Tomorrow's KM:

Innovation, best practice and the future of knowledge management

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Chapter 10: Driving innovation through communities
By Vincent Ribiere, managing director and co-founder of the Institute for Knowledge and Innovation Southeast Asia

Executive summary

Innovation is arguably an integral part of the knowledge management function and KM practice – as a popular "buzzword" over the past few years, and in the fast changing business world of today, it has become the mainstay of professional service organizations. The complexity of innovation increases with the growth in knowledge available to organizations, and with this comes the need to determine its place in business.

Tomorrow's KM: Innovation, best practice and the future of knowledge management focuses on the relationship between innovation and KM, elaborating on the role of KM as the facilitator and enabler of change. Consisting of in-depth case studies and insight from experts within varied fields, this book offers some contextual trendspotting and a general overview of the market.

In order to "innovate", one needs to know what it actually means. What is innovation and how does it relate to KM? Where does it start and end within the organization? How do you find out what you need to know in order to innovate? In the book's opening chapter, Helene Russell of TheKnowledgeBusiness defines what innovation means in relation to KM, setting the tone for the rest of the contributions. Helene then goes on to explore the nature of diversity in KM. It is thought that one important way to improving innovative thought within organizations is to break silos and increase the opportunities for those of different backgrounds and knowledge to interact. Chapter two explores the evidence and offers practical ideas to improve opportunities for innovation to arise in this way.

The next two chapters look at the differing places that innovation "sits" within the organization.

In the past, when knowledge management initiatives revolved around the gathering and organization of internal precedents or the implementation of specific technology such as a SharePoint portal or enterprise search, the knowledge manager or the knowledge management department had more control over the success of the initiative. With today's emphasis on practice innovation to position a law firm for financial

success and lawyer retention, today and in the future, successful initiatives are rarely the result of work by one person or one department; success or failure depends on the engagement of multiple departments and individuals. Chapter three by Cyndi Murphy, knowledge manager at Stewart McKelvey, focuses on specific examples that demonstrate the need for practice innovation to be embraced, implemented, and shared across an organization.

Chapter four takes a practice-based perspective, exploring what organizations actually do to innovate. To achieve this, Dr Mona Alhefdhi, of the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia, presents two case studies. The first is from a semi-governmental technology organization (TEKCO) which illustrates the innovation function residing within a dedicated unit. The second provides a more organic example, albeit in part facilitated by the knowledge management and project management units. The context is a public sector organization (VISCO) which focuses on implementation of the national transformation plan.

Chapter five looks at how the role of the knowledge manager will change to reflect wider field transformation. What new capabilities will they need to develop? What people will you need to be looking for in the future? Data scientists who can provide insights and analysis; those who can tell a story with data? Raymond Olayinka, senior advisory consultant at Arup, suggests that the role of KM will increasingly suit those who are more proactive than reactive, moving away from those who can maintain systems to those who can engage stakeholders and bridge practice and knowledge.

If innovation is dispersed across an organization, KM – as a department with a finger in multiple pies – is in the perfect position to own it and pull the various threads from different departments together. How is this achieved? What can be done to facilitate collaboration between different functions and initiatives? In chapter six, Sara Traynor of Sara Traynor Coaching gives an overview of a project used to pioneer knowledge management collaboration in a south west UK law firm, the purpose of which was for lawyers to collaborate, share knowledge, and learn from each other.

While innovation is the engine of an industry and a society, organizations can sometimes struggle to innovate or invent in a sustained manner. It continues to be an esoteric art, a mystery, and innovators are revered across organizations and industry. In chapter seven, Randhir Pushpa, manager, Knowledge Management at DXC Technology, maintains that despite extensive research work, we are still not able to change

innovating into a science. With innovation, we do not have the control that we have with other activities in an organization, and whilst we may be confident in planning and then dominating a particular market, we will not have the same confidence in planning and innovating in a particular technology. One of the reasons has been because researchers in innovation are not ready to admit or accept that innovation is nothing but new knowledge. Probably an admission may lessen the mystery around innovating, and push it down from the pedestal it is kept. Art has to move to science, if it has to be practiced, controlled, and sustained. The science behind innovating in a sustained manner is still in the nascent stage, and this chapter argues that the reason is because we are not ready to explore innovation by removing all the laces and frills it is packaged with. An approach to sustained innovation is shared, along with a case study.

The workplace is changing – different kinds of working and multiple locations mean that new ways of sharing and exchanging knowledge need to be negotiated. The millennial isn't just inheriting the earth; as it comes of age it is fundamentally redesigning the workplace. Alongside the arrival of this first generation of genuinely tech-savvy workers, a revolution is gathering steam. It isn't just about flexing the bricks and mortar of office space, or even installing IOT-enabled connected furnishings. Demands for different kinds of flexible working, across multiple locations, have given a new centricity to knowledge management within firms keen to ensure the efficient sharing and retaining of their corporate's learning, as well as its talent. While millennials work differently, they also communicate differently. Finding innovative KM strategies for this brave new world, ways that respond most effectively to Industry 4.0 and its demand for data-driven digital platforms, will prove key to future survival. In chapter eight, Clare Harman Clark, senior professional support lawyer at Taylor Wessing, looks at how to share knowledge in the future workplace.

Chapter nine looks at what KM should actually *do*. Should KM be focused on the capture and sharing of knowledge, or could it create greater opportunities by designing, developing, and delivering processes, structure, and behavior related to stimulating learning and optimizing processes for harnessing knowledge as it emerges? If KM sits at the hub of the organizational wheel and its potential impact on operational effectiveness and people, it should be part of the mechanism of and for change. How do we do that? It has to start with how KM feeds into innovation. Caroline White-Robinson, head of L&D at Shoosmiths, argues

the case for knowledge and its related management to be "just-in-time" and emergent.

Communities of Practices (CoPs) have proven to be a very powerful KM practice to manage and to leverage knowledge domains in organizations, particularly for organizational learning and problem-solving issues. CoPs can also turn into the innovation engine of organizations by also playing the role of Communities of Innovation (CoIs). In chapter ten, Vincent Ribiere, managing director and co-founder of the Institute for Knowledge and Innovation Southeast Asia discusses how CoPs and CoIs allow knowledge and ideas to flow internally in the organization, as well as communicate and collaborate with external communities to slowly build innovation ecosystems.

About the authors

Dr Mona Alhefdhi is advisor at the deputyship of policy and economic planning in the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia. Her career spans a number of sectors, including economy and planning, energy, education and research, foreign investment, and non-profit organizations. Mona earned her PhD in Management Learning and Leaderships with a focus on Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management from the University of Lancaster management school in the UK. Her research interests include organizational learning and knowledge management, innovation, and the development of dynamic capabilities in practice.

Clare Harman Clark is a senior professional support lawyer at Taylor Wessing LLP, building on a legal career that began over a decade ago at Clifford Chance. Before retraining as a lawyer, Clare worked as a journalist and within a government press office, and still regularly publishes articles in national and trade press. She has also been appointed as a guest lecturer in property law at the University of Westminster.

Cyndi Murphy is the knowledge manager in the Halifax office of Stewart McKelvey. Her firm-wide responsibilities include liaising with practice groups and administrative departments for the successful implementation of knowledge management projects, overseeing content management of the internal SharePoint portal and various internal databases, and attending meetings of the practice innovation advisory committee. An honored member and past president of the Canadian Association of Law Libraries (CALL), she is actively involved in the knowledge management and private law libraries special interest groups, as well as serving on the copyright committee. Cyndi has participated in a number of CALL conference panel presentations on knowledge management and other topics. In 2017, she spoke on "Matter-Centric Knowledge Management" at the ARK KM conference held in New York, and contributed to the ARK publication, *Innovations in Legal KM*.

Raymond Olayinka is a senior advisory consultant at Arup and subject matter expert in helping client organizations to develop and deploy knowledge management strategies. He started his career in civil engineering and successfully worked as project engineer and project manager on building projects. Raymond began his work on knowledge management in 2006 and has since held specialist roles with various organizations. He offers a wealth of knowledge management expertise gained through delivering projects in energy, infrastructure, transport, education, and international development. He has led, developed, and overseen knowledge and learning initiatives at corporate level, working in partnership with various stakeholders. His current interest is in the optimization of organizational knowledge to improve business performance through the development of knowledge management systems and programs.

Dr Randhir Reghunath Pushpa is a knowledge and innovation management consultant and researcher. His main focus is to evolve KM as a practice that can bring tangible benefits to organizations. He does work on leveraging knowledge and improving sales, automation, and cost cutting. In innovation management he has been involved in setting up innovation eco-systems, which can help in sustained innovation. At Unisys Bangalore, he set up an innovation program focusing on patent productivity, which resulted in a spurt in innovation in a sustained manner. He is the chief consultant and founder of Acies Innovations (a knowledge and innovation consulting firm). He works very closely with Knowledge Management Society Singapore and is also a member of KM Global Network. He writes regularly on next generation knowledge management. His areas of interest include knowledge management, innovation management, artificial intelligence, and human–machine collaboration.

Dr Vincent Ribiere is an enthusiastic and creative international consultant and professor with a passion for helping organizations solve their organizational knowledge and innovation management challenges. He is the founder and managing director of the Institute for Knowledge and Innovation Southeast Asia (IKI-SEA), a center of excellence at Bangkok University, as well as the program director of the Ph.D. in KM and Innovation Management. He has also co-founded various internationals events in the fields of business creativity and innovation (Creative Bangkok, ASCIM, CreativeMornings Bangkok, G-LINK) and

co-founded various communities of KM and innovation academics and practitioners nationally (iKlub, Thai KM Network) and internationally (KM Global Network). Vincent has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and enjoys sharing his knowledge and experiences. He delivers keynote speeches and workshops at various international professional and academic conferences and is the author of more than 80 publications.

Hélène Russell of TheKnowledgeBusiness is a lawyer (non-practicing) and specialist in KM. After working in clinical negligence litigation defense work for eight years, then two years in an in-house KM team, she has worked as a self-employed KM since 2008.

Hélène specializes in translating complex academic thought leadership and cross-boundary theories into practical tools to improve the efficiency and profitability of real-life law firms. She focuses on producing practical textbooks, hands-on workshops and giving independent advice. She particularly enjoys helping those firms that have reached a tipping point and need practical help with their first major knowledge audit and strategy, but she has helped large and small firms alike.

Hélène is the author of *Knowledge Management Handbook*, published by the Law Society of England and Wales, *Practical Projects in Legal KM*, published by Legal Monitor, and is a contributor to ARK's *Measuring the ROI of KM, 2nd Edition*, *Innovations in Legal KM, Emerging approaches to law firm profitability*, and *The Changing Role of the Professional Support Lawyer*.

Her book *Practical Projects in Legal KM* was declared "clear, succinct, jargon-free and one of the most pragmatic KM texts I have come across … Anyone dealing with legal KM should have a copy of this book. It's as simple as that," by head of client knowledge and learning at Linklaters, Ian Rodwell.

She has spoken at various events, including Lexpo Legal Innovation conference, ARK's KM Legal, Butterworth's PSL conference, and for UWE, BLS and Allice. She runs regular open KM training events in London, KM community groups nationwide under the "Knowledge Network UK" brand, and bespoke in-house training. She has completed an executive MBA with distinction, studying antecedents to knowledge sharing within UK law firms for her dissertation.

Sara Traynor is an executive and leadership coach specializing in coaching lawyers transitioning to board roles or heads of department. She also coaches groups and teams using the globally renowned LEGO

serious play methodology and is the only certified facilitator in south west England. Sara was previously the director of knowledge and learning at Stephens Scown LLP, a *Times* Top 100 Best Companies to Work For. Sara pioneered the firm's KM strategy, which focused on lawyers sharing knowledge and learning from each other. Previously, Sara worked at a FTSE 250 utility for 15 years with management roles in organizational development, change management, service delivery, and project management.

Caroline White-Robinson is head of knowledge management and learning and development at Shoosmiths. Knowledge management is a function that aims to bring all tacit and explicit knowledge within Shoosmiths together in a consistent way, complementing the learning and development area where Caroline has headed up the team for the last ten years. The overall strategy is to equip everyone in Shoosmiths with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to fulfil their role. Caroline's passion is leadership development, strategy development, and helping people find their way in the business world. Having studied for various qualifications for most of her adult life, Caroline uses her experience to find pragmatic solutions for the challenges in today's world. She is proud to lead a team who are passionate about what they do.