

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

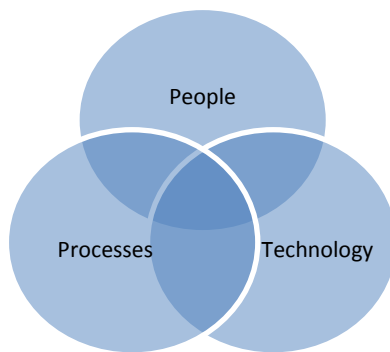
What is Knowledge Management?

Knowledge Management is “learning by sharing” – learning from what we know by effectively sharing information and best practice.

Knowledge Management is important for the Social Enterprise sector. Sharing information and working together can:

- Foster innovation by encouraging the free flow of ideas
- Learn from each other, share best practice and collaborate
- Utilize resources effectively, streamline operations, avoid duplication and reduce costs
- Increase revenues by getting products and services to market faster
- Improve customer service and satisfaction
- Grow the sector

Elements of Knowledge Management



People - ways of connecting people who have the knowledge to help each other, and developing their willingness and ability to ask, listen, share and apply knowledge;

Processes - tools and processes to simplify the sharing and representation of knowledge;

Technology - reliable, user-friendly technology that can support communication and knowledge sharing. This is more widely available than ever before with the rise of easily accessible sharing technologies such as email and social media technologies like Facebook and Twitter.

What processes does Knowledge Management use and how do they work?

Knowledge Management uses tools and processes to help capture, share, and re-use information.

Many organisations use Knowledge Management without even realising it – at its simplest, it is “learning by sharing”. This can mean using common processes such as workshops and forums, peer learning events, good practice guides, staff catch ups, newsletters, e-mail updates, and master classes, to share information within and between organisations.

Here are some structured process and facilitation tools that we have found useful:

After-Action Review - a structured meeting or conversation designed to carefully review and evaluate a particular activity. The reflections are then used to plan future activities, enabling us to learn from successes and avoid repeating mistakes.

Knowledge Harvesting - a conversation/interview based process aimed at capturing and recording the knowledge that resides in peoples' heads; knowledge that is highly valuable to others, and that the individual in question may not even realise they have!

Fishbowl Conversation - a useful technique for a large number of people (potentially up to 50) to have an intimate and dynamic conversation about a topic or issue that the group needs to discuss.

Storytelling - Storytelling leads to naturally emerging anecdotes - people telling one another about their experience of a particular topic or issue will produce richer and more valuable information than can be collected in a conventional interview.

Information Asset Register - is a process which helps to organise the many pieces of information organisations hold which are important to business, by organising individual information assets; categorising them together in groups, making them easier to access, use and maintain.

How does Knowledge Management work in practice?

By sharing information and working together, social enterprises can make good use of what they collectively know about running their businesses.

Here are some examples of Knowledge Management in the social enterprise sector:

The Trading Know-how project by [Social Enterprise West Midlands](#), aimed to gather and share good practice from around the region through five strands of work; by running a social enterprise Summer School, highlighting and supporting Flagship Social Enterprises, organizing Structured Study Visits, facilitating Good Practice Forums, and producing Online Resources, making available an extensive library of resources and materials to the social enterprise sector, wider stakeholders and partners.



After Action Reviews are used by the [Social Enterprise Coalition](#), in areas such as events, to review performance and use the learning to improve future activities.

After events have taken place, staff convene to review activities based on original aims and objectives. Strengths and weaknesses are addressed and the learning feeds directly into the design of future events; ensuring that SEC's aims are achieved and that future events provide the best experience for delegates.

[Social Innovation Camp](#) brings together software developers and designers with people who understand a social problem to help build web and mobile solutions to social challenges. This community of practice has become a place where people can experiment, create prototypes and become advocates for using social technology as a driver of positive social change.



The [Plunkett Foundation](#) uses a range of activities and services to develop Knowledge Management between rural social enterprises and community run shops. An online network hosts resource documents and forums, as a platform for shops to share information between them. Advisors visit shops to discuss issues and provide support, and shop staff can attend workshop and networking events to learn from experts as well as share their experiences with each other.

[SETAS](#) - the Social Enterprise Training and Support website is a key knowledge destination for social enterprises seeking high quality training and support. The site acts as an interface for support providers and social enterprises; hosting details of business advisors and consultants; training opportunities; as well as links to other relevant social enterprise resources.



Where can I find more information on Knowledge Management?

The following consultancy sites provide a range of content on Knowledge Management, including downloadable guidance notes and brochures.

www.chriscollison.com/l2f/

www.gurteen.com

www.knoco.com

www.tfpl.com

<http://www.cognitive-edge.com>

More information on the process tools and case studies above can be found on the SEC Business Support page:

www.socialenterprise.org.uk