



NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

Master of Science Learning & Organizational Change

MS LOC 430: Designing Strategies for Knowledge Work

Winter 2007

Instructors: Jeff Merrell and Margaret Sullivan

Room: 345 Annenberg Hall

Time: 6:00-9:00 pm

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Required Materials

- Newell, Robertson, Scarborough, Swan, 2002, Managing Knowledge Work
- MS LOC 430 Coursepak

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Designing Strategies for Knowledge Work Course Description

In this course, students will develop an understanding of how knowledge and knowledge work contribute to an organization's success, as well as how to design strategies to address critical knowledge work issues and challenges. The course will introduce theory, concepts, and frameworks to enable students to develop effective strategies. Students will learn how to apply course concepts through business cases and course projects. Guest speakers will also offer leadership perspectives on the real-world challenges of successfully managing knowledge in organizations.

Course Format

- Course sessions will be highly interactive.
- Each session will be a combination of group discussion based on the readings and key concepts and frameworks.
- The course reflects both a focus on practice and concepts. The course packet articles cover both key concepts and cases.
- The written assignments will provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate and apply your understanding/view of a particular concept.
- For some sessions, guest speakers will share their expertise and current experiences.
- The last several sessions will culminate in the development of a knowledge management strategy.
- On average, students can expect to have 9 hours of preparation per week (not including class time).

Expected Outcomes from This Class

- Knowledge work and knowledge management defined
- Strategic business issues affected by knowledge work and knowledge management
- An understanding of the areas knowledge strategies can help address
- Application of knowledge strategies to a real-world problem that students are facing
- Creation of a knowledge management strategy
- An approach for measuring the value of knowledge and knowledge management
- Application of your knowledge from other academic courses at Northwestern to knowledge work challenges

Course Requirements and Assignments

Your final grade is composed of:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Course Contribution/Active Participation | 30% |
| 2. Individual Projects/Written Assignments | 30% |
| 3. Small Group/KM Strategy Project | 40% |

Course Contribution/Active Participation in Class

Each student is expected to participate in class discussions (and it is the quality of participation, not the quantity of participation that will matter). To prepare for these discussions, students must complete the assigned readings, be ready to summarize key points from the reading, answer the discussion questions provided in the syllabus and ask their questions. Students should also be able to articulate an “aha” moment that they’ve had or how the reading has provided them new insights.

Most participation will be voluntary, but to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute, students may be called upon by the instructor. Students are expected to contribute resources, insight, and commitment to their written work and oral presentations, which will be evaluated by the instructor.

Course contribution will also include the quality of participation in the discussion forums/assignments/e-mails on Blackboard. **All Blackboard assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard by 7 a.m. CT on Wednesdays (unless otherwise specified by the instructors).** Note: Most Blackboard assignments have been described in this syllabus. Additional Blackboard assignments may be made during class.

In the spirit of how we act as a CLOC community, you also must show respect for others’ perspectives, make suggestions with the intent of helping, and look for opportunities to learn collaboratively. If you aren’t present, you can’t learn, and you can’t contribute to the learning community. More than two absences will result in a lowering of your final grade. If you must miss a class, please notify one of us at least 24 hours in advance so adjustments can be made to class exercises, as needed.

Individual Projects/Written Assignments

All written assignments should be uploaded onto Blackboard by 5 p.m. CT on Thursdays (unless specified otherwise). In addition to uploading the document onto Blackboard, turn in a hard copy at the end of class. Our goal is to review and grade all written assignments and hand them back by the end of class on the following Thursday.

All written assignments must be created in Microsoft Word using Book Antiqua, Arial, or Times New Roman font; 11 point, black type; double-spacing; and a 1-1/2 inch left margin and 1 inch right, top, and bottom margins. Please use endnotes not footnotes. Papers should not exceed the specified page targets.

Each individual written assignment will be graded on a 100 point scale. Assignments will be graded against the assignment criteria specified in the weekly class agendas and the extent to which you present your thoughts in a clear, concise, grammatically correct manner. The assignments should be written to reflect your synthesis of course content.

“World Café” Discussions (Small Group project)

In weeks 3, 4 and 5 we will devote part of the class time to group discussion conducted in a “World Café” format. During each of these discussion weeks, three small teams (2-3 students/team) will be asked to briefly prepare a point-of-view on a question related to the course readings and post “talking points” to Blackboard. During class, these three teams will then lead a small group discussion on their point-of-view findings. The rest of the class will rotate among each of the small group discussions until they have had an opportunity to attend all three groups. The entire class will then reflect on common themes and insights gained from these conversations.

Knowledge Management Strategy Project

Each student will be expected to complete a knowledge management strategy project. Prior to the second class, each student will identify a potential organization that can be used for a strategy project. This project will be used to develop a practical application of knowledge management strategy. Each student is also expected to contribute resources, insight, and commitment to their project groups, which will be evaluated by the instructors and group members through team evaluation forms.

A total of 500 points will be assigned (250 points for the presentation given in class and 250 points for the paper that each group is to provide). Both the presentation and the paper will be graded based on the extent to which you present your thoughts in a clear, concise, and grammatically correct manner. It also should be presented/written with the intention that the strategy could be implemented and reflects the appropriate synthesis and use of course content. Both the presentation and paper are due on the last night of class, Thursday, March 8.

Group members will normally receive the same grade. However, individual grades may be adjusted based on evaluations from the group.

Late Assignments

Late assignments (except where special consideration has been officially given) will lose 5% of the maximum assignment grade for each calendar day (including holidays) late; assignments more than 7 days late will not be graded.

Communications

The student is responsible for any announcements, assignment changes, lecture notes, verbal information, and handouts furnished during the class.

Recognizing that we have many students with different schedules, we will not have formal office hours. Instead, should you have questions, please e-mail both of us. If we need to meet, we can determine a mutually agreeable time.

Attendance

CLOC’s program guideline is that students can miss 1 or 2 sessions per course. The student is responsible for any announcements, assignment changes, lecture notes, verbal information, and handouts furnished during the class. If you know that you will not be able to attend a class,

out of courtesy, please inform the instructor via e-mail and we can determine arrangements for making up missed assignments and course content.

Academic Integrity

As an MS LOC student, you have entered a community of scholarship in which academic integrity is of the highest value. All students enrolled in the MS LOC program are expected to adhere to the standards for academic integrity. Students who violate these standards will be sanctioned as is deemed appropriate by the Director, Dean, and the faculty of the School. More information regarding academic integrity guidelines and policies can be found at <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In compliance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Northwestern University is committed to providing equal access to all programming. Students with disabilities seeking accommodations are encouraged to contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 467-5530 or <mailto:ssd@northwestern.edu>. SSD is located in the basement of Scott Hall. The SSD weblink is: <http://www.stuaff.northwestern.edu/ssd/>.

Knowledge Strategies

January 4

Class 1

Topics

- Roadmap for the course
- Introduction to ABN AMRO REAL business case
- Overview of knowledge management strategy components

Readings

- Harvard Business School case study: ABN AMRO REAL: Banking on Sustainability; Rosebeth Moss Kanter, Ricardo Reisen de Pinho; Oct., 2005
- APQC's Knowledge Management Business Case Guidelines
- Rasmus, Daniel W, Giga "A Framework for Implementing Knowledge Management," August 2000

Questions

- What is knowledge and knowledge work?
- What are the elements of a knowledge strategy?
- In what way is knowledge an element of the ABN AMRO REAL case?
- What are the different types of knowledge and what are their characteristics?
- How does knowledge compare to information?
- What is Knowledge Management?
- How do organizations create knowledge?

Knowledge Units and Expertise

January 11

Class 2

Topics

- Evolution of knowledge and knowledge management theory
- Cognition and expertise
- Tacit and explicit knowledge

Readings

- Newell, Robertson, Scarborough, Swan, Palgrave Publishing 2002, Managing Knowledge Work Chapter One, Introduction
- Nonaka and Takeuchi, The Knowledge-Creating Company, Oxford University Press 1994, Chapter 3, "Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation"
- Glaser, R. and Chi, M. T. H. (1988). Overview. In M. T. H. Chi, R. Glaser and M. J. Farr (Eds.), The Nature of Expertise (pp. xv-xxviii). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Rumelhart, D. E. (1980). Schemata: The building blocks of cognition. In R. J. Spiro, B. C. Bruce and W. F. Brewer (Eds.), Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension (pp. 33-58). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Coff, R.; Coff, D.; and Eastvold, R. (2006). The Knowledge Leveraging Paradox: How to Achieve Scale Without Making Knowledge Imitable; Academy of Management Review, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp452-465.

Questions

- How has knowledge theory evolved?
- What are the individual and social elements of knowledge development?
- What is expertise? How do experts differ from novices?
- Is it possible to leverage tacit knowledge in an organization?
- ABN AMRO REAL case: What insights from knowledge theory might play a role in developing a knowledge strategy in this case? How? Why? What do you see differently in the case?

Blackboard Assignments (Due January 10)

Students should pick an area in which they view themselves as experts (or at least beyond a novice). They should submit to Blackboard their reflections of what schemata they use to understand things—answering such questions as: what is the organizing framework they use; what are its pieces; do they recognize the schema they are using; and if they were to explain a concept to a novice, how might they approach things differently.

We will use a later portion of the class to begin to define the KM Strategy projects. Therefore, each student should submit to Blackboard a one-paragraph summary or an idea of what existing or prior work issue that they can use to develop a KM Strategy. Students should also be prepared to discuss the project with others.

Knowledge Organization Structure and Practice

January 18

Class 3

Topic

- How do organizational structure and work practices influence knowledge creation?

Readings

- Newell, Robertson, Scarborough, Swan, Palgrave Publishing 2002, Managing Knowledge Work Chapter Two, “Knowledge Intensive Organizations”
- Brown and Duguid (2001); Knowledge and Organization: A Social Practice Perspective; Organization Science, Vol 12, No. 2, March-April 2001, pp 198-213

Questions

- What is a knowledge-intensive organization?
- How does structure influence knowledge development?
- How is “practice” different than “process”? Why is that important to understanding knowledge development?
- ABN AMRO REAL case: Does organizational structure play a role in developing a knowledge strategy in this case? How does an understanding of work “practice” influence your thinking about strategy for the case?”

Written Assignment (due Wednesday, January 17)

Use the outline from the first week’s APQC reading to create a two-page summary of a KM project that could be done for either a current or prior organization.

Knowledge-Conscious Culture

January 25

Class 4

Topic

- How do you create a knowledge-conscious culture?

Readings

- Powell, Jon and Egmon, Jean M., KM's Hierarchy of Needs, <http://www.destinationkm.com/articles/default.asp?ArticleID=1012&Keywords=egmon>
- Scarbrough, Melcrum Publishing, 2003, " Why Your Employees Don't Share What They Know"
- Gray, David, HBR, November 2003, "Wanted: Chief Ignorance Officer"
- Newell, Robertson, Scarborough, Swan, Palgrave Publishing 2002, Managing Knowledge Work Chapter Three, "Knowledge Creation and Team Working"

Questions

- What is a knowledge-conscious culture, and how might you create one?
- What is collaboration?
- How might different leadership theories apply to developing a knowledge-conscious culture? (Reference leadership theory readings from MS-LOC foundations).
- What role does trust play in creating a knowledge-sharing culture?
- ABN AMRO REAL case: Does organizational culture play a role in developing a knowledge strategy in this case? How? Why?

Blackboard Assignment (due January 24)

Tell a brief story (based on your own experience) where trust played a role in creating a knowledge-sharing culture.

Communities

February 1

Class 5

Topics

- Communities and communities of practice

Readings

- Newell, Robertson, Scarborough, Swan, Palgrave Publishing 2002, Managing Knowledge Work, Chapter Six, "Community Approaches to Managing Knowledge Work"
- Wenger, E. (2000). Learning as Social Participation. Knowledge Management Review, Issue 6, Jan-Feb 1999, pp 30-33.
- Cross, Parker, The Hidden Power of Social Networks, Harvard Business School Press, 2004, Chapter 1
- Optional reading : Cross, R ; Leidtka, J ; Weiss, L (2005). A Practical Guide to Social Networks, Harvard Business Review, March 2005, pp 1-9 (reprint).

Questions

- What elements define a community of practice?
- What are the effects of communities of practice on knowledge sharing?
- What is social networking and how does it relate to COPs?
- ABN AMRO REAL case: Do CoPs or social networks play a role in a knowledge strategy in this case? How? Why?

Blackboard Assignment (due January 31)

Develop a 2-3 paragraph reflection on communities in which you have participated. Provide a description of the community, what worked, and what didn't. Based on your readings, what would you like to have seen done differently?

Managerial Aspects of Knowledge

February 8

Class 6

Topics

- Managerial aspects of knowledge management
- KM practical approaches
- Developing a KM Strategy
- What considerations need to be made for perception
- Group strategy project check point

Readings

- Quinn, J.; Anderson, P. & Finkelstein, S. (1996). "Leveraging Intellect," Academy of Management Executive, 10 (3), pp 7-27.
- Bartholomew, David, "Sharing Knowledge"
<http://www.knowledgeboard.com/download/5914/SharingKnowledge1.pdf>
- Optional: Sutcliffe and Weber, HBR, May 2003 "The High Cost of Accurate Knowledge"

Questions

- What are the different components of a KM framework and how does each relate to the whole?
- Are there better approaches to be used based on an organization's value discipline?
- What are the key considerations for developing a KM Strategy?

Blackboard Assignment (due February 7)

Develop a 5-7 paragraph point of view addressing: Do all organizations need to have in place all KM components? Or are there some components more relevant under different circumstances?

Measuring KM
February 15
Class 7

Topics

- Measuring the value
- Students can articulate how a given environment might benefit from knowledge management
- Understand approaches for measuring the intangible and tangible assets

Readings

- Clare, Mark, Knowledge Management Review, Solving the Knowledge Value Equation (Parts One and Two)
- Kaplan and Norton, HBR, 2004, "Measuring the Strategic Readiness of Intangible Assets"
- OECD, 2004, "The Significance of Knowledge Management in the Business Sector"
- Sutcliffe and Weber, HBR, 2003 "The High Cost of Accurate Knowledge"

Questions

- What are tangible/intangible assets?
- What are some ways to measure the impact of KM?

Blackboard Assignment (due February 14)

Provide a three-paragraph summary of what you have learned about measuring KM. Provide a point of view on whether KM can be measured and whether it matters if it is measured.

KM Integration

February 22

Class 8

Topic

- KM and Learning

Readings

- Rosenberg, Marc, e-Learning, McGraw-Hill, 2001, Chapter 4, “Knowledge Management: When Information is Better Than Instruction”
- Darling, Marilyn; Parry, Charles; Moore, Joseph, HBR, July, 2005, “Learning in the Thick of It”

Questions

- What's the difference between KM and Learning? How would you answer this question across the different levels of the Iceberg Model?
- From the reading, what have you learned about when a KM should/could be applied?
- As we move towards just-in-time learning and more sophisticated content management around learning objects, aren't we blurring any distinctions?
- Do we need to have distinctions? What are they?
- What are some KM best practices that can be applied to assist in learning?

Written Assignment (due February 22nd)

Write a five-page paper on a current issue and provide a point of view of how KM could impact this issue. Potential topic choices could include:

- The aging workforce
- Hurricane Katrina Response – What might have been done differently? What was done well?

Whichever issue is chosen, it should be either one that is broad (e.g., the aging workforce) or a specific event (e.g., Katrina). Provide an overview of your understanding of the issue; what you view as some key problems; and, for identified problems, where and why KM could be a good intervention. Also address at least one problem area in which KM would at first be seen as a good intervention, but a deeper review would suggest otherwise.

Knowledge Management Pragmatics

March 1

Class 9

Topic

- KM – how to get started

Readings

- Davenport and Prusak, Working Knowledge, Harvard Press, 1998, Chapter 9, “The Pragmatics of Knowledge Management”
- Newell, Robertson, Scarborough, Swan, Palgrave Publishing, 2002, Managing Knowledge Work, Chapter Eight, “Conclusions – Key Challenges”
- Ten Knowledge Domains: Model of a Knowledge Driven Company?

Questions

- What are the strengths/weaknesses in the field of KM?
- What are some practical ways to get started?
- What challenges exist for KM?

Written Assignments (due March 1)

- Submit a 5-7 sentence “elevator speech” describing what KM is and how its value can be applied in your environment.
- Aspects of elevator speech:
 - Provides a crisp articulation, in your own words, of what you understand KM to be
 - Clarifies how KM can be applied to their context
 - You should be prepared to deliver your speech in class.
 - The content should be developed with the intention of “selling” KM as a concept.
 - It should be engaging.
 - It should take about 1 minute to deliver.

Blackboard Assignment (due February 28)

Submit to Blackboard any questions or issues that you are having for the Strategy project.

We’ll use a good portion of this class to ensure that as many remaining issues as possible can be addressed.

Knowledge Strategy

March 8

Class 10

Topic

- KM Strategy – how are all the components applied?

Reading

None

Question

- What are the questions that need to be addressed when reviewing a KM Strategy?

Assignment (due March 9)

The KM Strategy Project will have two components:

1. A 25-30 minute presentation that the small group will use to present its strategy.
2. A 10-15-page paper that includes:
 - A one-page executive summary of what the problem was and how the strategy will have an impact on the problem
 - Nine to fourteen pages describing key components of the strategy and how they should be implemented

COURSE OVERVIEW

WEEK	1 – Jan 4	2 – Jan 11	3 – Jan 18	4 – Jan 25	5 – Feb 1	6 – Feb 8	7 – Feb 15	8 – Feb 22	9 – Mar 1	10 – Mar 8
CLASS AGENDA	Knowledge Strategies and Case	Knowledge Units and Expertise	Knowledge Org Structure and Practice	Knowledge-Conscious Culture	Communities	Managerial Aspects	Measuring KM	KM Integration	KM Pragmatics	KM Strategy Presentations
REQUIRED READING FOR WEEK, DUE BEFORE CLASS	<p>ABN AMRO Real Case Study</p> <p>APQC's KM Business Case Outline</p> <p>"A Framework for Implementing Knowledge Management"</p>	<p>Glaser, R. and Chi, M. T. H. Overview.</p> <p>The building blocks of cognition.</p> <p><u>Managing Knowledge Work</u> Chapter One, Introduction</p> <p><u>The Knowledge-Creating Company</u>, Chapter 3, "Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation"</p> <p>Knowledge leveraging paradox</p>	<p><u>Managing Knowledge Work</u> Chapter Two, "Knowledge Intensive Organizations"</p> <p>Brown and Duguid Knowledge and Organization, a Social Practice Perspective</p>	<p>KM's Hierarchy of Needs</p> <p><u>Melcrum Publishing</u>, "Why Your Employees Don't Share What They Know"</p> <p><u>HBR</u>, "Wanted: Chief Ignorance Officer"</p> <p>Situational Leadership</p> <p><u>Managing Knowledge Work</u> Chapter Three, "Knowledge Creation and Team Working"</p>	<p><u>Managing Knowledge Work</u> Chapter Six, "Community Approaches to Managing Knowledge Work"</p> <p>Learning as Social Participation - Wenger</p> <p><u>The Hidden Power of Social Networks</u>, Chapter 1</p> <p>Optional: HBR Practical Guide to Social Networks</p>	<p>"Leveraging Intellect"</p> <p>"Sharing Knowledge"</p> <p>(Exelon speaker)</p>	<p><u>Knowledge Management Review</u>, (1&2) Solving the Knowledge Value Equation</p> <p><u>HBR</u>, 2004, "Measuring the Strategic Readiness of Intangible Assets"</p> <p><u>OECD</u>, 2004, "The Significance of Knowledge Management in the Business Sector"</p> <p><u>HBR</u>, "The High Cost of Accurate Knowledge"</p>	<p>e-Learning, Chapter 4, "Knowledge Management : When Information is Better Than Instruction"</p> <p><u>HBR</u>, July, 2005, "Learning in the Thick of It"</p>	<p><u>Working Knowledge</u>, Chapter 9, "The Pragmatics of Knowledge Management"</p> <p><u>Managing Knowledge Work</u> Chapter Eight, "Conclusions Key Challenges" Holtshouse, Dan,</p> <p><u>CCC</u>, "Ten Knowledge Domains: Model of a Knowledge-Driven Company?"</p>	None
INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN OR BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENT		<p>Blackboard reflection on student's expertise Due January 10</p> <p>Idea for KM Project - Due January 10</p>	<p>Written assignment: 2 page APQC outline</p>	<p>Blackboard point of view regarding the role of trust Due January 24</p>	<p>Blackboard assignment on communities due Jan. 31</p>	<p>Blackboard Point of View regarding KM components Due February 7</p>	<p>Blackboard point of view of whether KM can be measured Due February 14</p>	<p>Written assignment: Current Workforce issue Due February 22</p>	<p>Written assignment: Elevator speech: Due March 1</p> <p>Blackboard assignment: Final questions on strategy project: Due Feb 28</p>	

SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENT			World Café 1 (group posts talking points)	World Café 2 (group posts talking points)	World Café 3 (group posts talking points)						KM Strategy Presentations
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