Above the Flow/In the Flow

In the context of knowledge management, *above the flow* activities are those that require a person to step out of his/her daily flow of work and reflect, codify, or share. *In the flow* activities are those that are seamlessly integrated into the daily workflow.

Absorptive Capacity

The ability to recognize the value of new information and/or practices, assimilate them, and apply them to current goals. Absorptive capacity is largely a function of an individual’s or group’s level of prior related knowledge as well as their ability to handle rapid change.

Activity Feed/Stream

A reverse-chronological list of updates from people or groups that a user follows in a given platform. Activity feeds are often used to show recent activity within a user’s communities of practice and/or enterprise social networks.

Acquired Knowledge

Knowledge external to an organization that can be purchased or rented. This can also refer to knowledge obtained through other channels, such as training or knowledge transfer.

Advisory Board

A cross-functional team, usually made up of high-level managers, that provides advice and/or strategic support to a KM program. The purpose is to provide a forum for surfacing, addressing, and solving KM issues and needs; creating, capturing, and leveraging KM best practices and approaches; supporting communities of practice and collaboration; communicating KM messages and successes; and advocating common processes for knowledge access, management, and use.

After Action Review

A structured process to debrief participants after a project or event in order to analyze what happened, why, which elements went well, and what could be improved in the future. Formal after-action reviews originated in the U.S. Army, but a range of public and private organizations have since adopted similar processes to capture lessons learned.

Alert/Notification

A system that automatically notifies users when new content or updates are available. This is one method of pushing relevant knowledge to employees, rather than forcing them to search for it.

Analytics

The process of searching for and gathering meaningful insight from data and then using that insight to inform business decisions. Also see data mining and knowledge analytics.

Anticipatory Knowledge Delivery

Using tools or processes to anticipate employee knowledge needs and proactively deliver knowledge content that helps the employee with a specific project or task.

APQC’s KM Capability Assessment Tool℠

A diagnostic that lets KM practitioners measure their KM programs across 146 capabilities in four categories: strategy, people, process, and content/IT. Based on APQC’s Levels of Knowledge Management Maturity, the assessment maps the current state of a KM program to the five levels of the maturity model.

APQC’s Knowledge Flow Process℠

A seven-step cycle that describes how knowledge is created, identified, collected, reviewed, accessed, and used inside organizations.
APQC’S Levels of Knowledge Management Maturity™

A five-level maturity model that tracks an organization’s progression from immature, inconsistent KM activities to mature, disciplined approaches aligned with strategic business imperatives.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Computer capabilities that can learn, solve problems, and adapt through perception of their environment. See Cognitive Capabilities/Systems.

"Ask The Expert" System

A platform that allows employees to reach out directly to the organization’s subject matter experts through chat, discussion forums, or other communication channels.

Augmented Reality

Technology that superimposes computer-generated visual (and sometimes audio) elements on the user’s view.

Autotagging/Autoclassification

Tools that automatically generate relevant metadata for content items based on their source or the information they contain.

Benchmarking

The use of specified measures to compare organizational processes and performance to those of other organizations in an effort to enhance productivity and quality.

Best-practice Organization

An organization recognized as exhibiting exceptional performance or employing innovative approaches. APQC identifies best-practice organizations through a multi-part screening process embedded in its four-phased benchmarking methodology.

Best Practice

A methodology or approach to a certain task that delivers measurably better outcomes. APQC uses its four-phased benchmarking methodology to uncover best practices.

Big Data

A collection of data sets so large and complex that capturing, storing, searching, sharing, analyzing, and understanding them is beyond the capabilities of traditional databases and tools.

Blog

A website with discrete entries that may be used to provide company or project updates, answers to common questions or challenges, descriptions of experiences, or tips. Blogs may be external (available to the public) or internal (available only to employees or specific groups). Blogs often allow comments so readers can give feedback and ask questions.

Bot

A software application, also called a software agent, that runs automated tasks on behalf of a user or another application.

Business Case

A proposal that outlines the justification and plan for starting a new task, program, or methodology. In the context of KM, a good business case lays out the details to formalize and implement a KM strategy, including scope, objectives, measures, required resources, estimated costs and benefits, and a timeline with milestones and approval stage-gates.

Buy-in

A stakeholder’s agreed support for a given decision or initiative.
Change Management

The application of a structured process or set of approaches to transition employees, teams, and/or an entire organization to a desired future state. In the context of KM, change management often involves support from senior leaders, internal communications campaigns, formal and informal training, and rewards and recognition to motivate participation.

Chatbot

A software application that acts as a virtual agent and conversationally responds to human enquiries. In the enterprise, chatbots can be used to respond to employee questions, recommend content, and perform/report back on simple tasks.

Chief Digital Officer (CDO)

An executive-level position responsible for driving digitalization of the enterprise. This includes converting paper-based processes to digital ones and promoting use of digital systems and capabilities to support the business.

Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Job title for the most senior executive responsible for information technology systems that support business goals.

Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO)

Job title for the most senior executive responsible for KM tools and approaches that support business goals.

Chief Technology Officer (CTO)

An executive-level position responsible for technological needs and issues within the enterprise.

Cloud

The delivery of computing as a service, rather than as a product, over the Internet. “The cloud” is the conceptual “location” for any remotely hosted data, application, or service that is accessed via the Internet.

Cognitive Computing/Systems

Self-learning systems that use data mining and machine learning to simulate human thinking processes.

Collaboration

Working together on a shared task, project, or goal. Collaboration typically involves identifying roles, sharing knowledge, and creating consensus.

Collaborative Culture

An environment in which employees at all levels feel empowered and encouraged to share knowledge and work together, especially across traditional organizational boundaries.

Community of Practice (CoP)

A network of people who come together to share and learn from one another face-to-face, virtually, or both. Communities are held together by common goals and purposes supported by a desire to share experiences, insights, and best practices. Varieties of communities of practice include:

◊ **best-practice communities**, which focus on developing, validating, and disseminating best-practices;

◊ **innovation communities**, which focus on the generation of new ideas, often through crossing departmental, disciplinary, and/or geographic boundaries; and

◊ **knowledge-stewarding communities**, which focus on organizing, managing, and retaining the collective knowledge of the organization, including day-to-day materials.
Community of Practice Leader/Community Leader

The individual who is primarily accountable for the success of the community. The leader usually establishes objectives, stays accountable for knowledge capture and reuse, stewards the community’s body of knowledge on behalf of the larger organization, and communicates with community members.

Community of Practice Core Team

A network of active community of practice members who support the community leader with key tasks related to sustaining community activity. These may include soliciting, vetting, and managing community content libraries; monitoring and soliciting replies to community discussion boards or social media activity streams; and planning and executing community meetings and webinars.

Competency

The ability and related skills required to perform a specific type of work.

Competency Management

Tools and approaches that enable competency analysis, competency profiling, skills-gap analysis, and succession planning. Competency management systems may be integrated or associated with a Learning Management System (LMS).

Content Management

The application of a structured process to store, deliver, and facilitate access to enterprise content. Enterprise content may include standard processes and procedures, vetted expertise and best practices, project-specific content, tools and templates, instructional content, and unstructured content.

Content Repository

A virtual space to store enterprise content. Content repositories can be central and enterprise-wide or specific to a business area, team, or project.

Core Team

A group of professionals who support a KM program by providing expertise, coordination, facilitation, training, templates, and best practices. Most KM core teams focus on bolstering knowledge capture and sharing across their organizations and promoting the application of KM tools and approaches to solve problems and close performance gaps.

Critical Knowledge

Knowledge that is valuable and durable enough to offer a sustainable, competitive advantage that justifies the cost of retaining it and transferring it from employee to employee.

Crowdsourcing

Obtaining input for a project or query by enlisting the services of a large number of people, often through an online collaboration tool. In KM, crowdsourcing is often used to solicit and filter knowledge and ideas from a broad cross-section of employees (or, in some cases, external partners).

Curation

Selecting, organizing, and presenting a collection of related items. In knowledge management, curation often involves soliciting, reviewing, organizing, publishing, and adding metadata to content so it can be found, accessed, and used by others.

Data

Qualitative or quantitative values and information.

Data Mining

The application of intelligent methods to discover new, interesting, and significant knowledge within large datasets. This knowledge can take the form of patterns, associations, changes, and anomalies.
Data Science
Using query, analysis, and reporting tools to extract and present information and draw conclusions from data sets.

Data Visualization
The graphical representation of data (e.g., bar chart, histogram, box plot chart) used to make complex data more understandable.

Dedicated Resources
Organizational resources (financial, human capital, physical, or otherwise) that are set aside exclusively for a particular task, project, or goal.

Deep Knowledge
Knowledge that is specific to an organization and cannot be hired from outside.

Deep Learning
Machine learning methods based on using predictive models that “learn” from existing data to calculate future behaviors and outcomes.

Design Team
A cross-functional team that represents the business unit or functional area of a KM initiative. The design team comprises the individuals who will scope and plan the KM initiative as well as those who will execute it; this typically includes a team leader or champion; relevant subject matter experts; and stakeholders impacted by the project, including both sources and recipients of the knowledge that will be captured or shared.

Design Thinking
A methodology that uses the creative strategies of design such as empathy, ideation, and experimentation to understand needs and solve problems.

Digital Assistant (Also: Intelligent Personal Assistant)
A virtual personal information manager that can perform tasks and provide information for the user. Commercial examples include Google’s Siri and Amazon’s Alexa.

Digital Hub
An electronic single point of entry into an organization’s knowledge assets, collaborative work environments, and expertise. Also see portal.

Digital Transformation/Enterprise
Integrating multiple technologies throughout the enterprise to fundamentally improve operations and better serve customers.

Digital Workplace
A virtual equivalent to the physical workplace. Components include email and other online communication platforms, team spaces, enterprise social networks, and virtual meetings.

Digitization
The act of moving processes, systems, or information online or putting them in a format that can be understood by computers or electronic devices.

Discovery
Encountering information through navigation, exploration, or targeted recommendation. Discovery is usually contrasted with search, which requires users to know what they are looking for in order to find it.

Discussion Board
In an enterprise KM system, a discussion board is an online forum for employees to pose and answer questions, post announcements, recommend content, and otherwise share information and ideas.
Document Management

Virtual storage, organization, and management of documents.

Engagement

Connection with and commitment to a project, idea, team, or organization. In KM, engagement refers to the act of getting buy-in from employees and convincing them to participate in one or more KM approaches.

Enterprise Content Management

Storing, managing, and facilitating access to content in a way that is tailored to the needs and processes of a particular enterprise. Enterprise content management typically includes elements such as standard review cycles for content, role-based access rights, metadata management, and so on.

Enterprise Search

Software designed to search within and return results from one or more content repositories within an organization.

Enterprise Social Networking

Social media-style applications that enable an organization’s employees (and in some cases, trusted partners) to connect, discuss, and collaborate in a protected digital environment.

Expert Masterclass

A class, workshop, or session in which an organization’s expert(s) share knowledge and coach other employees to help them develop the advanced skills and judgment required to achieve expert status.

Expertise Location

Tools and approaches used to surface experts and knowledgeable people in the workforce. Expertise location often involves the creation of searchable online employee profiles. However, approaches may incorporate centralized “ask the expert” services, communities of practice, collaboration applications, blogs, microblogs, and tools that analyze real-time data on employees’ contributions and behaviors to dynamically generate expertise recommendations.

Explicit Knowledge

Knowledge that is conducive to being written down or expressed verbally.

Extranet

An intranet that can be partially access by authorized external users, such as vendors and contractors, which enables organizations to securely exchange information over the Internet.

Facilitated Transfer of Best Practices

A structured process to surface best practices exhibited by a particular team, location, or business unit and replicate them in other parts of the organization.

Failfest

An event in which individuals, typically members of a project team or community, share experiences of past failures in order to learn and grow.

Federated Search

An enterprise search that sends queries and pulls content from different repositories. The result from an end-user perspective is that employees can use one search box to retrieve results from most or all content repositories across the organization.

Fellow/Fellows' Program

A program where the most knowledgeable and experienced employees in a particular field are assigned, nominated, or apply to be named as official subject matter experts. Fellows are usually responsible for leveraging their expertise in particular ways (e.g., as internal consultants, mentors, or reviewers).
Findability
The ease with which the desired content within a site or repository can be found.

Folksonomy
User-generated, collaboratively created, and loosely structured metadata classification system. Also see taxonomy.

Gamification
The use of game mechanics and psychology to drive a specific set of desired behaviors within a target audience. Gamification involves competitive elements like scores and prizes and operates on the assumption that people will be motivated to advance or “win” in the context of the game.

Gap Analysis
A technique for identifying variances between goals and current performance in order to determine next steps to move from the current state to a desired future state.

Graph/Relational Database
A database that uses graph structures for semantic queries with nodes, edges, and properties to represent and store data. Graph databases allow for efficient navigation of connections and relationships among data.

Harvesting
Gathering tacit and/or explicit knowledge for the creation of reusable knowledge content.

Ideation
The creative process of generating and communicating new ideas. Ideation is an essential part of the design process and design thinking.

Indexing
Organizing data or content in a structured way so that it can be easily tagged, managed, and accessed.

Information
Facts provided or learned about a person, process, technology, and so on. Information must be put into practice in order to become knowledge.

Information Management
Processes and tools that acquire information from multiple sources and make it available to those who need it. Information management includes organizing, reviewing, archiving, reporting on, and controlling access to information.

Innovation
The development of a new idea, method, or device that serves a new function or works better than what existed previously.

Intellectual Capital
An organization’s documented and undocumented informational resources, including employee knowledge (whether tacit, explicit, documented, and/or undocumented) and intellectual property, that can be used to produce value.

Intellectual Property (IP)
An organization’s legally recognized, exclusive rights to ideas, designs, writings, and other creative outputs. For example, a patent for an invention or a trademark for a product.

Intelligent Automation
Process automation that begins with process steps, business rules, experience-based context logic, and decision models as the foundation to incorporate machine learning or artificial intelligence for decision points throughout the process.
Intelligent Systems

Technologically advanced systems that can perceive and respond to the world around them in some way.

Interface

A shared boundary across which two different systems or entities exchange information. An interface can be between software, hardware, and/or people.

Intranet

A private network accessible only to an organization’s employees. Intranets often function as a starting point or one-stop shop for employee access to internal and external resources.

Job Handoff Document

Document created by a staff member who is about to retire (or otherwise leave the organization) in order to help his/her successor. The document creates a record of everything the position holder would need to tell someone who is replacing them in that role.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

Metrics deemed essential to understanding operational health. KPIs result from operational objectives and are outcome based. They are central to measuring impact on key stakeholders (i.e., stockholders, customers, and employees), and they are based on importance, not performance. In APQC’s Open Standards Research, a KPI is generally related to a particular process in the Process Classification Framework. For more information see the Open Standards glossary.

KM Approaches

Specific methods and tactics designed to formalize and enable knowledge capture, sharing, and collaboration within organizations. Examples include communities of practice, initiatives to facilitate expertise location, the facilitated transfer of best practices, and the capture and application of lessons learned.

KM Communication Director

The person responsible for developing, managing, and publicizing communications for a range of stakeholders regarding the organization’s KM program.

KM Core/Central Team

A team responsible for implementing and managing KM tools across an organization, function, or business unit. Core team members have all or part of their time explicitly and officially dedicated to KM. Team roles may include KM leader, KM specialist, KM communications director, and KM business analyst.

KM Design Team

A team responsible for planning all aspects of a new KM program/approach including scoping, knowledge mapping, design of knowledge sharing processes, creation of roles and responsibilities, measures, and analysis of IT capabilities and tools.

KM Implementation Team

A team responsible for implementing a KM initiative within an organization. Best-practice organizations typically use centralized implementation teams (comprised of stakeholders from affected business units, a program or project manager, and an executive sponsor) to develop their implementation plans while decentralized implementation teams tackle the actual execution of those plans.

KM Implementation Roadmap

A detailed plan of the steps an organization will take to implement a KM strategy and/or program as well as the estimated timeframe for each step.
KM Leader

The leader and champion of the KM team, who ensures that all KM initiatives support and align with the mission and goals of the organization, and who serves as the liaison between the business leadership and others involved in KM activities.

KM Portfolio Management

Management of an organization’s portfolio of KM tools and approaches. KM portfolio management involves assessing the organization’s knowledge needs and measuring existing approaches and solutions in order to determine which KM initiatives the organization should invest (or divest) in.

KM Specialist

An individual who promotes knowledge sharing throughout an organization’s operational business processes and systems by strengthening links between knowledge sharing and information systems and improving integration among information systems to facilitate seamless exchange of information across those systems.

KM Strategy

A systematic approach to helping employees share knowledge. Developing a KM strategy involves outlining objectives, necessary resources, and potential pilot projects.

KM/IT Business Analyst

An individual who supports the KM program as the liaison between the core KM team, business units, user communities, and the functional IT group. This role ensures that the needs of the organization are met, that users are provided with the appropriate level of technology support, and that corporate IT resources are utilized effectively.

Knowledge

Information in action. In a business context, knowledge is what employees know about work-related disciplines, products, processes, their customers, one another, mistakes, and successes.

Knowledge Analytics

A measurement, analysis, reporting, and decision-support methodology that combines data from KM approaches and business processes to guide knowledge-related investments. The knowledge analytics process blends KM statistics with data from HR, talent, content management, social analytics, finance, marketing, operations, and other disciplines to identify important patterns in employee knowledge creation, sharing, and use.

Knowledge Asset

Explicit knowledge content that belongs to the enterprise and can be used and/or reused to further enterprise goals.

Knowledge Audit

An inspection of the organization’s knowledge assets and evaluation of its KM strategy. Knowledge audits typically involve identifying knowledge needs and gaps, assessing knowledge flow, and performing knowledge mapping. Knowledge audits may have a broad scope, or they may focus on specific topic domains/expertise areas.

Knowledge Base

A central database of content and information specific to a particular topic, community, business area, or organization.

Knowledge Book (also: Learning Journal)

An in-depth collection of reusable knowledge content focused on a particular process, discipline or technology, usually created with extensive input from one or more subject matter experts. Knowledge books are often used to aid the transfer of knowledge from experts to other employees.
Knowledge Café
An informal session for members of a group (e.g., community of practice, learning cohort, project team) to share and reflect. Knowledge cafés are typically led by a facilitator who guides discussion around several pre-identified themes or open-ended questions. Large groups may break into smaller ones to enable discussion, with participants rotating in and out of discussions to engage with as many people as possible.

Knowledge Capture
The collection of an individual’s or team’s knowledge so that it can be accessed and/or reused by others.

Knowledge Champion
An employee who has some (but not necessarily all) responsibility for enabling and promoting knowledge sharing in a team, department, location, or business unit. Most knowledge champions do not have KM-specific roles, but devote a percentage of their time either officially or unofficially to knowledge-related activities.

Knowledge Flow
The movement of knowledge between employees, teams, business units, and/or across the entire enterprise.

Knowledge Hoarding
The practice of limiting the flow of knowledge and information either by controlling access to it or failing to share it.

Knowledge Loss Risk Matrix
A tool for prioritizing at-risk knowledge for potential interventions. This tool plots different knowledge domains on two dimensions: (1) how likely the organization is to lose the knowledge in the near- to mid-term, and (2) the consequences of losing that knowledge.

Knowledge Management (KM)
The application of a structured process to help information and knowledge flow to the right people at the right time so they can act more efficiently and effectively to find, understand, share, and use knowledge to create value.

Knowledge Map
A visual representation of an organization’s internal and/or external knowledge resources.

Knowledge Modeling
The translation of complex knowledge into a visual model or ontology so that it can be communicated and understood more easily, either by people or computers.

Knowledge Retention and Transfer (KR&T)
The conversion of knowledge in people’s heads into content, tools, and processes the entire work force can use. KRT strategies include communities of practice, lessons learned, mentoring, expertise location, storytelling, and leveraging retirees.

Knowledge Reuse
The application of knowledge by an individual other than the original producer/owner of that knowledge. Effective knowledge reuse is the goal of many KM implementations.

Knowledge Sharing
The exchange of knowledge between individuals. Knowledge sharing may be formal or informal as well as in-person or virtual.

Knowledge Transfer
The successful movement of knowledge from one person or area to another. Also see knowledge retention and transfer.
Knowledge-centered Service/Support (KCS)

A service delivery model that focuses on knowledge as a key organizational asset and integrates knowledge base use into employee workflows. KSC processes often focus on creating and maintaining a collection of high-quality content that customers and/or customer-facing employees (e.g., in contact centers) can use to answer questions and solve problems.

Learning Organization

An organization that embraces continuous learning as a core organizational value. Usually, learning organizations promote knowledge sharing and collaboration as vehicles for continuous improvement.

Lessons Learned

A knowledge-sharing approach that helps employees reflect on and capture lessons and proven practices from projects or events. Lessons learned activities typically focus on questions such as “what did we do right?” and “how can we improve to be more effective in the future?” These activities are sometimes referred to as after action reviews, hot washes, post-mortems, or event debriefs.

Mentoring

The process of advising, training, and/or guiding another (usually younger or less experienced) colleague.

Metadata

Structured information about an information resource that makes it easier to find, use, and manage. Often referred to as “data about data.” Also see taxonomy.

Metric

A measurement of organizational activities and performance; for example, cycle time.

Microblogging

A microblog is a platform that allows people to post short, text-based messages and updates. As with blogs, readers can subscribe to or “follow” writers and topics, and posters can add basic metadata to their posts (through hashtags). Twitter is the most popular microblogging service in the consumer IT market, whereas Yammer is the dominant enterprise microblogging platform.

Natural Language Processing (NLP)

Machine learning software that enables computers to understand human language and detect patterns therein. An NLP engine can take a block of text and extract what topics appear in the text and weigh the coverage of those topics (e.g., 70% of the text is related to Topic A).

Network

A group or system of interconnected people or things (e.g., a social network of people, a local area network of connected computers).

Neural Network

A computer system, modeled on the human brain and nervous system, that uses an interconnected group of nodes to “learn” (i.e., automatically improve performance on) tasks.

Nex’pert

A mid-career employee, especially one who might move into an “expert” role in the near future through professional development. Lockheed Martin’s KM team coined this word as a contraction of next expert.

Non-competitors

Organizations that do not seek the same business or clients as a particular firm do but from whom that firm might glean best practices and lessons learned.
Ontology

The formal definition of the types, properties, and relationships of entities that exist in a particular domain.

Open Innovation

Innovation through internal and external collaboration. Open innovation yields access to connections and partners with different technologies, processes, cost structures, and business models.

Peer Assist

A session that brings together a group of peers to share knowledge and provide feedback on a particular project or activity. Peer assists may target a specific challenge an individual or group is currently facing.

Pilot Project

A small-scale preliminary project that allows stakeholders to evaluate the feasibility, time, cost, and benefit of a planned full-scale project. For example, an organization may pilot a KM capability in one business area before implementing it enterprise-wide.

Portal

An online point of access to enterprise content and knowledge. A portal may also be used as a collaboration tool that enables employees to work together, find expertise, and share knowledge.

Predictive Analytics

Using statistical methods on one or more data sets to predict future events or trends.

Process Automation

The use of software to mimic human action and connect multiple fragmented systems together through automation. Process automation enables systems to carry out high-volume, multistep actions, without manual intervention by employees, to capture information, manipulate data, or trigger responses in other systems.

Process-based Knowledge Mapping

Mapping knowledge assets (people, expertise, and/or content) required to execute particular business processes. A process-based knowledge map provides an explicit picture of who has the knowledge, where it is located, who owns and validates it, and why it is important. The ultimate objective of process-based knowledge mapping is to reveal gaps in process knowledge.

Profile

An online representation of a user’s identity. In the enterprise, profiles typically contain information such as an employee’s department, expertise, and major projects. Profiles can be searched through expertise location.

Project Management

The application of a structured process to plan, organize, secure and align resources for, and execute a project.

Project Risk Analysis

The process of identifying and analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with a particular project.

Recommendation Engine

An information-filtering system that predicts the “rating” or preference that a user would give to an item, based on available information about that user. In KM, recommendation engines can be used to suggest content, experts, or learning opportunities to employees based on data such as their role, experience level, location, current projects, community memberships, and search/browsing history.
Records Management

The function or process of managing organizational information. Records management encompasses the entire information lifecycle: creating, classifying, storing, organizing, retrieving, tracking, and archiving. It often involves rules for preserving and destroying information based on legal and regulatory requirements.

Return on Investment (ROI)

A calculation of the relationship between investment gains and costs for a given project or initiative.

Rewards/Recognition

Incentives that encourage employee behaviors. Rewards and recognition may be formal or informal, and may be awarded by leadership/management or by peers.

Robotic Desktop Automation

Process automation that pauses during execution at decision points for human judgement and/or inputs to move forward. Typically applied to complex processes that require dynamic inputs or have high levels of variation.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Process automation that is server-based and combines process steps with decision models or business rules with little to no human oversight. Typically applied to high-volume transactional processes with limited variation and clearly-outlined business rules or decision models.

Role-based Knowledge Mapping

Mapping of all knowledge required for a given role.

Seamless Collaboration

Collaboration that can bridge geographical, functional, generational, experiential, and/or cultural gaps, and thus is not hindered by silos.

Shared Funding Model

A funding model in which costs for a project or initiative are divided between business units and a central corporate function.

Silo

A lack of information flow between groups or parts of an organization. Silos can create re-work and reduce productivity. Also see knowledge hoarding.

Social Computing

The interaction of human social behavior (such as sharing) and computational systems. Examples of social computing include blogging, instant messaging, and microblogging.

Social Learning

Learning in a social context through discussion with or observation/imitation of others. Some organizations use social learning as a synonym for knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Social Network Analysis

A technique that leverages network theory to analyze and visualize the connections among individuals and groups in social networks. In KM, social network analysis may be applied to identify employees who serve as hubs for knowledge distribution as well as areas where poor network connections may limit the effective flow of knowledge.

Soft Skills (Also: Professional Skills)

Personality traits, habits, and attitudes. Examples of include communication and flexibility. Soft skills facilitate an employee’s ability to work as a member of a team, utilize feedback, collaborate, and lead others.
Software as a Service (SaaS)
A software delivery model wherein the provider hosts the software and makes it available to customers over the Internet. Customers purchase SaaS software on a subscription basis. SaaS is a form of cloud computing.

Speech Recognition
Software that enables the recognition of human spoken language and the translation of that language into text.

Sponsor/Sponsorship
Individuals who serve as advocates for a program or initiative. Sponsors have a firm understanding of the value proposition and business case for the program. They serve as a point of communication between the program and key decision makers: they work with decision makers to secure support for the program, and help align the program with organizational goals.

Stakeholder
A person or group that has interest in a particular project or in the organization as a whole. A stakeholder can affect and/or be affected by the project or organization.

Steering Committee/Team
A cross-functional team typically made up of high-level officers and respected thought leaders from throughout an organization. The purpose of a steering committee is to provide guidance on, sign off on, and approve funding for KM-related decisions as well as to promote knowledge sharing throughout the enterprise.

Storytelling
The act of sharing stories with an audience. In KM, storytelling can be used for the capture and transfer of experience-based knowledge.

Strategic Alignment
The extent to which an initiative, program, or process is linked to the organizational strategy and objectives.

Structured Data
Data that is organized in a way that allows a computer to access, process, and modify it easily. Common examples include data stored in spreadsheets or relational databases.

Structured Interview
A formal process to interview and capture critical knowledge from employees, often experienced employees or subject matter experts.

Subject Matter Expert
A person who is an authority on a particular subject. Some organizations assign individuals to serve as official subject matter experts for specific topics, whereas others use subject matter expert as a more informal term used to describe someone with extensive knowledge and experience in a given area.

Success Story
A narrative account of a positive experience related to an accomplished task or project.

Supervised Machine Learning
A machine learning system or algorithm that uses data to derive a solution from specified output variables.

Systems Thinking
A method of analysis that focuses on the connections between parts of a system as well as that system’s connections to larger systems.
Tacit Knowledge

Knowledge that resides in the minds of individuals and is surfaced in response to a situation or action.

Taxonomy

A kind of metadata that functions as a “common language.” Taxonomy is a hierarchy of categories used to classify content by moving from broad categories to increasingly narrow ones. In the enterprise, taxonomy is used to classify enterprise content to promote consistency across media types, business areas, and/or locations.

Teachable Moment

A specific point in time when an individual is most receptive to learning something. This concept is based on the idea that information learned at a critical period, when an individual is faced with a problem or opportunity, is more likely to be absorbed and retained than information provided at another time.

Text Analytics

The use of statistical methods to analyze unstructured text and glean useful business intelligence.

Unstructured Content

Content that is not formatted or categorized in a way that can be easily interpreted and manipulated by computers. This may include reports and presentations, emails, designs and drawings, videos, and social media threads. In the context of content management, unstructured content may refer to content lacking metadata that would allow systems to analyze and surface it effectively.

Unstructured Data

Data that is not organized in a pre-defined way. See unstructured content.

Unsupervised Machine Learning

A machine learning system or algorithm that uses data to derive a solution from latent variables. The system discovers groupings and structures on its own.

Value Path Measurement

An approach to measuring the impact of knowledge management programs by correlating KM activity data with business outcome metrics. The goal of value path analysis is to demonstrate the statistical relationship between KM adoption/participation and the generation of business value.

Value Proposition

A description of the reasons for an initiative or change, based on an estimation of benefits, costs, and risks. When building a knowledge management value proposition, APQC recommends defining the value for both the organization (i.e., what business problem will KM solve?) and individual employees (i.e., what will motivate participants, and how will they benefit?)

Virtual Reality

A computer-generated scenario that simulates a realistic experience. In the enterprise, virtual reality can be used for trainings and prototyping/modeling.

Wiki

An online collaborative application that allows people to add, modify, and delete content.

Workflow

The routine manner in which work gets done by an individual, team, or organization.

Working Out Loud

Making one’s work visible to others by promoting collaboration and openness. Organizations that support working out loud encourage employees to post questions and updates to platforms where teammates can view and respond to them.
ABOUT APQC

APQC helps organizations work smarter, faster, and with greater confidence. It is the world’s foremost authority in benchmarking, best practices, process and performance improvement, and knowledge management. APQC’s unique structure as a member-based nonprofit makes it a differentiator in the marketplace. APQC partners with more than 500 member organizations worldwide in all industries. With more than 40 years of experience, APQC remains the world’s leader in transforming organizations. Visit us at www.apqc.org, and learn how you can make best practices your practices.