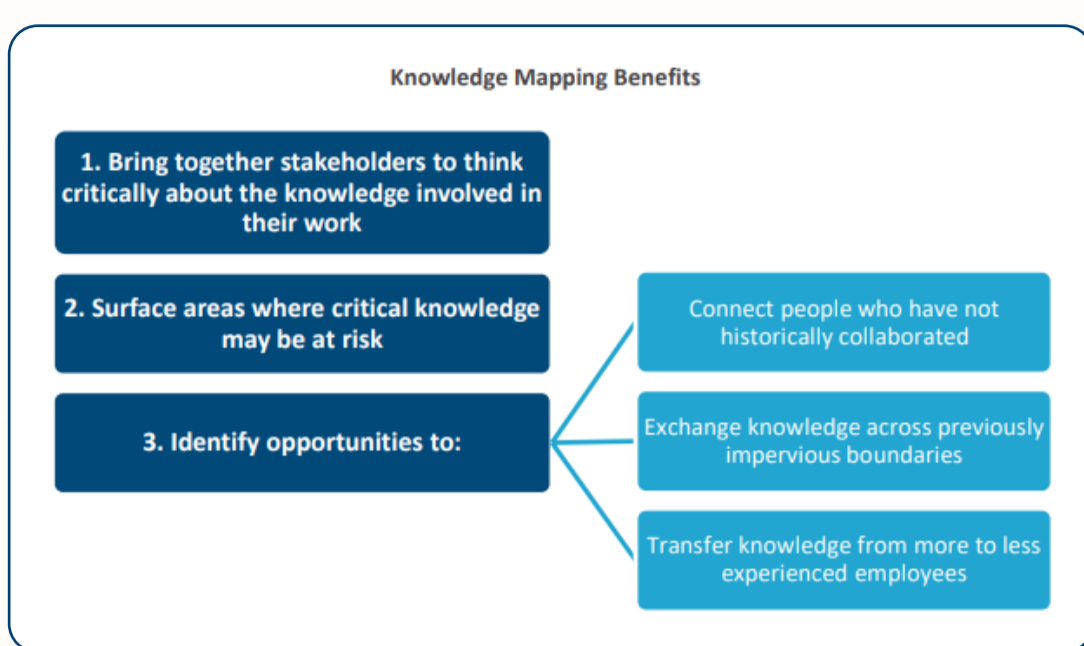


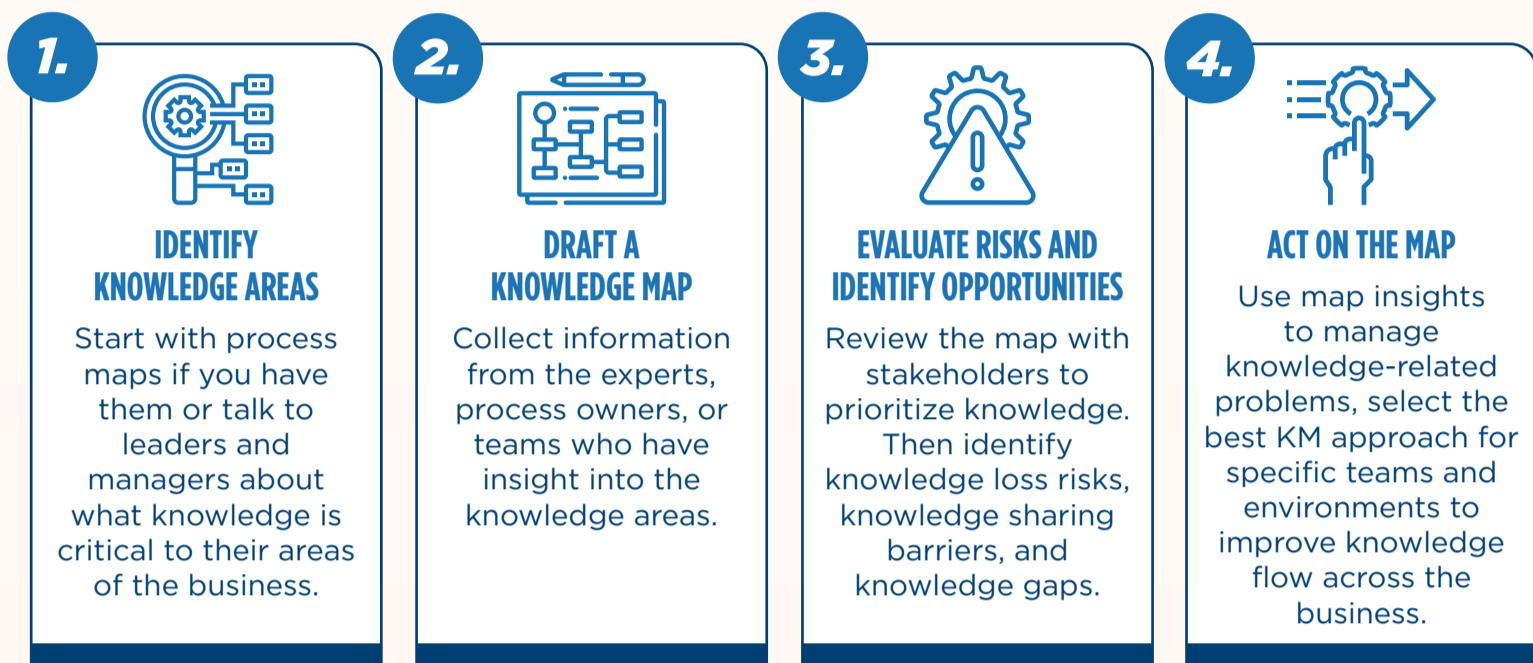
Tips & Best Practices for Effective Knowledge Mapping

A knowledge map is a visual representation of an organization's intellectual capital. This allows stakeholders to easily pinpoint and prioritize critical knowledge, how it flows, and any barriers or gaps. Knowledge mapping is one of the most powerful approaches in knowledge management (KM). It can help organizations:

- Identify, retain, and replicate critical knowledge and expertise
- Drive strategic improvements by understanding where knowledge exists and how it flows
- Articulate and promote global standards



4-Step Knowledge Mapping Process:



Tips & Best Practices for Effective Knowledge Mapping

TIP #1: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

KM teams should do as much pre-work as possible before initiating a knowledge mapping exercise. Review existing process maps and other documentation and interview stakeholders who interact with the expert(s) whose knowledge will be mapped.

TIP #2: USE A STANDARD PROCESS AND A SKILLED FACILITATOR

Leverage a standard process supported by a standard template or question list to ensure consistent information is captured across groups. Use APQC's customizable templates in our [Knowledge Mapping Concepts and Tools](#) collection.

TIP #3: VALIDATE MAPS

Review completed maps for errors, inconsistencies, and missing data. Leverage the KM team, the individual or group whose knowledge is being mapped, the leader sponsoring the project, or even ask the employees who will use and learn from the maps.

TIP #4: USE A STANDARD RISK ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Best-practice organizations use standard risk criteria to guard against bias and effectively evaluate risks across roles, processes, and functions. Use a [knowledge loss risk framework](#) to aid analysis.

TIP #5: IDENTIFY GAPS

Evaluate knowledge maps in order to identify:

- **Gaps:** Knowledge that is needed, but does not exist or isn't documented
- **Islands:** Knowledge that is held by a single person or small group that should be more widely available
- **Bottlenecks:** Organizational silos or weak links between groups and systems that impede the flow of knowledge
- **Commonalities:** Opportunities where knowledge that is benefiting one area can be leveraged more broadly
- **Interdependencies:** Areas where one stakeholder group's knowledge needs rely upon that of another group, which presents opportunities to streamline and standardize

TIP #6: TAKE ACTION

- **Develop targeted plans for knowledge documentation and transfer.** Use maps to create knowledge documentation (e.g., articles, how-to guides, videos, checklists) or guide additional knowledge transfer activities (e.g., mentoring, webinars, job shadowing).
- **Improve the overarching KM strategy and approach.** Use maps to surface areas where knowledge is being duplicated, isn't flowing, or needs to be documented. Identify subject matter experts and other stakeholders who can support the KM strategy and capture success stories.
- **Drive standardization of best practices.** Use maps to build consensus around best practices and disseminate across the enterprise. Partner with process teams to embed best practices into processes, procedures and supporting documentation.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Knowledge mapping is an important exercise that should be performed early in an organization's KM journey and repeated regularly as KM capabilities and approaches mature. Knowledge mapping isn't easy, but there is no better way to understand the most important knowledge-related risks and opportunities in your organization.

For further guidance and tools to get started, see:

- [Getting Started with Knowledge Mapping](#)
- [APQC's Knowledge Mapping Concepts and Tools](#)