



Can a Knowledge Management system be deployed both quickly and effectively?



Tips for a successful Knowledge Management implementation

One of the most common questions asked during the sales process is “How long does it take to implement the knowledge management solution?”

On first glance this may seem like a simple enough question but the answer may not be straightforward.

Implementation of technology alone cannot deliver a complete solution. Only when there is a clear understanding of the elements which make up a successful knowledge implementation, can this be truly understood.

Of course, when we are asked this question we provide a guideline based on our understanding of the customer’s requirements and experience of similar implementations.

A range of consultancy days is quoted and the customer has a guideline for budgetary purposes. However, consultancy days from the vendor does not necessarily reflect the length of an implementation.



To understand that, we need to ask another question, “How can we ensure the success of the knowledge management project?”

There is little value in a quick deployment if users are not on board, content is not fit for purpose or the processes behind knowledge capture and maintenance is not fully understood and agreed.



“Implementation of technology alone cannot deliver a complete solution”





Only when we understand our company's culture, content generation and maintenance processes and how people use information, can we start to determine the project management aspects for implementation. Experience tells us strong leadership has significant impact on project timescales and success, which starts with the selection of the right Knowledge Management tool.

Selection of a technology for knowledge management is, of course, key to ensuring a speedy and successful deployment. Many tools exist in the market to help capture, alert, search and share information.



The tools which provide rich functionality out of the box will keep the length and cost of the implementation lower, as there will be no need for custom work and training costs will be significantly lower.

However, the technology is only one part of the knowledge management jigsaw.



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Knowledge Management - The Full Picture

Without user buy-in the potential of the content & technology cannot be realised

Without the right content technology alone cannot deliver the answer



Without measurement effectiveness of the 3 other factors cannot be managed

Knowledge Management software



Technology

Whilst Knowledge management is about people, process and content - not just the technology - technology selection is a key part of a successful implementation.

Look for tools which are easy to configure and have out of the box features for your major requirements. Customisation of tools will add complexity and risk to a project and of course, additional time to deploy. Documenting your requirements and selecting a solution using a scorecard will help you identify the best match for your requirements. Ensure knowledge capture is simple as this will reduce time in initial set-up as well as ongoing time spent in adding and maintaining content.



Content

There is often a broad spectrum of content that contains valuable, reusable information. If the chosen technology allows you to easily capture and search these documents, it makes sense to hit the ground running by including these in the knowledge base.

Understand your knowledge gaps from the beginning of the implementation and determine how these will be managed - perhaps by creating new content as part of the implementation and ensuring a process is defined for the ongoing identification and management of these. If content is not fit for purpose, the other pieces of the jigsaw will not fit into place - it could be the best technology in the world but if the content is not right, the technology investment cannot be realised.



People and Process

When surveys have been carried out on KM projects and leaders have been asked what would they do differently, most say that they would have communicated more why they are implementing KM.

A well thought out communications plan, knowledge management evangelists and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities will ensure buy in from the most sceptical of users. Best practice organizations recognize that adoption and value cannot be ensured by top-down mandates; usually they require bottom-up acceptance. It could be the best technology in the world with the best content but if no-one is going to use it, the project will fail.

Ensure concerns are managed and users understand the value to them as an individual as well as to the team and the organisation as a whole.

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Measurement

The people, the content and the technology should be measured for continued success.

Understanding user activity levels will help identify any potential adoption issues and give you the opportunity to address these. Measuring contribution to the knowledge base is key - this shouldn't necessarily be based on the number of solutions entered, rather the times it was reused. It is about quality not quantity.

If you measure on the number of documents people are entering, this can lead to a reduction in the quality of the KB.

The requirements for measurement should be identified as part of the knowledge management solution implementation. Spending time up front on how this should be done will save time and reduce risk once the system goes live.

Back to our original question - "How long does it take to implement a Knowledge Management solution?" - If the project has a strong project team with strong leadership, the content is fit for purpose, the processes for ongoing knowledge capture and measurement are agreed and understood and the technology provides robust features out of the box, this can be clearly understood and defined.

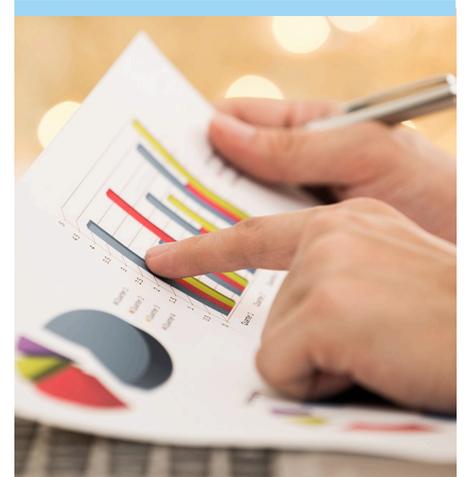
Without these factors in place, the answer to that question may be misleading and ill-informed.

Working with the right technology provider who understands not only how to implement a solution but makes sure it continues to grow and evolve will de-risk the project.

Successful implementations can absolutely be delivered in a short timeframe with limited consultancy days from the right vendor, ensuring long term value is derived from the investment in a Knowledge Management platform.



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Universal Knowledge Deployment

Knowledge Powered Solutions provide Universal Knowledge, a functionally rich Knowledge Management solution, which is typically deployed with 5-10 days of consultancy from the Professional Services team.

With an adaptive and pragmatic approach to project delivery, KPS deliver effective solutions in line with best practice.

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