

TRANSLATING
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
VISIONS INTO STRATEGIES

WORKING METHODS FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Titles in this series

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TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT VISIONS INTO STRATEGIES

MONIQUE CERUTI

Independent Scholar, USA

ANGEL WILLIAMS

The Timken Company, USA

DENISE BEDFORD

Georgetown University, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction to the Series</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>

SECTION 1 THE DESTINATION – VISION OF A KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION

1. Building Knowledge Capacity for a Knowledge Economy	3
2. Knowledge Organizations	23
3. Creating a Vision of the Future	51
4. Translating the Vision into Strategies	77

SECTION 2 STRATEGIES AS ROADMAPS

5. Knowledge Management Strategies – The Big Picture	97
6. Building Your Capacity to Develop the Strategy	117
7. Strategic Affinities and Alignments	131

SECTION 3
STARTING THE JOURNEY

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 8. Realizing the Vision – Moving from Strategy to Tactics | 151 |
| 9. Defining Roles and Responsibilities to Manage the Strategy | 163 |

SECTION 4
STAYING THE COURSE – MAINTAINING
THE STRATEGY

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 10. Keeping the Strategy Alive – Governance | 175 |
| <i>Appendix:</i> Developing a Vision and a Strategy –
A Project Plan Pulling It All Together | 185 |
| <i>Index</i> | 197 |

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES – WORKING METHODS IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Knowledge sciences as a discipline has a rich and diverse history dating back to the 1950s. In the past seventy years, the discipline has drawn theory and practice from economics, engineering, communications, learning sciences, technology, information sciences, psychology, social sciences, and business and organization management. To craft this discipline, we have developed our own language and terminologies, established our own peer reviewed journals and built a rich research foundation, created a gray literature and established a series of networks and conferences. Over the decades there have been many knowledge management education programs, but there is no consistent curriculum and few have sustained. It has been challenging for new practitioners to gain an understanding of the field. And, while the practice of knowledge management is growing around the world it has not yet achieved the expected organizational stature. For knowledge management to rise to the stature of other business functions and operations, it must be able to speak the language of business, align with and support the way the organization works.

This series is designed for business and knowledge management practitioners. Working Methods in Knowledge

Management is a multi-year and multi-volume series designed to address each and all of the methods required to establish and sustain an organization-wide knowledge management function. The goal of the series is to provide a business perspective of each topic. Each book begins by grounding the method in the business context – then translates established business models and methods to a knowledge management context. It is often the case that this translation expands and extends the business model and method.

The knowledge management literature is rich with introductory handbooks, guidebooks, cookbooks, toolkits and practical introductions. This literature is an important starting point for anyone new to the discipline. We recommend any and all of these books as a way to build a fundamental understanding of the scope and coverage of the field. These texts will provide a good 10–20 page introduction to all of the key issues you need to be aware of as you embark on a new career in the field or have been assigned a new knowledge management role or responsibility. Once you have that grounding, though, we recommend that you look to the Working Methods in Knowledge Management texts as an intermediate source for understanding “What comes next? What now?”

Just as this series is not intended as a starting point for the field, neither is it an ending point. Each text is designed to support practical application, and to foster a broader discussion of practice. It is through practical application and extended discussion that we will advance theory and research. The editors anticipate that as practice expands, there will be a need to update the texts – based on what we are learning. Furthermore, the editors hope the texts are written in a way that allows business managers to extend their work to include knowledge management functions and assets. We will learn most from expanding the discussion beyond our core community.

JOINT ENTERPRISE, MUTUAL ENGAGEMENT, AND A SHARED REPERTOIRE

From the outset, the publisher and the editors have established a new and different approach to designing and writing the books. Each text is supported by a team of authors who represent multiple and diverse views of the topic. Each team includes academics, practitioners and thought leaders. Every author has grappled with the topic in a real world context. Every author sees the topic differently today than they did when the project began. Over the course of several months, through weekly virtual discussions, the scope and coverage were defined. Through mutual engagement and open sharing, each team developed a joint enterprise and commitment to the topic that is enduring. Every author learned through the discussion and writing process. Each project has resulted in a new shared repertoire. We practiced knowledge management to write about knowledge management. We ‘ate our own dog food’.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF EARLY SUPPORT

The series is a massive effort. If there is value in the series much of the credit must go to two individuals – Dr. Elias Carayannis, George Washington University, and Dr. Manlio Del Giudice, University of Rome. It was Dr. Carayannis who first encouraged us to develop a proposal for Emerald Publishers. Of course, this encouragement was just the most recent form of support from Dr. Carayannis. He has been a mentor and coach for close to twenty-years. It was Dr. Carayannis who first taught me the importance of aligning knowledge management with business administration and organizational management. Dr. Del Giudice has been generous with his guidance – particularly in setting a high standard for any

and all knowledge management research and practice. We are grateful to him for his careful review and critique of our initial proposal. His patience and thoughtful coaching of colleagues is rare in any field. The field will reach its full potential as long as we have teachers and editors like Dr. Del Giudice.

PREFACE

OVERVIEW OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

Visions and strategies have been the focus of the field of business for many decades. These were standard tools in the industrial economy. There are textbooks and business school courses devoted to business visions and strategies. Every organization has a vision statement, a mission statement, strategies, and a culture. The challenge is not that organizations lack visions and strategies. The challenge is that they have visions that are ineffective, impractical, are actually a mission statement or lofty platitudes. The challenge is that they have multiple and conflicting visions – over time and across the organization. The challenge is that they have strategies that are tactical, outdated, or not well aligned with business goals and objectives. In stable economic times, well-aligned visions, mission statements, strategies, and cultures are important management tools. Organizations that know how to design and develop a vision and align it with their business environment will always thrive.

Vision and strategy are critical tools for navigating change. Well-defined and aligned visions, mission statements, strategies, and cultures are critical to guiding an organization through turbulent economic times. They are critical to a successful transition from the industrial to the knowledge economy. The shift from an industrial to a knowledge economy

is characterized by rapid and continuous economic change. No economy is entirely stable – there is always change. Change within the industrial economy has been more predictable and manageable than the change from an industrial to a knowledge economy. Change within the industrial economy was slow moving – organizations could “react” to change and survive. Change within the knowledge economy is fast paced and disruptive – organizations need to build knowledge capacity in order to see the change coming and to be prepared for it. In the industrial economy, “seeing change” was a matter of following a pattern or a factor to its logical end state. We could project out five to ten years with some degree of confidence. That was because change affected aspects of the economy, rather than its fundamental assets and behaviors.

In a knowledge economy, the fundamental assumptions and behaviors are changing. The balance of capital is shifting. Where earlier economies placed higher values on financial and physical capital, the knowledge economy increases the role and value of knowledge capital. Knowledge capital has a different set of economic properties and behaviors than physical and financial capital. The new properties and behaviors change how markets and economic transactions behave. In this new economic environment, the future is more effectively defined by what we want it to be. Organizations with visions and strategies grounded on knowledge capital and knowledge capacity will thrive in the new economy. Those organizations guided by industrial era visions and strategies may not fare as well. Leaders, executives, and managers need to ensure that their vision and strategy are aligned with the economic changes. Leaders, executives, and managers need to expand their vision and strategy to build knowledge capacity for the future.

We can build on and learn from the management literature. We need to expand upon this literature, though, to include guidance from futures studies and from knowledge management.

From futures studies we can leverage methods that will produce effective and practical visions. From knowledge management we can leverage a rich history of research and practice around knowledge economies, knowledge capital, knowledge capacity building, and knowledge organizations. This book bridges all four disciplines.

WHERE THE TOPIC FITS IN THE WORLD TODAY

In designing the structure and content of this book, the authors hoped to branch three disciplines. The book also draws from the three worlds of business, knowledge management, and futures studies. The authors have defined the topic to include both visions and strategies, understanding that strategies are not the starting point, but in fact a later planning step. Visions are the starting point. And, visions are critical to today's organizations – we need to focus on where we're going in these turbulent economic times. The way visions are treated in the business literature is too often cursory. Futurists have developed rigorous methods for developing and maintaining visions. In contrast to both of these fields, the knowledge management literature does not treat visions – and the treatment of knowledge organizations in the knowledge economy is scarce.

While there is an extensive discussion of the importance of and need for strategies in the knowledge management literature, the discussion is generally advisory rather than practical. It is not sufficiently rigorous to serve as an authoritative and trusted source for business managers. The most significant challenge with the current literature is its failure to connect with day-to-day business activities and its lack of integration with common business management practices. The literature and guidance on developing knowledge management

strategies is either a generalized discussion of the need for knowledge management leadership or a presentation of general principles, tactics, and tools. At a minimum, developing a practical knowledge management strategy means aligning it with the business strategy. Ideally, the knowledge management strategy is grounded in a vision of a knowledge organization. Ideally, knowledge management professionals and practitioners see their role as critical to the organization's transition from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy. Ideally, the text will expand our perspectives beyond the traditional boundaries of the knowledge management field to the broader business and organizational context. Ideally, the text will help us to see that our role in the organization goes far beyond tactics and support functions. Viewing knowledge management strategies and tactics in a business context helps us to expose the challenges and opportunities.

This book is written by three authors who have all addressed the challenges on a practical level and in an academic setting. The structure of the book reflects where we looked for guidance, what we found that helped, what we learn through mistakes, and what we learn from our colleagues. Above all we learned that you cannot use or borrow someone else's Vision or strategy. We learned there is a framework you can use to think through the issues. However, you must work through the framework and consider the issues as they relate to your organization. This book provides a framework that can be leveraged by organizations of any type, of any size, and in any region to develop a vision of a knowledge organization in the 21st century, and to develop strategies to achieve that vision.

There is no one vision or strategy that fits all organizations. You can engage a consultant to help coach you through the process, but the vision and strategy must be developed from within and it must come from the core culture, beliefs

and assumptions of the organization. This is not a one-person task that is accomplished by sitting in an office for a few weeks. A vision of a knowledge organization is not the purview of knowledge managers. It must be owned and lived by the business side of the organization. A vision of a knowledge organization is not just a leadership perspective – it must be owned and lived by every member of the organization. And, the strategy is not just a set of tools or tactics. Knowledge management is not an isolated function. It is not realized by preaching to ourselves. It is a contact sport, and it must be integrated into the day to day operations or an organization to have an impact – to reach its full potential. The framework offered is intended to help you realize an integrated, adopted, and lived vision and strategy.

WHERE THE BOOK FITS IN THE LITERATURE TODAY

We define the literature to include the series, the peer-reviewed literature, and the gray literature. This is the fifth book in the series. This book addresses a specific knowledge management method – development of a vision of a knowledge organization and the design of strategies to realize that vision. To achieve this goal, the book covers essential management and futures topics. By focusing on a single topic, the authors have the luxury of providing a deeper and more rigorous treatment of the topic.

The authors intend for the book to fill a significant gap in the business management literature – the development of a deep understanding of the nature of knowledge organizations in the knowledge economy. The authors strive to expand the vision of business managers beyond the current focus of technology impacts to the larger and fundamental economic shifts. The authors also intend for the book to fill a significant gap in the knowledge management literature – an in-depth

discussion of visions, mission, and goals, strategies and tactics for knowledge organizations.

The authors further hope the text will launch a new discussion of what a knowledge organization looks like and how it relates to the broader economic transition. The authors suggest that there is a broader role for knowledge management professionals and practitioners to play beyond tactics and support functions. In the 21st century we have an opportunity to advance the field of knowledge management to a core and trusted business capability. The authors hope this text will contribute to realizing that opportunity.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE

The audience for this book includes professionals and practitioners in all of those fields described earlier. The three primary audiences are business managers and organizational executives, knowledge managers, and futurists. The book is intended for business managers and leaders who are responsible for setting visions, for developing missions and strategies – to help them contextualize their work in a knowledge economy. The book is intended for knowledge managers who have struggled with these challenges on a practical level and are looking for guidance on what to think about and how to frame it for their organizations. In particular, the book is intended for anyone who is familiar with the field of knowledge management but who needs something beyond the general discussions and the ten page high-level discussions of strategy. The book is intended for futurists who are guiding organizations through visioning experiences to expand their view of the future beyond the impacts of technology. The book is also intended to stimulate a discussion and prompt a

new perspective on the fundamental role of knowledge in the 21st century knowledge economy.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book is organized into four sections and 10 chapters. Section 1 introduces the reader to the knowledge economy, the role of knowledge organizations in that new economy, the importance of creating an understanding of the possible futures, and the importance of having a vision to navigate the transition. Section 2 provides a deep dive into knowledge strategies, including the current state of the practice and literature. This section also stresses the importance of building your knowledge capacity to lead a strategy development effort, and the value of identifying strategic alignments and affinities across the organization. Section 3 focuses on translating the strategy into tactics. The section describes the current stock of knowledge tactics, and explains the key roles and responsibilities required to manage the strategy. Finally, Section 4 focuses on developing a governance model to sustain your knowledge strategy. Each chapter provides background information on the topic as well as references to additional resources – both theory and practice. Each chapter highlights the thought leaders and practitioners in that topic. Finally, the Appendix provides a high-level project plan that the reader can use as a template for designing their own approach. Each Task and Subtask in the project plan traces back to a chapter in the book.

Section 1. The Destination – Vision of a Knowledge Organization

- Chapter 1. Building Knowledge Capacity for a Knowledge Economy

- Chapter 2. Knowledge Organizations
- Chapter 3. Creating a Vision of the Future
- Chapter 4. Translating the Vision into Strategies

Section 2. Strategies as Roadmaps

- Chapter 5. Knowledge Management Strategies –
The Big Picture
- Chapter 6. Building Your Capacity to Develop the
Strategy
- Chapter 7. Strategic Affinities and Alignments

Section 3. Starting the Journey

- Chapter 8. Realizing the Vision – Moving from Strategy
to Tactics
- Chapter 9. Defining Roles and Responsibilities to
Manage the Strategy

Section 4. Staying the Course – Maintaining the Strategy

- Chapter 10. Keeping the Strategy Alive – Governance

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 1 focuses on developing an awareness of the knowledge economy and knowledge organizations. The authors explain the transition from an industrial to a knowledge economy and describe the role that knowledge capital plays in the new economy. The chapter also describes the relationship between other characterizations of the new economy and

the knowledge economy. The chapter stresses the role that knowledge organizations will play in the knowledge economy and the importance of having a vision to navigate the transition. The authors also explain how the field of business defines and leverages visions.

Chapter 2 describes and characterizes an organization as a knowledge organization and explains how knowledge organizations are different from traditional organizations. The authors explain what knowledge organizations do, how they behave, and how they manage their knowledge capital. Examples of traits of knowledge organizations are presented as a tool for assessing your organization's status in transitioning to the knowledge economy. The chapter also explains why it is important to understand your organizations progress in transitioning.

Chapter 3 guides the reader through creating a vision of your future knowledge organization. The authors describe the elements and functions of a vision in the changing economy, and explain the risks of moving forward without a vision and understanding of the future. The chapter describes common misrepresentations of missions, goals, and strategies as visions. The authors explain why there are many views of the future rather than one, what we mean by long-term, mid-term, and near-term futures, by possible, probable, and improbable futures, and by positive, neutral, and negative futures. The chapter walks the reader through the visioning process, describes visioning methods, and explains how to document your vision.

Chapter 4 explains how to translate your vision to a strategy. The chapter explains how visions relate to missions, cultures, strategies, and tactics. The chapter also describes what a knowledge organization's missions and goals, cultures, strategies, and tactics might look like. The authors also describe the state of coverage of knowledge strategies in the field. A high-level framework for developing a knowledge organization

strategy is presented. The four components of the framework are described.

Chapter 5 explains how to translate your vision into a holistic knowledge strategy. The authors walk through the four basic levels of a knowledge organization strategy and explain why it is important to develop organization-wide strategies, business-aligned strategies, core knowledge management strategies, and strategies focused on human capital. The chapter also explains how to leverage the field of knowledge management to define scope and coverage of your strategy. The chapter also introduces steps involved in operationalizing your strategy.

Chapter 6 stresses the importance of building your own knowledge capacity before you embark upon the visioning or strategy development process. The authors describe the risks to the overall effort of strategy lead as lacking credibility or trust with stakeholders. The authors offer guidance to build your knowledge of the organization's business, the organization's administrative structure, the organization's current and past visions and strategies, of the knowledge economy, the fields of knowledge management and of futures studies.

Chapter 7 explains why it is important to build strategic alignments to support your strategy. The authors provide guidance on how and where to discover and connect to existing strategies. They key strategies you need to discover pertain to knowledge management capabilities, opportunities to advance knowledge management in business operations, strategies pertaining to human capital management. The authors draw upon their own experience to offer guiding principles for approaching stakeholders and making connections.

Chapter 8 focuses on translating your strategy to tactics. The authors begin by explaining how tactics relate to strategies. The chapter explains why strategies fail and how you can avoid these failures. The rich stock of knowledge

management tactics is reviewed. The authors draw upon their practical experience to offer guiding principles for selecting tactics for your organization.

In Chapter 9, the authors explain why it is important to define roles and responsibilities for managing your strategy once it has been developed. The chapter reviews a common range of levels of responsibility. Five key roles are defined to ensure the strategy will be well supported and managed, including business stewards, knowledge management custodians, functional and technical stewards, the strategic planning community, and business consumers. The authors describe responsibilities that might be assigned to each role. Finally, the reader is reminded that roles and responsibilities should be interpreted and translated to suit the organization's context.

Chapter 10 explains why governance is essential to sustaining your strategy. The authors describe the basic components of a governance model, including the triggers that might launch your governance process, the tools and processes that provide the context for governance, the strategy review process, how governance decisions are made and documented, and the annual review process for your strategy.

HOW THE BOOK IMPACTS THE FIELD

The intention of the authors is to shift the discourse from a general treatment of knowledge management strategies as an isolated task to a fully integrated business activity, supported by business managers and operationalized by every individual in the organization. The authors have anchored the discussion of strategies in the larger context of visions and of the knowledge economy. The goal of the book is to create a new dialog among business managers, knowledge management practitioners and professionals, and futurists. The knowledge

economy calls for a coalescing of perspectives and practices and a new focus on knowledge organizations and economic transitions. Until this dialog begins, each area of practice will operate in isolation. Until this dialog begins, each area of practice will focus on a part of the solution. Until this dialog begins, no one area of practice will effectively address the challenge. The authors hope this book will be a catalyst for that dialog.