

Preface: Enabling the knowledge sharing culture

Knowledge services is described as the approach that streamlines the management of an organization's knowledge by converging information management, knowledge management (KM), and strategic learning into a single enterprise-wide discipline. Its goal is to ensure the highest levels of knowledge sharing within the organization, and, as an operational function, knowledge services contributes significantly to the successful achievement of the organization's stated and agreed-upon mission and vision.

The Knowledge Services Handbook – a companion volume to *Knowledge Services: A Strategic Framework for the 21st Century Organization* (De Gruyter 2016) – is a single reference for supporting knowledge strategists in their work. When published, *Knowledge Services* included both a “theoretical” perspective about knowledge services and offered a “prescriptive direction” for working in knowledge services. Yet for a knowledge practitioner just starting in knowledge services, an even more distilled, practical guide was also needed, a focused “road map” for the knowledge strategist to enable hitting the ground running. *The Knowledge Services Handbook* is that road map.

As knowledge strategists (or aspiring knowledge strategists) seek to ensure that knowledge services is practiced as well as it can be in the organizations in which they are employed, they recognize that they must be familiar with the wide range of topics, methodologies, and leadership requirements that guide them in their work. They are responsible for directing the trajectory of knowledge services – developing and implementing the knowledge strategy for the knowledge domains of their organizations. As methodologies and requirements continue to be introduced and refined in the workplace, it is incumbent on the knowledge strategist to remain as current as possible regarding these trends and best practices. With technology ever improving and the general pace of completing tasks continually demanding faster responses to knowledge sharing opportunities, the necessity for having information readily available and knowledge sharing processes successfully integrated is more important than ever, if for no other reason than to establish that knowledge sharing in the organization will remain best-in-class to ensure that the organization's intellectual capital is not lost due to turnover or retirement.

With this handbook, we go beyond the *Knowledge Services* theoretical approach and move deeper into the practicalities of knowledge services. Describing this book as “a single reference for supporting knowledge strategists” states exactly what we expect to do. Knowledge strategists (whether so titled or not) are the employees in every organization tasked with a very important (indeed, critical) responsibility; they require the prescriptive and practical

direction provided in this book as they seek to meet the challenges of knowledge strategy implementation in their organizations. They have strategic knowledge services management responsibilities, including authority and accountability for successful knowledge services. At the same time, those responsibilities succeed only when the knowledge strategist's leadership skills are developed, and the employee is recognized and supported as a leader in the organization. For the most successful knowledge strategists, knowledge services truly is a balanced management and leadership methodology that meets the definition found in the earlier book, that is, "an approach to the management of intellectual capital that converges information management, knowledge management, and strategic learning into a single enterprise-wide discipline."

Additionally, knowledge strategists must not only excel in the subjects identified in *Knowledge Services: A Strategic Framework for the 21st Century Organization*, they must also be able to facilitate bridging these fundamentals back to the organization's knowledge domain – putting knowledge services to work for their organization. And knowledge strategists – make no mistake about it – must before all else deal with these fundamentals from a collaborative point of view, a point of view that puts the people affected by the knowledge strategy first. This people-focused approach to knowledge services is essential for how the contemporary workplace functions. As much as top-down support is key, a more collaborative approach to implementation has proven to achieve a higher, more successful level of adoption, over a push-down-the-hierarchy approach.

As a practical handbook, the format of the present volume is structured to provide ample opportunities for thinking about the application of knowledge services and its transition into an integrated and actionable, enterprise-wide knowledge strategy. Each section of the book's three chapters includes a topic essay that describes the essential characteristics and the application that links the topic to knowledge services. The essays are followed by "other voices" contributing to the book, individuals recognized for their expertise in knowledge services who also – based on their own experience and expertise – provide guidelines and suggestions for implementing knowledge services and developing and managing the organizational knowledge strategy.

A set of consolidated considerations is then attached as a checklist, giving readers a "tear sheet" that distills the topic essay and other voices even further, highlighting the main action items that a knowledge strategist implementing a knowledge strategy would need to consider in order to be successful. In fact, the "checklist of considerations" is primarily directed to the knowledge strategist, to ensure that the strategist has a set of topics to study, providing motivation for additional attention, if desired. The checklist is followed by a list of discussion

questions, chosen to provide readers with a framework for facilitating conversations with colleagues in the employing organization.

Who will read *The Knowledge Services Handbook*? Since the book's purpose is to provide practical content for how to be a successful knowledge strategist, our identified readership is clear. First, we expect knowledge strategists, and those seeking to become knowledge strategists, to be the primary readership. A second group of readers links closely to knowledge strategists. It is the large body of knowledge workers – “aspiring” knowledge strategists. They are usually employees in an organization who are not thought of as knowledge professionals *per se*. They have acquired some knowledge sharing management and leadership responsibilities because they have subject matter expertise, a common situation found in almost all areas of an organization. With this specialization they work as *de facto* knowledge specialists. Indeed, they often have informal responsibilities closely related to those of knowledge strategists. This practice leads, in some organizations, to the classification of these individuals – people who act and communicate with knowledge within a specific subject area – in a broader organizational role of “knowledge specialist.” In this case, formal strategic or academic learning for knowledge services, or even professional development, is often limited or self-driven.

Beyond formal and informal knowledge services practitioners, we have prepared this book for other employees for whom we think the handbook will be valuable. An entire group of working professionals – knowledge services professionals, knowledge analysts, knowledge systems specialists, knowledge coordinators, knowledge editors, and knowledge historians (including many who do not necessarily have expertise in knowledge services) – will find the guidelines offered in *The Knowledge Services Handbook* of value. Naturally, Peter F. Drucker's famous term – the knowledge worker – comes into the picture, describing the many employees in every type of organization who are, in fact, often knowledge workers who generally connect with professionals in other disciplines. They usually work with captured knowledge – tangible information – in physical or electronic repositories, with the distinction being that the knowledge these professionals manage is strategic, directly connected to organizational or corporate effectiveness. They, too, are included in our targeted readership, and the guidance we offer in *The Knowledge Services Handbook* is organized specifically so they can benefit, whether they have been trained or educated in working as knowledge services “professionals” or not.

Finally, continuing to the next level of the management and leadership spectrum, in addition to the more senior management staff, the book can benefit enterprise leaders, C-suite officers, and board-level stakeholders. Many senior leaders have identified knowledge sharing issues and have concerns about

the value of knowledge in organizational success, but they do not have experience or expertise in dealing with these matters. Naturally they themselves are not necessarily going to undertake the actions recommended here, nor would they be expected to do so. They are managers after all; their role is to delegate. But to delegate effectively they require at least a foundational understanding of what can be accomplished if a knowledge strategy is successful. It is thus our goal in *The Knowledge Services Handbook* to provide managers and enterprise leaders with what they need.

While there is no one-size-fits-all knowledge services prototype or single knowledge strategy development model, this book offers a set of guidelines for understanding and working with an approach for finding practical and applicable knowledge services solutions. The approach will focus on people themselves and how they put their collaborative knowledge sharing skills to use.

Readers will benefit from understanding the fundamental criteria that support a knowledge services leader or champion in their efforts for the larger enterprise or organization, and we provide those criteria here. At the same time, as concerned knowledge workers and knowledge strategists seek to solve specific knowledge sharing problems or embrace specific knowledge sharing opportunities, the guidance included here will show them how to utilize what they learn as they approach the problem or opportunity. We want readers to succeed in performing their work in their knowledge domains, and what we offer here will enable them to do so.

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