

# *Managing Knowledge Management*

## *Knowledge Management: Why Corporations Fail*

- ❖ No tool can develop a knowledge structure for your environment
- ❖ This is a complex, time-consuming process

And if That Weren't Hard Enough...

- ❖ Changing technology
- ❖ Conflicting demands of multiple projects
- ❖ Unanticipated demands on time
- ❖ Personnel turnover
- ❖ The winds of politics

All impact the process.

## *Eight-Step Approach to Successful Knowledge Management*

1. **Define organizational objectives.** It is imperative that the team understand the cycle of creation, use, and deployment of content within the organization before beginning to define content management requirements.
2. **Know that content has a life cycle.** From production to distribution, content has a life cycle. To fully address this cycle, an effective content management design must be extensible and scalable. Future opportunities to extend system capabilities should not be foreclosed by design shortcuts. Scalability should be designed into the system as that design starts to take shape.
3. **Perform a needs assessment.** Based on an understanding of objectives and the uses and life cycle of the knowledge elements, perform through a thorough needs assessment, including:
  - Determine the value of content
  - Define the scope of content development
  - Evaluate processes
  - Assess investments—past and future
  - Define realistic outcomes—phased implementation
4. **Integrate processes.** The knowledge management solution must fully support content developers. To do so may require re-engineering business processes and re-tooling technology.



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5. **Build a web-enabled “knowledge base.”** Many web sites rely on text-based indexing and don’t optimize the use of databases. By using a database infrastructure for content storage, content can be quickly and easily searched based on specific properties.
6. **Appoint a content manager.** This person coordinates the deployment and management of all enterprise content.
7. **Start small & succeed.** Choose a defined area, with a reasonably static flow of information to start the project. This enables the organization to learn what works within their environment, and to develop methodologies and achieve buy-in.
8. **Build best practices & keep momentum.** Building on lessons learned in step 7 and ongoing planning and assessment at every phase of the content life cycle the organization can define and implement best practices. Budgets, project plans, and benchmarking are all part of this process. Expanding the base of the project with these practices is the way to grow the content base. Remember to publish achievements as they occur, and to build the knowledge management process into employee orientation and training.

### ***Meryl Natchez, CEO TechProse***

Meryl Natchez has been in the technology field since 1978. She is CEO of TechProse, a technical writing, training, and IT consulting firm in Lafayette, California. TechProse was on the 1998 *Inc 500* list of fastest growing privately held businesses in the U.S., and last year received the Arthur Andersen Best Practices nomination for Exceeding Customer Expectations.

TechProse places contractors on writing, training, and IT development projects and does entire writing and training projects in-house. An increasing portion of TechProse business involves creating online solutions from standard documentation.

Natchez has taught computer documentation at San Francisco State University and California State University at Sacramento, and is past President of the San Francisco Chapter of Society for Technical Communication (STC).



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