivery channels?

#### **WEBSITES**

The most common way for businesses to share information with their customers is with a website. However, even a website requires customers to search through numerous sections and drill deeper into content to obtain the information they are seeking. If customers can't find what they need, when they need it, they get frustrated and head elsewhere.

#### **CALL CENTERS**

Companies have Call Centers and Live Chat sessions that are devoted to answering incoming customer questions and inquiries. However, the employees in these areas still rely on the same methods to retrieve data and knowledge. High call volumes and employee turnover contributes to sharing inconsistent, and often, inaccurate information with customers. Long hold time creates frustration for both customers and call center employees. Additionally, there is simply no time to market and cross-sell products; resulting in lost opportunities.

## The Impact

- ▶ **Dissatisfied Customers**
- ▶ **Lost Opportunities**
- ▶ **Less Competitive in the Marketplace**
- ▶ **Unnecessary Operating Expenses**
- ▶ **Erosion of Company Knowledge**
- ▶ **Less Efficient**
- ▶ **Employee Frustration**

**Answer:** Knowledge Management is broadly defined as “the acquisition, organization, sharing and use of knowledge within an organization.”

The proactive practice of capturing and reusing information or knowledge, with the help of technology, is a Knowledge Management System (KMS).

**Solving the Problem** with a Knowledge Management System is a rapidly growing trend. Giving employees and customers access to knowledge in a quick, easy and accurate manner can help resolve many of the typical problems of today’s operations.

### A Knowledge Management System is not:

- ✗ **A CRM system**
- ✗ **A Document Management system**
- ✗ **An Intranet**
- ✗ **A Portal**

**A Knowledge Management System is** a collection of direct answers stored in an interactive database. This type of database is called a knowledge base. A Knowledge Management System allows companies to:

- ◆ **Capture and document best practices**
- ◆ **Reduce incoming email, calls and hold times**
- ◆ **Provide self-help capabilities**
- ◆ **Easily share information across channels**
- ◆ **Easily access and maintain all manuals, policies, compliance, and product information**

A sophisticated type of search engine is used to search through a knowledge base, regardless of its stored format. Rather than return mass results like a typical search engine, knowledge management search engines focus more on quality than quantity, and turns current delivery channels into self-service applications.

## The Result

**Increased productivity** is accomplished because employees can access answers to questions and company information directly on their screen. This eliminates research time, conferencing with other employees and switching between applications while customers wait.

**Customers** visiting the a company’s web site will find self-service capabilities through a search of the knowledge base and/or through interacting with online questions that narrow down their question or inquiry to an appropriate response. Customers who can’t find an answer this way can quickly submit their question, which is then routed to the appropriate employee to resolve.

**Redundant tasks can be reduced** and in most cases eliminated entirely. With KMS, outstanding questions are continuously tracked and monitored. An automated answering process handles over **95%** of incoming questions. A *self-building knowledge base* is produced that grows ever-more useful and relevant.

**Re-allocation of staff to higher-value tasks** is quickly accomplished by automating customer service and streamlining the management of online content. Self-service systems eliminate the need to devote staff to low-value, repetitive tasks—thereby freeing them to focus on assignments that truly require their skills and personal attention.

**Reports** can be generated that provide a clear measurement of effectiveness. Companies can easily track how many questions have been resolved and which issues are most active. This real time accountability gives businesses the power to respond to customer needs, build knowledge where it is appropriate and track the effectiveness of the system and the productivity of customer-facing employees.

## **In Summary**

“Incorporating successful knowledge management solutions is a growing opportunity. “Knowledge Management is a strategic opportunity for business today. It is one way to leverage the sharing of information among employees and customers to increase teamwork and communication with the intent of returning superior value to the customer”. -**Callahan & Associates.**

“Companies using our Knowledge Management System have enhanced their operations dramatically, and the majority of those businesses are reporting saving **hundreds of thousands of dollars** each year”.  
-**SilverCloud Software.**