

**Направления в управлении знаниями в организации:
современное состояние**

**The dimensions of knowledge Management in an organisation:
Where do we stand?**

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Многие десятилетия вопрос об управлении знаниями игнорировался, однако возникли новые условия, которые должны породить новые подходы к решению проблемы и обеспечить ее глубокое понимание. Сегодня все больше специалистов соглашаются с тем, что знанием внутри организации следует управлять. В этом контексте автор делает попытку реконцептуализировать проблему знаний и управления ими, представить связанные с этим задачи и возможности, оценить применение элементов УЗ при помощи контрольных таблиц/инструмента, разработанного специально для этой цели. Подчеркивается важность понимания целей УЗ в их связи с миссией и философией организации. Предложен инструмент самооценки достижений и недостатков УЗ в организациях.

Ключевые слова: управление знаниями, УЗ в организациях, общество знаний.

The concept of knowledge and knowledge management has been with us for generations, but new dimensions warrant new approaches and understanding. Increasingly, more people agree that knowledge should be managed in organizations. Within this context, the paper aim to revisit knowledge and knowledge management, its challenges, and evaluate the application of KM entities and components by using a checklist that was created for this purpose. The importance of KM for understanding the objectives of KM and what it entails within the context of the mission and vision of an organisation is recognised. The paper proposes a checklist or self –evaluation tool for the application and evaluation of the successes and failures of KM in organisations.

Keywords: knowledge management, KM in Organisations, knowledge society.

1. Introduction

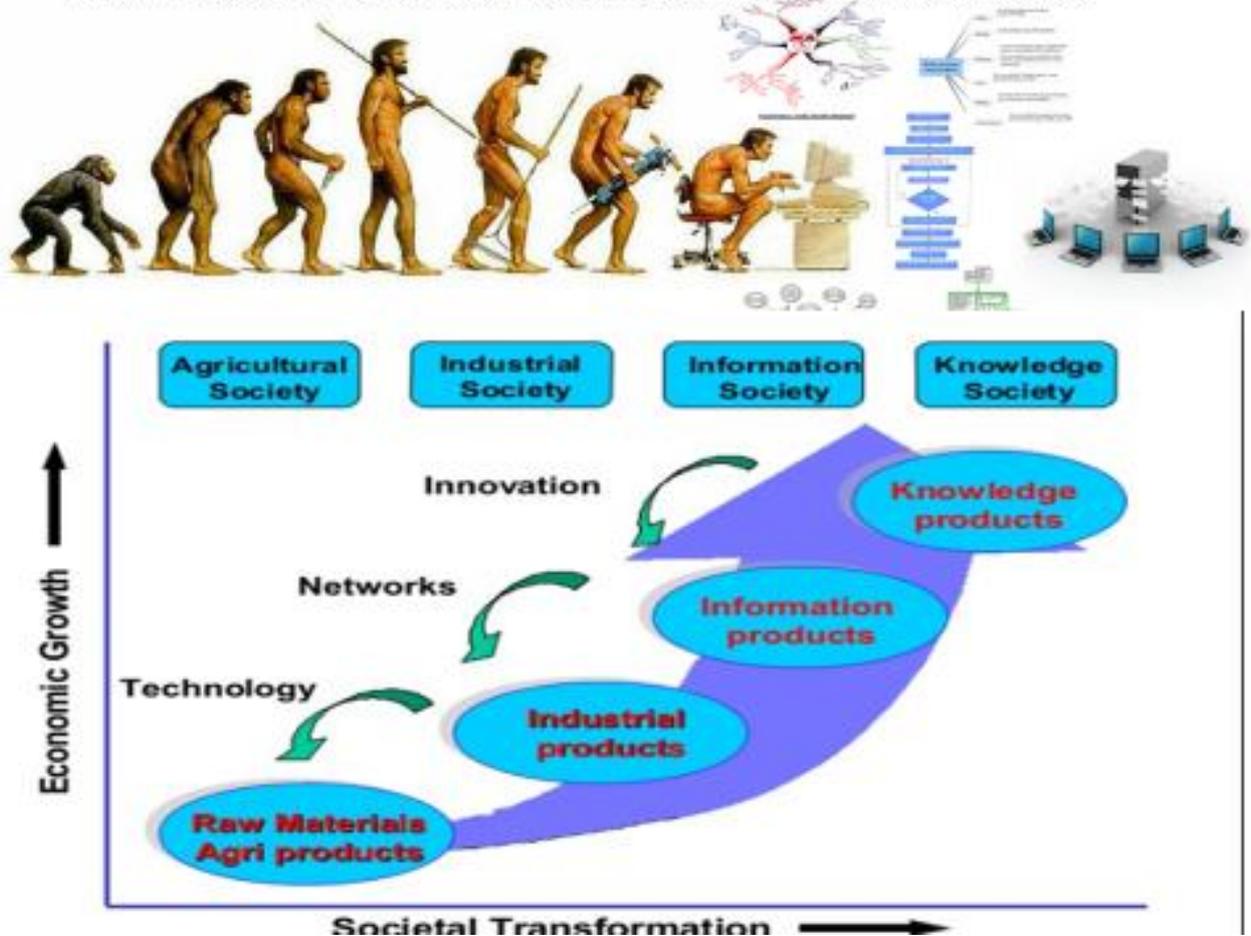
Studies show that knowledge management is a growing discipline and knowledge management (KM) in organisations, such as KM in government, KM in business, KM in NGOs and KM in higher education institutions, is growing much faster as it is embraced and appreciated more than ever before. This warrants new approaches to and understanding of knowledge management, particularly as it evolves in organizations. In this paper, I recognise the evolution of society to understand the origin of knowledge and knowledge management. I also recognise the seminal works of Peter Senge (1990) and Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takaeuchi (1995) in reference to knowledge management in organisations for its examination. In this context, the aim was to re-conceptualise knowledge and knowledge management, its challenges, and evaluate the application of KM entities and components by using a checklist that was created for this purpose. The paper is concluded by acknowledging the importance of understanding the objectives of KM and what it entails within the context of the mission and vision of an organisation. It is noted that the application and evaluation of the successes and failures of KM in organisations may be done through a self-evaluation tool. It is important that KM entities and components are well defined and understood through sufficient auditing and mapping.

2. The concept of knowledge and knowledge management revisited

The concept of knowledge can be approached in many ways. One could, for example, use the knowledge pyramid to explain the relationship between data, information, knowledge and wisdom (Ackoff, 1989; Jean-Baptiste et al, 2008; Ocholla, 2011). Knowledge can also be viewed from an ownership /property point of view, defined by Daniel Bell (1973:176) as “that which is objectively known, an intellectual property, attached to a name or a group of names and certified by copyright or some other form of social recognition (e.g. Publication)”. Knowledge can also be classified for better understanding.

For example, Polanyi (1962) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) divide knowledge into tacit (intangible or personal) and explicit (tangible) knowledge. According to Davenport and Prusak (2000:5), “Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms”. We can also use core-periphery analysis to trace changes in the terminology of knowledge management over time, thereby determining the core focus of knowledge management at present (Onyanha and Ocholla, 2009).

In a recent paper (Ocholla, 2011) on reconceptualising and contextualising knowledge and information management, the author acknowledged the pioneering work of Polanyi (1962) and the seminal works of Ikujiro Nonaka, Hirotaka Takeuchi (1995) and Choo (1998), among others, for shedding more light on tacit and explicit knowledge. Understandably, the author notes that knowledge is human driven--what the knowledge holder knows, so to speak (knowingly or unknowingly, or as Polanyi puts it, “we know more than what we can tell”)--while information is largely a product of knowledge. The author understands a knowledge society to be a society that “generates, processes, shares and makes available to all members of the society knowledge that may be used to improve the human condition” (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/knowledge_society). For those who ascribe to Darwin’s theory of evolution, the journey to today’s knowledge society has been long (see Figure 1), and is rooted in the transformation of societies from gatherers and hunters, through Agrarian and industrial societies, to information and knowledge societies (where we belong today). Each transformation stage/epoch has been recognised with particular economic growth or output ranging from raw materials and agricultural products through to industrial products and the current knowledge products. Not all societies have encountered these changes in the same way (e.g. Jiyane et al, 2013). More affluent societies, often associated with developed countries or the well-educated, or the rich, are fully part of the knowledge society, and produce, access and use more knowledge society products and services than everyone else because they have the means to do so.



The concept of knowledge management continues to invite new perspectives, including the many definitions of knowledge management (Ocholla, 2011:27) that have been reported. Ocholla (2011) argues that many definitions seem to converge rather than diverge. Among the many definitions he cites are that “knowledge management (KM) comprises: a range of strategies and practices used in an organisation to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences”; “the creation, storage and collaborative sharing of employee information within the business environment”; “the way a company stores, organises and accesses internal and external information”; “the process of capturing, organising, and storing information and experiences of workers and groups within an organisation and making it available to others”; “a system or framework for managing the organisational processes that create, store and distribute knowledge, as defined by its collective data, information, and body of experience;” and “managing tacit knowledge (held in an individual’s brain in the form of know-how and experience) and explicit knowledge (recorded independently of humans)”. Through the core-periphery analysis of knowledge management over 20 years, Onyancha and Ocholla (2009) defined KM to be a discipline focusing “on IRM (Information Resource Management – also IM), its major functions are people and document/records management oriented; and it largely involves IR (information retrieval) processes while the resources and systems managed are overwhelmingly IT (conduit, content, networks etc.) oriented”. The authors note that these activities are closely linked to Skyme (1998) and Gu’s (2004) definitions of KM, activities such as managing information – explicit/recorded knowledge; managing processes – embedded knowledge; managing people – tacit knowledge; managing innovation – knowledge conversion; and managing assets – intellectual capital. A process approach to knowledge management would normally fall in line with Bout hillier and Shaerer’s (2002) six processes (see Figure 3), which include: the discovery of existing knowledge, acquisition of knowledge, creation of new knowledge, storage and organisation, sharing of knowledge, and application of knowledge. These processes are

closely linked to the information management processes suggested by Choo (1998) and examined by Ocholla (2011).

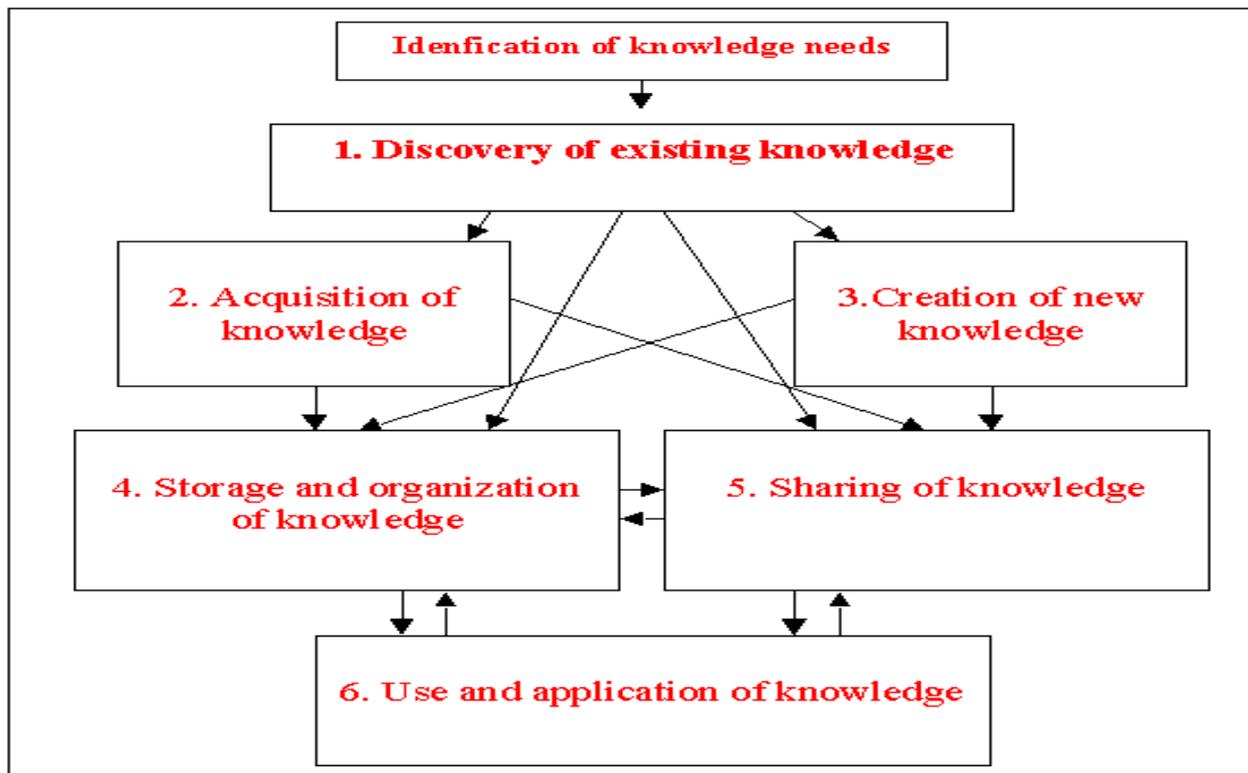


Figure 2: Knowledge management process

Source: Bouthillier and Shearer (2002).

3. Knowledge management in organisations

Knowledge management can be divided into three dominant branches: knowledge management in science, knowledge management in society, and knowledge management in organisations (KMO). Knowledge management in organisations can be further divided into four categories: knowledge management in business (KMB), knowledge management in government (KMG), knowledge management in Higher Education Institutions (KMHEIs), and knowledge management in NGOs (KMNGOs). Of the three branches, knowledge management in organisations is the fastest growing, with KMB leading.

3.1. Theoretical foundation

Several theories are associated with the growth of knowledge management in organisations (KMO). Peter Singe’s (1990) seminal work entitled, “The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation”, proposes a foundation theory for KMO. In the book, he envisions five factors: personal mastery as a discipline focusing on “continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively”; mental models focusing on “pictures of images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action”; building shared vision focusing on “unearthing shared pictures of the future that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance”; team learning focusing on “the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into genuine thinking together”; and systems thinking that he calls the “fifth discipline that integrates the other four” within the organization. We also consider Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) proposed SECI model for understanding and interpreting the knowledge creation process from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge as represented in Figure 2.

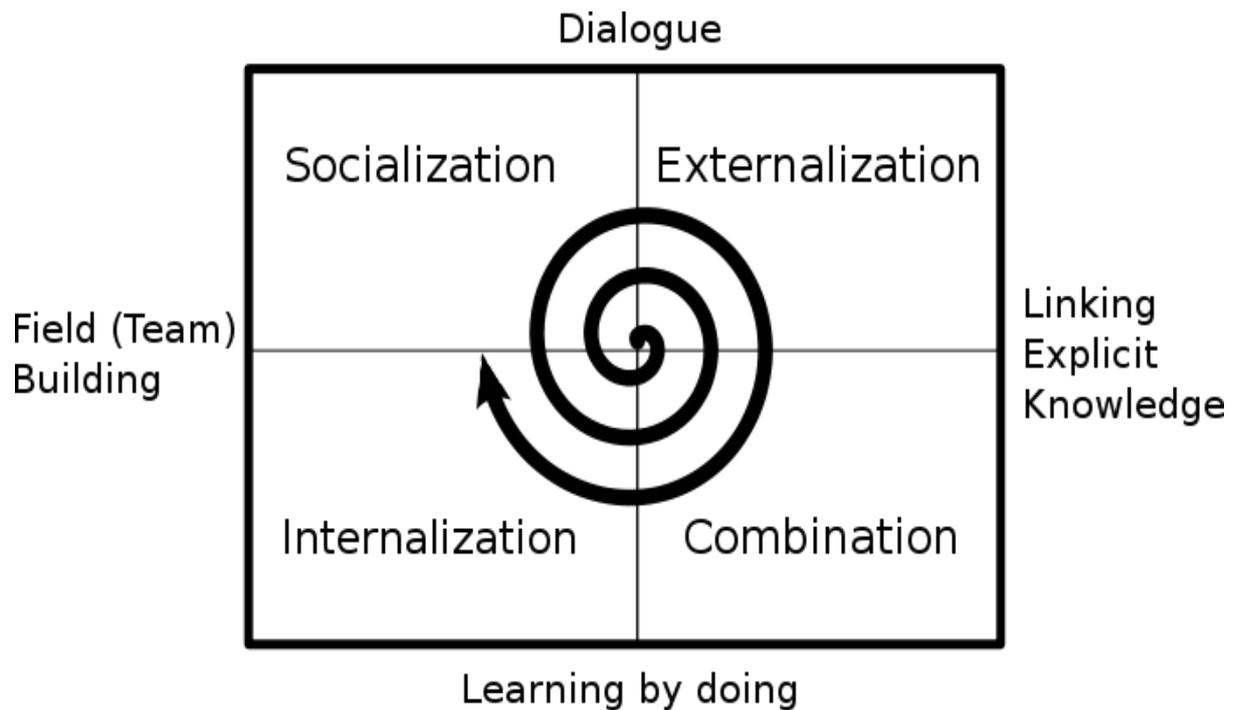


Figure 3: Spiral of organisational knowledge creation
(Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995)

In reference to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) work, Ocholla (2011) notes that knowledge is created and extended through the social interaction between tangible and intangible knowledge, and may follow four basic patterns that are already widely known: i) Intangible to intangible (socialisation) – where individuals share intangible knowledge through personal contact; ii) Intangible to tangible (externalisation) – where the knowledge base is extended through the codification of experience, insight and judgement so that it may be utilised by others; iii) Tangible to tangible (combination) – where individuals combine the tangible knowledge of others to create a new whole; and lastly iv) Tangible to intangible (internalisation) – where individuals use the codified knowledge of others to broaden their own intangible knowledge (see Figure 2), usually moving in a spiral form.

Table 1 shows how knowledge management entities and activities are envisaged by this author.

Table one: Knowledge management entities

Knowledge management entities	Activities/components
Knowledge Generation	Research + Innovation + Discovery. Invention. Creativity –Intellectual property
Knowledge creation/transfer	Socialization+Externalization+combination+Internalization (see Nonaka 1998)
Knowledge processes	Discovery + acquisition+ creation+ storage &organization +sharing+ use and application +auditing/mapping
Knowledge content and access	Format- Print/electronic Spaces –physical/ virtual (eg library +Internet/ Type –books+ journals+ grey literature eg annual reports/correspondence/emails/minutes of meetings +conference proceedings + official /government publications + research reports ,eg T&D + industrial/commercial publications (eg patent,designs) + mass media+ web/internet/intranet/social media Access – Open Access(OA). IR,internet, intranet
Infrastructure/resources	People/Kmanager + space + money + technology+ content + development /maintenance
KM integrity, ethics, regulations	Policy +ethics

3.2. Challenges of knowledge management

Most of the challenges of knowledge management in organizations tie in to the knowledge management entities identified, such as knowledge generation, knowledge creation and transfer, knowledge processes, knowledge content and access, knowledge infrastructure, and knowledge integrity, ethics and regulations. Frost (2014) divides the challenges into two categories: causal failure factors and resultant failure factors. In the first category, he lists: lack of performance indicators and measurable benefits; inadequate management support; improper planning, design, coordination, and evaluation; inadequate skills of knowledge managers and workers; problems with organizational culture; and improper organizational structure. In the second category he lists: lack of widespread contribution; lack of relevance, quality, and usability; overemphasis on formal learning, systematization, and determinant needs; improper implementation of technology; improper budgeting and excessive costs; lack of responsibility and ownership; and loss of knowledge from staff defection and retirement.

3.3. Towards a knowledge management measurement tool for organisations

The challenges highlighted by Frost were considered alongside with my views to develop a checklist for KM in organizations in Table 2 below.

Table Two: Auditing knowledge management in organisations

Power of KM in organizations check list	Yes	No	Not sure
1. We have performance indicators and measurable benefits			
We can determine whether KM activities are succeeding or failing			
We have strategies in place to improve KM activities			
2. We have management support for KM			
We have knowledge management programmes and activities in place			
We have an HR that supports KM			
We have an IT division/section that supports KM			

Power of KM in organizations check list	Yes	No	Not sure
We have KM leadership in place			
There is general acceptance of KM in the organization			
The institution has KM policies			
The institution has KM management structures			
The institution has (a) knowledge manager(s)			
The responsibilities of KM are clearly spelt in the organization			
The Institution has KM incentives and motivation in place			
The institution has KM policy and guidelines			
The institution provides adequate resources(human, financial, facilities, budget, space for KM)			
There is understanding of the benefits of KM in the organization			
There are performance indicators for evaluating KM achievements			
There is sincerity in promoting and developing KM in the organization			
There is enough time to implement KM activities and strategies			
3. We have proper planning, design, coordination and evaluation of KM in place			
We plan for KM(involves people, processes and IT)			
We organize KM activities			
We coordinate KM activities			
We implement/execute KM activities			
We control KM activities			
We evaluate KM activates			
We set goals and delegate KM responsibilities			
We integrate KM enablers into the KM strategy			
We align the KM strategy with organizational strategy			
We improve KM effectiveness at project level			
We anticipate/detect problems			
We determine successes and failures			
We forecast KM costs and determine budgets			
We implement corrective measures			
4. We ensure adequate skills of knowledge managers and workers			
We provide strategic and business skills for KM			
We provide management skills			
We provide intellectual and learning skills			
We provide communication and interpersonal skills			
We provide information management skills			
We provide IT skills			
We provide relevant skills			
We ensure that competent knowledge managers are recruited			
5. The institution has organizational culture development strategies in place			
There is trust in the organization because of reciprocity or return for knowledge shared, willingness to share, willingness to learn			
We support informal communication, tolerance, commitment			
We are open to change			
We have the desire and ability to experiment, learn and innovate			
We are willing to be open, honest and accept mistakes			
We manage business processes and react to external changes			
6. The organization has a proper organizational structure			
Our organization has a centralized structure, decisions are made by			

Power of KM in organizations check list	Yes	No	Not sure
few managers			
Our organization has a formalized structure, and behavior is governed by rules, policies, procedures			
Our organization is complex, consists of many units that hinder KM			
7. There is widespread contribution by members of the organization to KM			
Stakeholders contribute when asked to do so to KM processes			
Stakeholders are generally unable to contribute to KM processes			
Stakeholders are normally unwilling to contribute to KM processes			
8. Knowledge is relevant, of quality/integrity, usable			
KM is aligned to organizational strategy, and is therefore vital			
Knowledge generated is relevant to users			
Knowledge available is easy to understand, access and apply			
9. The organization properly implements technology			
The technology performs well and is widely accepted for KM			
The technology fits with organizational processes and culture			
The organization does not over-rely on technology for KM			
10. There is proper budgeting and in excessive costs for KM are avoided			
There is adequate finance for KM			
There is sound financial management for KM			
There is adequate budget for KM in place			
11. There is ownership of KM in place			
Responsibilities of a knowledge manager are in place			
There is a sense of ownership of KM in place			
12. Staff resignation and retirement does not affect KM			
There is a succession plan in place for KM			
There is a knowledge retention strategy in place			
13. There is a knowledge sharing strategy/plan in place			
We share knowledge through conferences , seminars and workshops regularly			
We share knowledge through regular meetings			
We share knowledge through knowledge fares, exhibitions, displays			
We share knowledge by celebrating KM achievements and successes			
15. Knowledge access and repositories exist and are cherished			
We have a functional institutional repository			
Knowledge in the organization is accessed through a physical and virtual library			
There are knowledge spaces in the organization for knowledge access and use			
The institution has functional Internet/web access			
The organization has a well-developed website for promoting knowledge and KM activities			
The organization uses social media effectively			
The organization supports open access initiatives			
The organization provides easy Internet and Intranet access			

Conclusion

We cannot manage what we do not know, therefore it is important to fully understand what knowledge management entails, and acknowledge that organisations are not the same. Because KM does not

operate in a vacuum, the knowledge of the mission and vision of the organisation is crucial for the development of an appropriate and suitable knowledge management strategy. Thus, an awareness of the objectives of KM is informed by the mission and vision of the organisation. Management functions (such as planning) seem to be applicable to all types of management (including KM), and therefore are appropriate for the execution of knowledge management in organisations. KM mapping and auditing (questions of what, why, how, when, where, who, etc.), which the checklist in Table 2 represents, provides a strong foundation for an in-depth understanding of the status and requirements of KM. Without the support of stakeholders in the organization, it would be difficult to roll out KM strategies. Knowledge of an organization's strengths and limitations can help to develop and sustain KM strategies, initiatives and activities. Essentially, the checklist would be helpful in self-auditing, developing, and improving KM in organizations.

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