

2.URA

KM Framework to facilitate strategic decision making and daily business execution – The URA Experience

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The Background and Purpose of the KM Effort in the Case

As Singapore's national planning authority, URA relies heavily on good knowledge and information management to capture, process & use vast amount of planning related information from various sources with different data types and varying contextual depths. To meet future business needs of faster decision making and changing dynamic environment, we have reviewed KM implementation strategy and developed a comprehensive KM framework to guide the development of KM in URA.

What URA Did

The URA KM Framework which we developed has two goals:

- Facilitate strategic planning and decision making (through 'Effective Tacit Knowledge Management' and 'Effective Intelligence Management');
- Facilitate daily business operation in the divisions (through 'Effective Explicit Knowledge or Information Management' and 'Effective Infrastructure / Data Management').

The heart of URA KM Framework lies in its "Approach & Deployment", which can be categorized into 4 levels as shown below:

Level 4: Effective Intelligence Management

This level focuses on intelligence knowledge gathering, analysis and application in the external business environments (e.g. benchmarking & comparison studies of business areas).

Level 3: Effective Tacit Knowledge Management

This level focuses on 'Tacit knowledge' for continual learning, sharing and collaboration (e.g. Learning Days, After-Action-Reviews, Planners' Club).

Level 2: Effective Explicit Knowledge (Information) Management

This level focuses on 'Explicit knowledge', i.e. effective identification, use, analysis and accessibility of information (e.g. Corporate Intranet, Integrated Information Systems).

Level 1: Effective Infrastructure / Data Management

This level focuses on infrastructure provision and accuracy, reliability, timeliness and security of data (e.g. Corporate Taxonomy, information access control).

Lessons Learned

- KM is a journey and not a destination - not every KM project will be smooth-sailing and there will be failures / hiccups along the way.
- It is important to communicate KM in business terms.
- The success of KM depends equally on "People" and "Process" factors instead of the "Technology" factor alone.

Impact and Benefits

- The framework enables us to formulate a 3-year KM rolling plan to identify, consolidate and formalize all the KM projects for the next 3 years.
- It facilitates a common understanding of KM for URA staff, and it ensures alignment of KM with URA business objectives.
- The framework also provides the overall vision and deployment guide to our KM effort.

Insights and lessons learned from case study discussions

1. I find that in order for CoP to be effective, there should not be too much regulation and rules
2. Centralised approach was better
3. Top level support is critical
4. Motivation to share
5. Employ high level 'drivers' for KM
6. Cultivation vs 'carrot stick'
7. KM framework and communicate to staff
8. If KM effort is not full time job, it is difficult to get good results
9. Very large scale KM development that involves vastly across departments, lot of integration, justification and support required. On going fine tuning and learning of course!
10. A common platform is critical to promote sharing. Support from management is mandatory. Most importantly, reach the ground level staff to instill an build a KM culture
11. KM activists/drivers should be of certain seniority (eg. DD and above) so that they can help drive KM more effectively. Senior management support is essential
12. Bottom up approach sound elusive and a struggle for even the best organizations
13. KM objects or whats available must be made known across the organization, who knows who will develop the next 'big' thing
14. Need to have benchmarking to measure KM effectiveness
15. Centralised approach is better after trying out different approaches in URA
16. Very important to establish clarity of KM in URA
17. Some form of standardization at higher level is inevitable for KM to work effectively. Tie it into corporate vision and mission would be better
18. KM has to come from real business needs and supported by management (eg. CEO participation)
19. Insight on photographs and documents tagging
20. Good governance process in driving KM
21. Identify existing good practices and apply and introduce to other divisions or sections.
22. More IT oriented
23. Did not bring it to the ground staff. There are also tacit knowledge at every level

URA's learning points from discussion

- KM means different things to different organisations. There is no single right method for implementing KM in organisations. It is important for us to decide on the best way to proceed KM based on our understanding of the specific organisation's culture setting and business focus. KM is not an end by itself, but a mean to effectively contribute to strategic business objectives in an organisation.

- We have adopted the approach to communicate KM in business terms for end users as much as possible. Over time, we could review how we could also bring useful KM concepts in simple ways to these officers.