



99% of consumers surveyed say that **getting a satisfactory answer** is the most important prerequisite to a great customer experience.



How do I Build a Successful Knowledge Management Business Case for our Contact Centre?



Knowledge Management Software



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Successful Knowledge Management projects have typically started off with the business identifying a need to improve a process, activity or interaction in relation to capturing and finding information. Many projects need to have a solid business case that clearly demonstrates the value and / or savings to be made by implementing a Knowledge Management system. The first stage is to have a clearly defined project aim. The next pages highlight some areas that other clients have examined in order to build their business case.



Capture:

- How quickly can you capture information that is required for your Agents / Back office Support?
- How much time is spent formatting documents and information to be presented to the Agent or Knowledge users in an easy to consume format, ensuring succinct information is presented when they are on the phone with a customer or interacting through social channels with your clients?

Manage:

- If your Contact Centre could manage their information more effectively, what would be the impact for staff and customer interactions / customer satisfaction scores and repeat business?
- How many seconds, minutes and hours are wasted by Agents looking for information that already exists?

Communicate:

- How quick and effective is the communication between Agents / back office support staff?
- How quickly can you organise your processes and systems to ensure that your Agents can find and share information effectively?

Share:

- How quickly can your Agents and Back office Support Staff share information, edit and reuse knowledge articles to inform better decision making, ensuring that your customers receive quality up to date information?
- How do you ensure that your Contact Centre has a continuous cycle of knowledge improvement?

The important elements to consider when creating your own business case for Knowledge Management should be what are the options available to your Contact Centre?



“The first stage is to have a clearly defined project aim.”





Generating your own Business Case - Where are you and what does the future look like?

It is far better to generate and personalise your own business case based on your Contact Centre's needs rather than trying to understand and benchmark yourselves against other companies. Trying to measure yourselves against someone else does not give you the opportunity to truly examine your own constraints and processes and how these can be removed or improved.

Knowledge Management should be thought of as a journey: understand where you currently are (assess, benchmark and understand what your current situation is), then where are you trying to get to (what do you want to achieve and what benefits will they bring the Contact Centre?).

A Contact Centre's and company's information estate is often more valuable as tangible physical assets and the issue is that they are located somewhere within the organisation - if only they could be found!

Due to the very nature of Knowledge Management, the savings that need to be made for any Knowledge Management business case should consist of:

- 1. Quantitative savings** such as time saved in seconds, minutes and hours,
- 2. Metrics** that can or are currently being measured,
- 3. Qualitative savings** - service improvements, satisfaction scores and quality improvements, anything that is subject to people's opinions (staff, clients, stakeholders, customers etc). These can add real value, giving you a true picture and understanding of the overall value derived from your Knowledge Management project.



Some organisations assess the options that they have when looking to implement a Knowledge Management system, these include:

- Build an organisational in-house tool / Use in-built add-on eg. Basic Knowledge component / FAQ System / Keyword Search
- Do nothing
- Buy a 3rd party Knowledge Management system



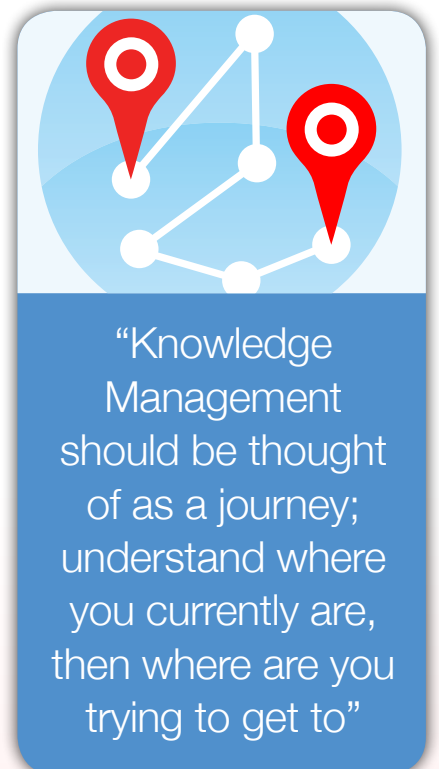
Build your own

Some companies choose to build their own system as they believe that spreadsheets, sets of Wiki pages, Word and PowerPoint documents sitting on their intranet, webpages, file shares or SharePoint repositories can make up their own knowledge base.

This is only a correct assumption if the agent, as the knowledge user, knows exactly where to look for a particular piece of information at the time that they need it and what terms and tagging have been applied to those documents.

However, as knowledge sources and the knowledge base inevitably grows and evolves (which all good Knowledge Management strategies should encourage), if no maintenance takes place across these disparate sources, the company ends up back where they started; wanting and needing to improve the ability for the knowledge user to find and share information more effectively.

Often, when a client does build their own software or uses an inbuilt plug-in from a 3rd party (eg the CRM System), that same potential client comes back to the Knowledge Management vendor a few years later after they have tried and tested the build option themselves; and failed or the 3rd party add-on is not adequate.





Contact Centre Managers / Directors quickly realise that they need to prepare a comprehensive Knowledge Management business case. Once again the Contact Centre team embark upon explaining their issues all over again, that this set of disparate sources are not kept up-to-date, are difficult to maintain and the people are still struggling to find and share information effectively. A number of reasons for this include:

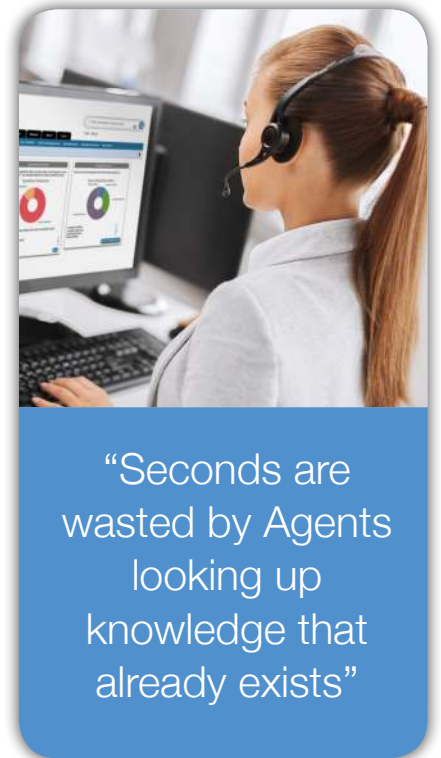
1. Not having a process in place to provide a workflow behind capturing new or editing existing templated information.
2. User adoption has been low - users have not had the value to them communicated effectively.
3. Finding information has not significantly improved, due to the limitations of a keyword based search.
4. The knowledge base has not evolved effectively as identifying knowledge gaps is difficult.
5. The results are not achieving the key metric improvements due to the limitations of an add-on knowledge management system from another tool e.g CRM System.

There is value in buying from Knowledge Management software experts as this allows your Contact Centre to focus on what its strategic objective is, in line with its own business model and value, rather than the development and build of another in house solution.



“If a business case had been thoroughly written, it would include the cost of doing nothing.”

This issue is not industry or sector specific either. From large technology companies through to midrange companies, many IT departments think that it would be cheaper to build their own without considering the ongoing maintenance costs that this will incur. The costs are not limited to the development, testing and maintenance but also the need to retain expertise to support it, which carries a financial cost, not to mention the lack of sophistication required to ensure that knowledge is easy to find and share through a natural language search. Using technology containing a Natural Language Search allows not only each agent to use their own words, but ultimately allows the knowledge base to be utilised by each customer in a web self service or social/ personal portal environment.



“Seconds are wasted by Agents looking up knowledge that already exists”

The Cost of doing nothing

Contact Centres often realise that they have an issue with finding and sharing information, so they have asked many of the questions shown on page three of this white paper. However, due to failing to identify the cost savings and value that the Knowledge Management system can bring, they choose to do nothing. If a business case had been thoroughly written, it would include the cost of doing nothing.

There is a cost to a business for failing to improve and standing still. Seconds are wasted by Agents looking up knowledge that already exists, or worse still trying to find the information that someone else has, whilst all the time keeping customers on hold. This leads to dissatisfied customers, which does not enhance customer engagement activities nor does it increase profitability for the Contact Centre Operations, rather increasing the cost to serve the customer. This is often missed from the business case options since the measurement of time is wrapped up in “the way we do things around here”, rather than taking the approach of what is it costing the business to do nothing?





As a very crude but easy benchmark that could assist in this calculation, you could time workers to understand on average how much time per day does it take to find information and knowledge that already exists?

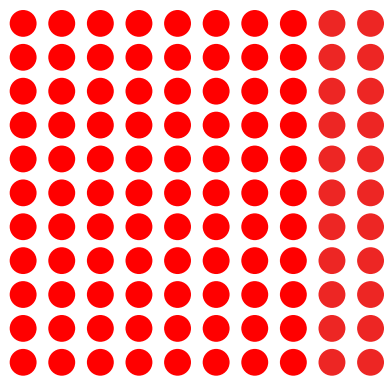
Is it easier to pick up the phone and ask Sarah or Fred, “do you know what repository to look in?”, “where was it residing?”, “how easy was it to find?” Once found, were they able to easily provide feedback to rate the document or highlight any issues with quality?

As a guide, a McKinsey Report highlighted that for every 100 employees, 20 of them would be spending every day each month just searching for information and not contributing real value to the business.

What would your team, department or organisation do with the 20% of salary savings?

Reducing cost throughout the lifespan of the project

With the correct technology accompanying the appropriate processes and organisational culture, a commercial off-the-shelf Knowledge system provides a quick and easy way to achieve the project goals from the outset and beyond. However, not all Knowledge Management Systems are equal.



“For every 100 employees, 20 of them would be spending all day each month just searching for information”

Often, in the long term, a 3rd party Knowledge Management System costs less, particularly when taking into account the cost to do nothing, build costs and the time and effort to maintain a bespoke system.

With no build, testing and system refinement/enhancement costs, the implementation of a flexible Knowledge Management tool will provide security, a future proofed investment, with the ability to influence future product direction.



Universal Knowledge - Knowledge Management's system of choice

Universal Knowledge, Knowledge Management software, will help your Contact Centre Agents and Support Staff to find and share information and knowledge more effectively within and across your Contact Centre, in a way that allows you to map your required processes within the tool, rather than being constrained by the functionality provided.

Therefore, it is important to recognise the value of having a Knowledge Management system which can be configured to the Contact Centre and its Agents, Support Staff and your processes.



“Universal Knowledge will also assist you to streamline and reduce your operational costs, drive up productivity and enhance your customer service offering”



Content is always the primary starting point when looking to understand what knowledge you want to bring into the knowledge base. For this reason KPS provide a workshop to ensure that all key stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to learn about best practice content structures. Many options are available for different content types with a flexible and personalised Contact Centre Knowledge Management workshop.

KPS offers more than its software product Universal Knowledge; KPS consultants share expertise which has been gained, across a range of industries. With a range of successful global knowledge management contact centre implementations over the last decade, best practice is highlighted and shared in a way that best fits with your individual organisational goals and strategies.

Universal Knowledge will also assist you to streamline and reduce your operational costs, drive up productivity and enhance your customer service offering (regardless of whether this is referring to direct customer / client interactions or Agent to Back office / Underwriting or Change / Transformational teams). However, any Knowledge Management project should ensure that the continual improvement cycle is taken into account. After all, any knowledge project should be seen as the same as the lungs in your body - breathing in the good stuff and exhaling the bad.



“Universal Knowledge will also assist you to streamline and reduce your operational costs, drive up productivity and enhance your customer service offering”

Practical Support and Help to build your Knowledge Management business case



Within any Knowledge Management project there are a range of components that you will need to take into consideration, before we consider these elements, identifying the aim of the project is the first and most important, not only for buy-in from the Senior management team and Directors but also the key stakeholders such as knowledge authors and the Agents, who will be daily users of the knowledge base.

- **Project Aims**

What is your Knowledge Management project trying to achieve?

Whilst this may change as you learn about Knowledge Management benefits and as you seek additional stakeholder engagement, you will need to have a clear aim or vision of what your project is trying to achieve so this can be clearly articulated to each stakeholder.

First of all, think about what benefits you will gain from your Knowledge Management project. A few suggestions are listed below (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Brainstorm activity: what metrics do you need to prove your ROI?
- What metrics do you currently measure or would like to measure?



“Thinking about what metrics your Contact Centre currently collects is a good starting point.”



- **Seeking Buy-in**

Requirements Gathering & Stakeholder Expectations

We have touched upon these aspects earlier. Bringing in key stakeholders to gather requirements helps to enhance buy-in of the project further downstream.

However, this does need to be handled carefully. It is great if all stakeholders can provide some feedback to how a Knowledge Management system will help them, however just because a feature is requested, this needs to be balanced with the value that will be derived from that element.

- **Strong Leadership**

Active engagement by the Project Sponsor will ensure success

Successful Knowledge Projects need strong leaders who make decisions quickly, with an overall understanding of the impact of why decisions have been made to either leave document sets in a certain repository, or if a migration exercise needs to take place. Without strong leadership and a strong communication plan, projects will fail.

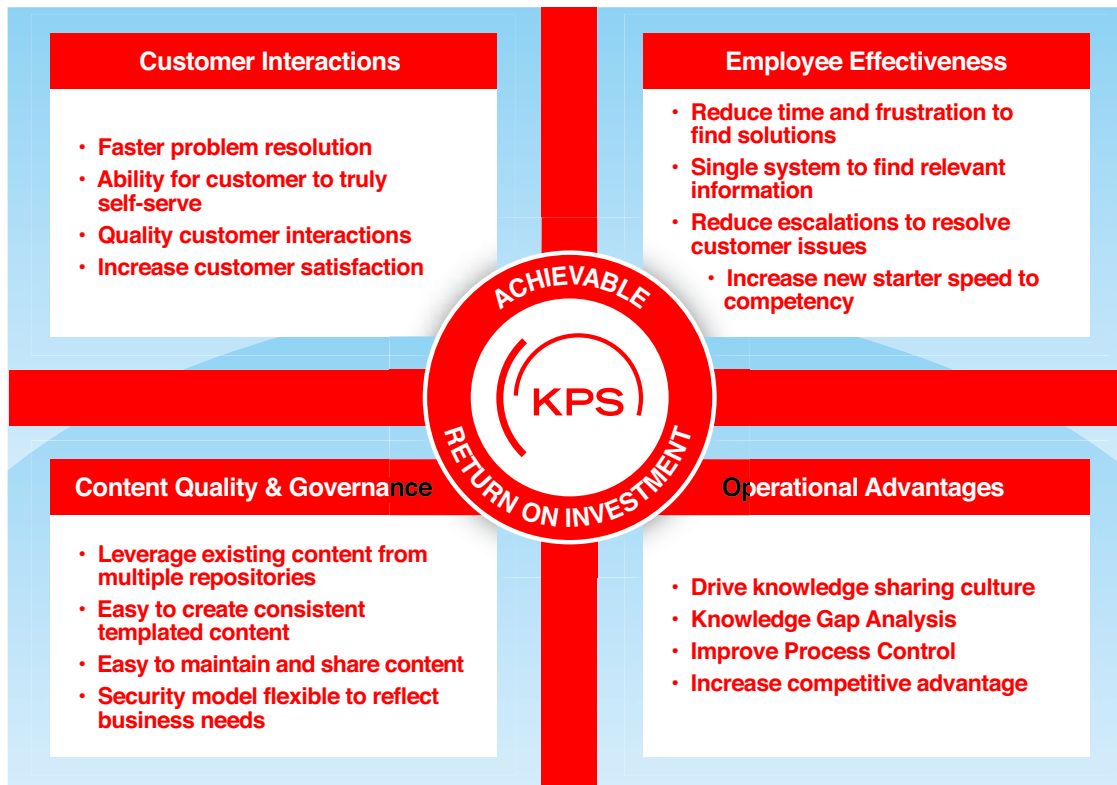
- **Value Creation**

Understanding the Value that your Knowledge Management software will deliver

A matrix often helps to establish where the savings and service improvements for a Contact Centre Business Case will be gained; for an internal Business Case the following Knowledge Management value Quadrant helps to split out the benefits across three key areas; Agents, Customers, Organisational.

So we have a section for Agent and Customer Interactions, Employee Effectiveness and Organisational Benefits including Content Quality and Governance and overall key operations.

The Knowledge Management Value Quadrant



Thinking about what metrics your Contact Centre currently collects is a good starting point to measuring at least 3 of the quadrants; Average Handling Time (AHT), 1st call Fix/Resolution Rates, Call Escalations, Number of Customers Self-Serving (without the need to contact you), number of Avoidable Contacts are typically collected by most organisations that have Call Centres.

Another effective way of collecting a baseline measure for the “what we currently do around here” is to map a customer journey from end-to-end using a particular scenario, e.g. take a typical customer example - a customer returns for clothing (regular item) and then something unusual (such as swimwear or jewellery) where the process or information is different. This should give a good average between the regular, ordinary, every day return versus the unusual or different item that is seasonal, as this may take longer to process or is unfamiliar to the agent. Looking at both examples gives you a better understanding of the typical way in which the agent would work.





Understanding how long it takes Agents to find information and what path they follow when they do and do not know what process to follow is a good way to map the Agent's journey. Timing them on these different journeys is not to create a test like environment, but a real way of measuring actual interactions.

For an insurance enquiry you may want to understand why a call needs to be passed to an underwriter or different department - should that information be available to the front line? Often content owners are not the front line staff and hence allowing authors and agents to access the same content, ensures that consistent versions are used for quality customer interactions.

Operationally, if you can save time in both the customer interactions and the process of new content development / editing existing content this builds up a true cost to serve the customer, rather than focusing on just the point of interaction e.g the front line operations (Web / Social / Agent).



Successful Business Case Lessons

Ensure that the Knowledge Management Software is targeting an area that is able to demonstrate quick successes, from customer service improvements through to quality and governance measures. If an Agent using the knowledge base can save seconds from many calls throughout the day, those seconds add up to considerable savings across the teams of Agents within the Contact Centre.

Highlight any positive metrics gained. In order to do this, at the planning stage you must identify what metrics you currently have (and take a baseline) and subsequently understand what metrics you would like to gain. Using examples provided from the Knowledge Management Value Quadrant on page 13 would be very insightful and assist to build the business case, highlighting the significant Return on Investment (ROI) for the Directors of your Organisation.

To summarise:

- Understand your own organisational strategy and how your Knowledge Management project fits together.
- Ensure the cost of doing nothing and / or building your own is fully scoped and costed in order to provide an accurate cost comparison with a commercial tool.
- Have a clear idea of what you want the knowledge base to achieve and how Universal Knowledge will help you to Save Time, Improve Customer and Agent Engagement and Interactions, Ensure Content Quality and Governance is Created and Maintained, whilst simultaneously Lowering your Departments Operational Risks and Costs.



For more details on how to develop your business case, and to ensure that you can demonstrate a fantastic ROI back to the business, Contact KPS today on www.kpsol.com or International: 1-855-361-8713 / Tel: +44 (0) 870 160 1993.



“Understand your own organisational strategy and how your knowledge management project will help you to achieve those.”

Knowledge Powered Solutions (KPS) offers knowledge management software (Universal Knowledge) that helps organisations deliver operational efficiencies and at the same time improve customer services by providing immediate access to information at the point of need. Benefits include significant increases in productivity, reduction in operational costs, reduced training times and increased speed to competency for agents. Customers and stakeholders receive consistent answers to their queries and issues for improved service quality.

Universal Knowledge is being used as a business critical tool within help/service desks, call/contact centers, web self-service and shared service operations around the world (UK, USA, Canada, Australia and Middle East). It is empowering agents to deal with a wider number of queries and enabling end users to self-serve 24 x 7.

Universal Knowledge enables organisations to capture and share their knowledge and expertise through a simple, easy to use end user interface.

6 Whitworth Court, Manor Farm Road, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1WA Phone: +44 0870 160 1993

Sales: sales@kpsol.com Partners: partners@kpsol.com Support: support@kpsol.com

Email: info@kpsol.com Twitter: [@kpsol](https://twitter.com/kpsol) LinkedIn: Knowledge Powered Solutions Ltd



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