



Addendum 3: Interviews

Due to the fact that aspects of the KM model proposed in this thesis have already been partially introduced, it was considered valuable to get feedback before the full installation of the model into ETB work practices.

The format for the interview was adapted and developed from a Knowledge Management survey carried out by “Business Innovation Inc.”¹ Prior to the interview, the participants were given a summary of the content of this dissertation, with sufficient in terms of definition, to be generally aware of the knowledge management concept. It is the author’s intention to continue this process as the KM process develops.

These questions are divided into four major categories:

- A. The Case for Knowledge Management
- B. The Elements of Knowledge Management
- C. Challenges to Overcome in Implementing KM
- D. Advantages of KM

Interview with Todd Boggess (President, ETB Architects)

Mr Boggess is the president of ETB Architects.

All responses in blue

A. The Case for Knowledge Management

A1. Are you in what you consider to be a “knowledge-intensive” business?

Yes, architecture is extremely knowledge intensive.

A2. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: “It would be possible, through more deliberate management, to leverage the knowledge existing in my organisation to a higher degree.”

I agree. It is a major problem in the profession to keep up to date and avoid stagnation.

A3. What types of knowledge are critical to your competitiveness?

Design requires many facets of knowledge – enabling intuitive, conceptual, and visual processes to take place. The knowledge of the environment, how to achieve certain atmospheres with lighting, colour etc. There remains a constant

tension between the practical and the aesthetic and acknowledgement of the knowledge based aspects of that tension results in a successful project.

A4. What benefits do you believe your organisation could gain from more active management of its knowledge?

Better projects / Greater efficiency / Sharing of and access to knowledge / Improved communication.

A5. Of the benefits listed in question A4 above, which would be most important to your organisation's success?

Sharing of Knowledge and better communication

B. The Elements of Knowledge Management

B1. Rate your organisation's current performance in knowledge processes.

As with most businesses, there is room for improvement in all areas: in Content; Participation; Knowledge Base structure; Change and expansion; Sharing; Skills; Levels of Customization.

B2. Does your organisation's ability to compete based on knowledge depend more upon people, process, or technology issues?

- In your view, is this the relative emphasis currently being placed?
- If no, what is the relative emphasis your organisation currently places on people, process, and technology issues?

We depend on the interaction of people, process and technology, with an emphasis primarily on people.

B3. What technology tools do you believe offer the greatest potential for enhancing your organisation's knowledge base?

This company was one of the first in West Virginia to adopt Computer Aided Design and Drafting, and this has remained our most important technological tool.

B4. Please comment on the culture of your organisation and its impact on knowledge.

A knowledge culture exists, but this remains one of the most difficult things to manage because of its complexity.

B5. Do you think it is or would be valuable to have a formal role of "Chief Knowledge Officer" (or equivalent) in your organisation? If so, on what tasks should a chief knowledge officer focus?

Yes, this is the direction we wish to evolve. We have a need for structuring of the huge amount of information we have collected.

C. Challenges to Overcome in Implementing KM

C1. What are the biggest current impediments to knowledge transfer in your organisation?

Ownership of knowledge and the willingness to share.

C2. Reflecting on what you consider to be the largest obstacle to knowledge transfer, please comment on the degree to which it could be overcome by more deliberate management.

Some form of managed process and guide would be useful to process and catalogue the data available. Improved communication would also assist this process.

C3. What do you think would be (or are) the biggest difficulties in managing knowledge in your organisation?

Communication of the complex factors involved in architectural practice.

C4. If you were to track the knowledge performance of your organisation over time, what do you believe would be most useful to measure?

Efficiency of the project and improved profits.

C5. What do you see as the major risks to managing knowledge in an organisation?

Loss of Intellectual Property.

D. Advantages of KM

D1. Describe a knowledge management project your firm has initiated or completed.

The office Procedural Manual

D2. Who led that effort?

Roy Morum

D3. What were the most difficult aspects of managing that effort?

Still in the process of being implemented.

D4. How did or will management assess the success or failure of the effort?

Still in the process of being implemented.

D5. What types of knowledge management efforts are underway, are planned, or would make sense for your organisation?

Extension of the Knowledge Management process to a point where this asset could be presented to clients as an example of the company's work strategy, efficiency and high level of quality control.

Interview with Gus Anderson (Engineer, ETB Architects)

Mr Anderson is a co-worker of the author and is the structural engineer on the Mathena Cultural Arts Centre Project in Princeton, West Virginia. *(some questions were skipped)*

All responses in blue

A. The Case for Knowledge Management

A1. Are you in what you consider to be a “knowledge-intensive” business?

The building professions are intensely knowledge oriented.

A2. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: “It would be possible, through more deliberate management, to leverage the knowledge existing in my organisation to a higher degree.”

Agree fully

A3. What types of knowledge are critical to your competitiveness?

Job and Field knowledge / Knowledge of roles / Timing, deadlines and scheduling / Information sharing / Knowledge of the Cultural environment.

A4. What benefits do you believe your organisation could gain from more active management of its knowledge?

Improved efficiency and communication.

A5. Of the benefits listed in question A4 above, which would be most important to your organisation's success?

Communication

B. The Elements of Knowledge Management

B3. What technology tools do you believe offer the greatest potential for enhancing your organization's knowledge base?

Open Communication / Data and Information Transfer / Specific and Realistic expectations

C. Challenges to Overcome in Implementing KM

C1. What are the biggest current impediments to knowledge transfer in your organisation?

Fear of giving away information as this might weaken an established personal position. / Communication lacking.

C3. What do you think would be (or are) the biggest difficulties in managing knowledge in your organisation?

Resistance to authority and change. Fear of bureaucratic restraints.

Interview with Riel Sarno (Client)

Mr. Sarno is the client representative and member of the seventh Day Adventist church in Bluefield West Virginia. ETB is currently designing a new community centre for the church. In this interview, the questions were adapted from being relevant to the enterprise, to project based questions

All responses in blue

A. The Case for Knowledge Management

A1. Do you consider Knowledge Management essential for a project such as this one?

Yes, particularly when dealing with a committee. This process kept most of the members well informed.

B. The Elements of Knowledge Management

B1. Rate the project's current performance in knowledge processes.

The project Extranet was a great help in communicating the project concepts and progress.

C. Challenges to Overcome in Implementing KM

C1. What are the biggest current impediments to knowledge transfer in this project?

Because a technology based communication was used, many members, who had no access to the Internet, were not kept informed. A printed format, which could be mailed, should be developed together with the web-based process.

D. Advantages of KM

D5. What types of knowledge management efforts are underway, are planned, or would make sense for your organisation?

A major benefit of the project Extranet is that, due to the fact that a lot of the building materials and services will be donated by members and others, the website will enable advertising of material and service needs by means of the published project schedule and progress.

¹ "Business Innovation Inc." <http://www.businessinnovation.ey.com>