Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Recommend that choosing the wrong metrics, or misconstruing their relevance, risks allowing your metrics to cost you your objectives.
2. Explain and discuss that advocating knowledge sharing as the normal way of doing business can increase the difficulty in inquiring into the impact of particular KM projects.
3. Explain and discuss that “complicated” systems are completely definable by strict rules of operation and that “complex” systems include self-directing elements with dynamic interactions that make them inherently unpredictable.
4. Explain and discuss that wicked environments can be incrementally improved on, but rarely (if ever) will an ideal “solution” be found.
5. Evaluate why the education and training of the KM workers usually work best when they are interdisciplinary in nature.
6. Assess the three major categories into which typical KM-related job titles fall.
7. Examine the science/art of KM and discuss the fact that it has far fewer generally accepted principles and definitions than the management of physical or financial assets.
8. Discuss how the rising demand for access to business knowledge has provided new career paths for knowledge workers.

Unit Summary

This unit begins with wicked problems. It is not enough to collect a database full of information and hope people begin to use it and contribute knowledge. After establishing a centralized knowledgebase in an easily accessible place, it becomes time to evaluate its performance. Typically, performance metrics are anecdotal, quantitative, or qualitative, but how can you measure such intangibles as communication, collaboration, and trust? These factors are covered in detail in this unit. Choosing the correct high-level KM strategies relies on accurately evaluating organizational KM needs. Chapter 13 provides insight into the need for and methods of analyzing the state of knowledge exchange within your company.

We also cover careers in knowledge management. The field of KM offers several choices for careers, and the practice of KM applies to any career. Few blessings in this world compare with the joy of spending your days working at a career you enjoy. As a public space for self-expression, nothing beats your career. What you choose to work at and how you pursue the goals of your career will determine not only how you will spend many of your waking hours, but also what value much of the world will see in you. Career choices are hugely important crossroads in our lives. Having a fulfilling career requires getting in touch with what is really important and then pursuing your goals relentlessly.
The education and training of KM workers works best when it is interdisciplinary in nature. Those pursuing a career in KM should be working to develop skills in a variety of areas. Try to learn as many industry-specific businesses and communication processes as possible. Pay special attention to the organization of intellectual assets, information needs analysis and inventories, methods of eliciting tacit knowledge, and the development of information standards, policies, and procedures. Typical KM-related job titles fall into three major categories: strategic, developmental, and tactical.