

AS 5037—2005

Knowledge management - a guide



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Australian Standard™

Knowledge management – a guide

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Preface

This Standard was prepared by Standards Australia Committee MB-007, Knowledge Management to supersede AS 5037(Int)—2003.

The objectives of this Standard are to:

- provide an easy-to-read, non-prescriptive guide on knowledge management;
- help individuals and organisations deepen their understanding of knowledge management concepts;
- assist organisations to understand the environment best suited for enabling knowledge activities; and
- offer a scalable and flexible framework for designing, planning, implementing and assessing knowledge interventions that respond to an organisation's environment and state of readiness.

The Standard has been developed for professionals who have either recently encountered knowledge management or who are looking for further guidance.

This revision incorporates insights gained as a result of feedback and consultation on the Interim Standard, which was issued in February 2003. The Committee acknowledges the many Australian and international knowledge management practitioners who commented on the Interim Standard. All suggestions received were considered and many of them have been incorporated into this Standard.

The major changes in this revision are:

- an increased emphasis on how to understand whether an organisation is ready to adopt and/or expand knowledge management activities;
- a recognition that organisations are knowledge ecosystems – a complex set of relationships existing between people, process, technology and content;
- detailed guidance on how to implement the Standard within the context of an organisation's environment; and
- emerging issues and trends in knowledge management.

The implementation of knowledge management is context dependent and the field is continuing to evolve. This Standard identifies some of the major trends currently emerging.

The knowledge management field has adopted its own language and metaphors and many of these are used in this Standard.

Breakout boxes containing guidance, stories from practice and key learnings are provided throughout the Standard to enhance an understanding of concepts discussed.

A different style and language has been used in this Standard when compared to other Australian Standards. This is due to the objectives of this Standard and the need to reflect the knowledge management area of practice.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword	vii
1 Scope and general	
1.1 Scope.....	1
1.2 Referenced documents	1
1.3 Definitions	1
2 Introducing the concepts	
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Using this Standard.....	4
2.3 The knowledge lens	8
2.4 The organisation as a knowledge ecosystem.....	8
2.5 Understanding the map/build/operationalise cycle	10
3 Mapping context and culture	
3.1 Introducing the mapping phase.....	13
3.2 How to start.....	14
3.3 Existing knowledge ecosystem	16
3.4 Assessing the elements	17
3.5 Mapping culture and context outcomes.....	19
4 Building experiences and linkages	
4.1 Translating mapping into action	21
4.2 Introducing the building phase	22
4.3 Allowing knowledge management to evolve.....	22
4.4 Selecting enablers.....	23
4.5 Prototyping and pilot projects.....	24
4.6 Building organisational forms and structure	25
4.7 Communicating knowledge interventions	25
4.8 Creating champions and advocates	26
4.9 Building organisational competencies	26
4.10 Identifying resistance to change.....	26
4.11 Building experiences and linkages outcomes.....	27
5 Operationalising initiatives and capabilities	
5.1 Shifting the focus	29

5.2	Operationalising knowledge	29
5.3	Capitalising on branding	30
5.4	Operational champions and mandates	31
5.5	Operationalising pilots	31
5.6	Operationalising competencies and skills	31
5.7	Sustainability and success	32
5.8	Operationalising initiatives and capabilities outcomes	33
6	Enablers	
6.1	General	35
6.2	After action reviews	35
6.3	Business process mapping and redesign	36
6.4	Champions and advocates	36
6.5	Change management	37
6.6	Content management	37
6.7	Communities of interest (CoINs)	37
6.8	Communities of practice (CoP)	38
6.9	Critical incident technique	38
6.10	Document management	38
6.11	Environmental scanning	39
6.12	Information auditing	39
6.13	Knowledge auditing	39
6.14	Knowledge literacy	41
6.15	Knowledge mapping	41
6.16	Leadership	42
6.17	Learning and development	42
6.18	Leveraging information repositories	42
6.19	Meetings and 'share fairs'	43
6.20	Mentoring and coaching	43
6.21	Narrative management	44
6.22	Networks and communities	45
6.23	Physical environment	45
6.24	Play theory	46
6.25	Reflection	46
6.26	Rewards and recognition	47
6.27	Social network analysis	47
6.28	Storytelling	48
6.29	Strategic conversations	49
6.30	Taxonomies and thesauri	49
6.31	Technological integration	50
6.32	Technologies for communication and knowledge sharing	51

6.33	Technologies for discovery and creation	52
6.34	Technologies for managing repositories.....	52
7	Evaluating and measuring	
7.1	Introduction	54
7.2	What to evaluate and measure	55
7.3	How we evaluate and measure	55
8	Reflecting	
8.1	Introduction	59
8.2	Looking back.....	60
8.3	Sensing the future	61
APPENDICES		
A	Related areas of practice	66
B	Sample job descriptions	71
C	Knowledge management resources	75

Foreword

The transition into the knowledge era means that knowledge has become the major asset and capability for contemporary organisations.

Organisations face a hyper-connected, competitive and constantly shifting environment. Within this environment, Australia has witnessed many changes over the last forty years, including deregulation, microeconomic reform, increased globalisation and the rise of computerisation. The knowledge-based services sector is now a key driver of national wealth. There is growing recognition that knowledge and the ability of an organisation to learn, innovate and adapt contributes significantly towards organisational strength and survival. Knowledge and related intangibles are increasingly viewed as fundamental to organisational success, whether in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors.

To understand and deal with these changes, knowledge management promises deeper insights into an organisation as a knowledge ecosystem, together with greater impact on how the organisation responds to, innovates and learns from aspects of its environment. Knowledge management recognises the uniqueness of organisations in terms of strategic intent, context, capability and culture.

Knowledge management has emerged from a variety of other disciplines. Its foundations lie in the management of explicit knowledge including information, documents and records as well as the management of tacit knowledge including networks, skills transfer and learning. Its strength lies in its power to combine the organisational elements of people, process, technology and content into a coherent approach to address gaps in organisational capability.

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1 Scope and general

1.1 Scope

This Standard provides guidance on what knowledge management is and how it may be implemented using a flexible framework. The Committee encourages organisations to develop their own shared understanding and/or definitions that are suitable and applicable to their context. This Standard can be used by any individual, community or organisation that requires an understanding of knowledge management and its implementation.

1.2 Referenced documents

The following documents are referred to in the body of this Standard:

AS 5090	<i>Work process analysis for record keeping</i>
AS ISO 15489.1	<i>Records management, Part 1: General</i>
AS ISO 15489.2	<i>Records management, Part 2: Guidelines</i>
HB 189	<i>Knowledge management terminology and readings – An Australian Guide</i>
BS PD 7502	<i>Guide to measurements in knowledge management</i>
ISO 2788	<i>Documentation; guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri</i>

Additional references are provided in Appendix C.

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Standard the following definitions apply.

1.3.1 Data

Any manifestation in the environment, which may include symbolic representations that, in combination, may form the basis of information.

1.3.2 Enablers

Specific tools, techniques and activities through which knowledge management is implemented in an operational environment.