

## Towards an Integrated Knowledge Management: Expert Networking in the Company

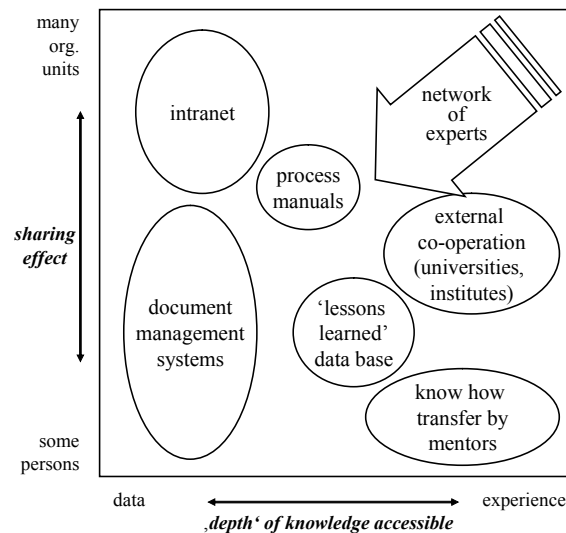
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Companies in the field of nuclear power generation are active in a knowledge based business: They are faced with the close interaction of quite different technologies, the complexity of large projects – especially in constructing new plants – and the challenges of the long lifetime of their product. In the past daily needs have pushed the introduction of diverse procedures and tools for knowledge handling in the different organisational units of Framatome ANP, e.g. project documentation systematic, knowledge transfer to young engineers, or co-operation with external institutes.

The different approaches can be classified in a portfolio spanning the ‘depth’ of knowledge handled (data ... ‘experience’ as interpretation of data within a context) vs. the sharing effect (some persons ... many units). Obviously the complete coverage of the two dimensions cannot be expected from one method or tool. Even attempts for more integration in IT based knowledge management systems have failed due to the effort required for supporting the application scopes in the different technical fields and in project management.



Nonetheless some aspects have become apparent requiring an integrating view for these distinct elements:

- Methods and tools may be useful for other business contexts in the company also. Therefore there is an obvious need for *exchange of information and 'best practice'*.

- Common projects and collaboration require mutual use of methods and tools by different units not foreseen before. *General guidelines agreed for knowledge management* facilitate the linking and merging of tools.
- *Knowledge improvement and extension* – i.e. *innovation* – should be supported within all methods and tools. Promoting *suggestions from users* and integrating improvements are optimized approaches to be unified within the company.

Handling these issues by a specialized unit only will not overcome the barriers between the approaches faced in the past. Best solutions are expected by involving directly users with a more general scope.

This is now easily organized, after having introduced in the AREVA Group the status of experts and their networking. First they are a complimentary element in the management of knowledge, but furthermore their duties defined will result in the transverse integrating effect for the elements deployed yet. The respective assignments for experts are – in addition to the work in their operational units:

- expanding and consolidating various areas of knowledge and know-how with regard to the areas of expertise,
- making this knowledge and know-how available within the Group and sharing it,
- identifying, developing, analyzing, assimilating and harnessing the new technologies required for future markets.

The need for interaction of experts from different technical areas by networking is obvious, as is the need for procedures and ‘team tools’ documenting approach and results. Thus experts will contribute to the methods of knowledge management in a constitutive way.

The mutual adjustment of the tools and methods by the community of experts, who represent technical contents through expertise and its use through their operational duties, is a decisive step for an integrated management of knowledge within the company. It ensures the flexibility required for success.