



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### Demystifying Knowledge Management

In order to be competitive, corporations are finding that "time-to-market," along with quick response time, is critical for launching a new product. Therefore, the need to manage what a company knows, or more specifically "who knows what," becomes increasingly important. As industries consolidate and organizations go global, this need increases in order to help a team or business unit improve its responsiveness, innovation, competency and efficiency.

KM is not a new concept. For years, owners of family businesses have passed on their learnings and wisdom to their children, Master craftsmen have taught trade secrets to their apprentices, and schools and educational institutes have been resources of learning. Libraries have been the aggregation of such knowledge. However, it was only in the 1990s that organizations started talking about KM as a science.

#### Definition

"Knowledge management" means transforming information and intellectual assets into assets of enduring value.

#### Demystifying KM

What is KM? KM is much more than just an extension of any enterprise-computing tool. It becomes imperative if organizations have to become leaders in a competitive environment. Future business success increasingly depends on the retention and creative use of knowledge, ideas and experiences of the organization and its employees.

KM marketscape is an expansion of the business intelligence (BI) market, including enterprise reporting, data warehousing, customer relationship management (CRM), and data mining - the traditional domain of analysts. KM adds executives, departmental managers and workers to the mix and allows their involvement in knowledge collaboration. Knowledge management also includes managing knowledge resource that an individual possesses. Even if the organization is not in a position to retain its most valuable and knowledgeable employees, it should have a system to document this knowledge.

Knowledge management goes beyond investing in technological infrastructure and telling employees to make use of it. To capitalize on the wealth of intelligence available in an organization, knowledge must be packaged in such a way that it is insightful, relevant and useful.

To support these efforts, budgets need to include allocations for content development, either by staff or by external consultants. Without these critical investments, knowledge management will be relegated to the IT bin of disappointing business fads.