



TenStep Supplemental Paper

5 February 2004

You Need to Save Information Before You can Share It

As you probably know by now, Knowledge Management is a term used to describe a systematic approach to collecting, storing, retrieving and sharing information throughout your organization. There are many aspects of Knowledge Management, and it can be a very difficult program to fully implement.

The real value of Knowledge Management is in the sharing and leveraging of the information. However, you can't share information unless you can first store it somewhere where people can get access to it.

Information is everywhere

Information is all around us - in emails, groupware, databases and other content delivery systems. However, information is useless unless it is made accessible to the right people at the right time. Imagine an important email message, for instance, that you send to the wrong email address. It contains information, but it is useless if it is not delivered to the right person. Similarly, a paper document that is misfiled may become useless since no one will be able to find it in the future.

You have information all over your organization. One of the key concepts of Knowledge Management is that much of the information can be further leveraged by not just the original recipient, but also by others in the organization. People can also take information from you and others in the organization to create new insight and new meaning that is greater than the sum of the individual knowledge components.

You need a place to store information

Yes, information is all around us. However, your people will not be able to find this collective knowledge if you don't have some centralized mechanism to store the information and retrieve it. Even creating directory folders to store related documents is a rudimentary storage mechanism. However, usually you really need to have some more specialized knowledge management software.

Summary

You now have a high-level sense of what is required to create a Knowledge Base that can be used for a general knowledge management initiative. This discussion has focused on saving documents, which can include text, spreadsheets, presentations, etc. You can also include other types of information such as emails.