Future Trends in KM

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Overview

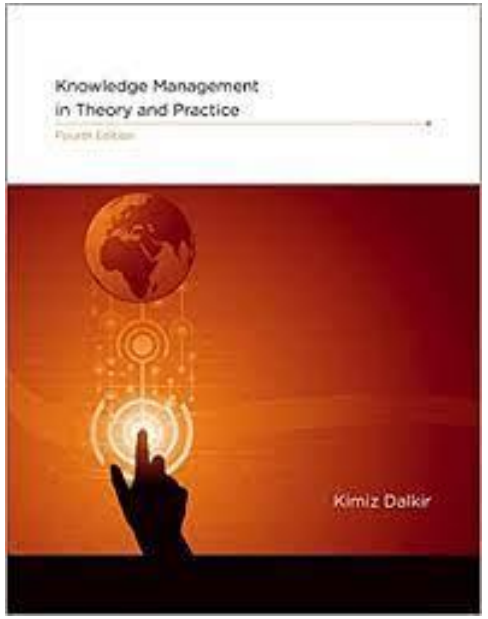
Key KM Milestones to Date

KM Today

Major challenges ahead

Some KM trends

What's next for KM?



This presentation discusses and integrates a number of perspectives and key studies from the KM community but presents a predominately personal view and position on the future evolution of KM

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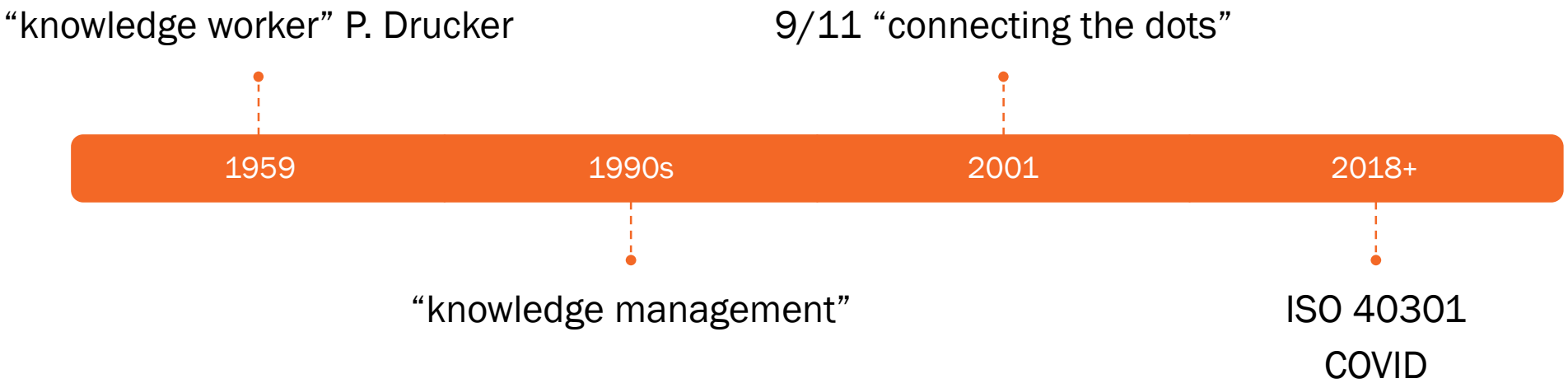

“The goal 20 years ago was to find knowledge. Today, the challenge is to accurately find the right knowledge” (Nakash & Bouhnik 2021)

A New ISO KM Standard

7.1.6, Organizational Knowledge – The organization shall determine the knowledge necessary

- for the operation of its processes and to achieve conformity of products and services.
- This knowledge shall be maintained and be made available to the extent necessary.
- When addressing changing needs and trends, the organization shall consider its current knowledge and determine how to acquire or access any necessary additional knowledge and required updates.

KM has become mandated and more prescriptive

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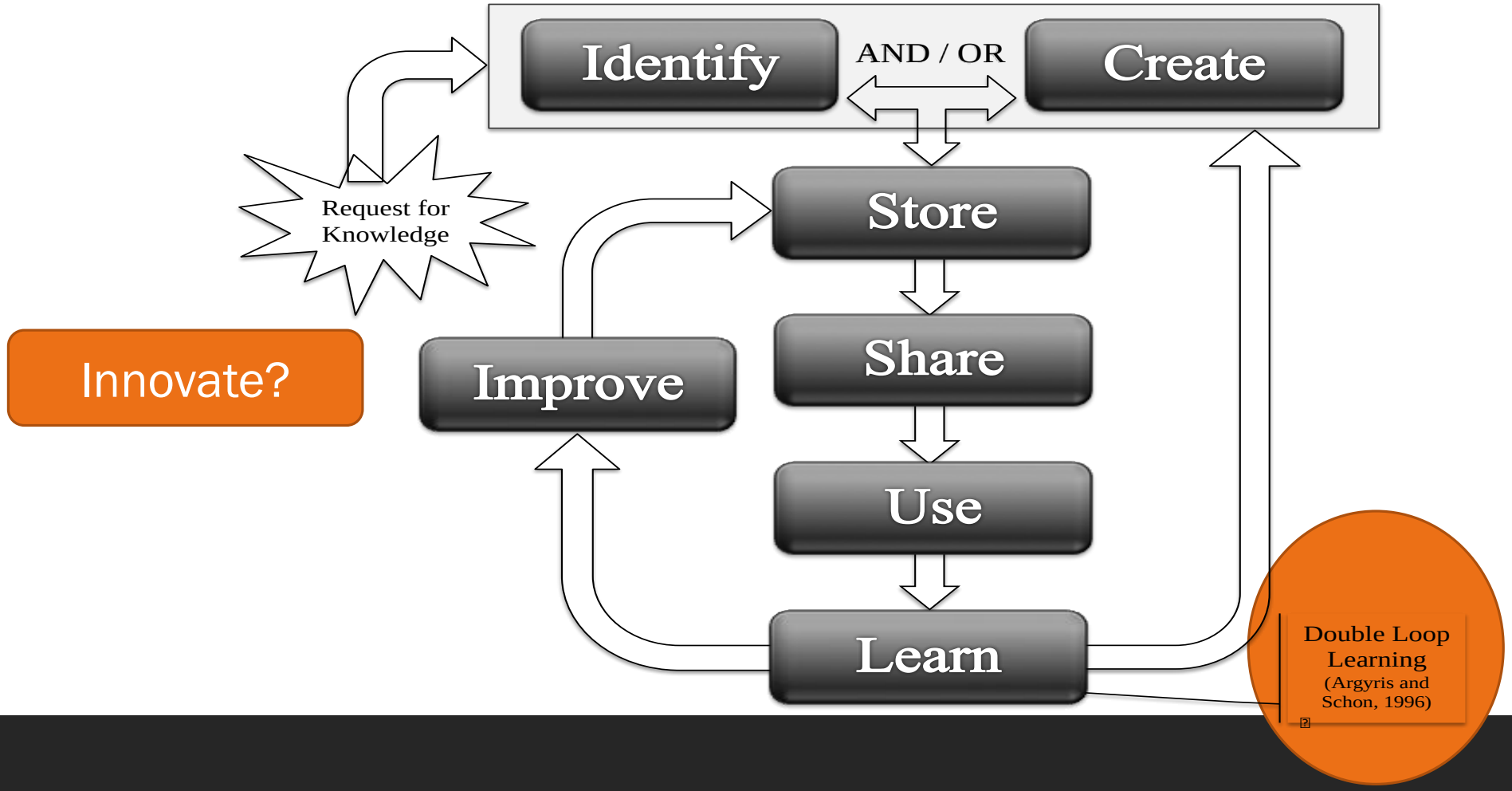
- We no longer have to “sell” KM
- KM is integrated in organizational strategies and processes
  - Often in performance evaluation criteria
- Increased requirement for “formal” credentials
  - More KM graduates, including PhDs
  - More KM programs in universities → KM Discipline
- Increasing number of KM teams
  - KM roles → KM Profession
- More likely to value tacit knowledge (esp after the COVID-19 pandemic)

Evans et al KM Processes



Current state-of-the-art of KM

FOCUS IS ON:

- Learning and improving from the past (lessons learned, single loop learning)
  - Can we do x, y and z better?
- Historical data
- Within the organization
- Improving efficiency through reuse

LESS FOCUS ON

- Double loop learning
  - Should we be doing x, y and z?
- New data
- Inter-organizational and societal KM
  - The KM ecosystem
- KM to promote greater creativity and innovation

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Major KM Challenges

- KM is still significantly **reactive** rather than proactive
  - Examples include responses to 9/11 and the pandemic on a macro level
  - On a more micro level, knowledge continuity breaks due to resignations, retirements (turnover)
  - Alternative is to have a clear KM strategy with measurable objectives & **KM governance**
- Remote/hybrid work model appears to be here to stay
  - While explicit knowledge is easily created, shared and preserved remotely
  - **Tacit knowledge** is at a significant risk of being lost, "misplaced" and not shared
- Scope of KM has increased (or at least, perception of its scope)
  - Interorganizational KM - - **societal KM**
- Still no **consensus** on definition of KM!
  - No clear organizational (or academic) home for KM (Management, Comp Sci – HR, IT???)

Why is knowledge governance important?

Governance is typically defined in terms of 3 major components:

- Authority
- Decision making
- Accountability

This implies that there are:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Policies, rules and guidelines
- Expectations if not consequences of not governing knowledge successfully

But how does this framework apply to knowledge? To tacit knowledge?

Will require balanced governance

FORMAL GOVERNANCE

Link to organizational governance

- organizational structure (hierarchical? Direct reporting?)
- Type of leadership (authority)
- Policies, rules, regulations
- Job and task descriptions
- Incentives linked to performance reviews, promotions

INFORMAL GOVERNANCE

Link to organizational culture

- How is collaboration viewed (e.g. positive or loss of status?)
- Are there opportunities for knowledge networking (time during the day; physical/virtual space)?
- Barriers? (e.g., linguistic, geographical proximity, time zones)
- Level of trust?
- Peer-to-peer mentoring
- Leaders as role models

Some best practices

FORMAL GOVERNANCE

Chief Knowledge Officer
- With formal KM team

Knowledge is addressed in organizational policy
- Intellectual property
- Non-disclosure, non-compete clauses
- Compensation

Extrinsic rewards

INFORMAL GOVERNANCE

Leaders as role models

Clear charter for all knowledge networks
- Eligibility criteria for members
- Clearly identified roles (e.g., moderators)
- Clearly posted rules of conduct (e.g., what to post, how to share)

Intrinsic rewards (e.g.,. recognition)

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Selected KM Trends

1. Integrated (instead of standalone) KM
2. Scalable KM
3. Inclusive KM
4. AI and KM (and other tools for the KM toolkit)
5. Sharing and Preserving valuable tacit knowledge

KM Trend #1: phasing out of standalone KM

- While KM does have many unique features, it is not possible (nor desirable) to isolate KM
  - KM and other functions such as change management, information management and ICT management (instead of KM vs. ICTs)
  - Other examples include:

Artificial intelligence, analytics, big data	Document management
Data science, statistics	Digital libraries
Records management	Information management
databases	Recordkeeping, archives
Information retrieval, search	Innovation management

KM Trend #2:

More Scalable KM

- Knowledge continuity at multiple levels
  - Individual
  - Group
  - Organization
  - Inter-organizational
  - Societal KM or KM for social needs e.g., COVID-19 pandemic and KM for climate change
- Business continuity is too short-term focused
- Knowledge continuity is too long-term focused

KM ecosystem

KM Trend #3: Inclusive KM

- Geographical
- Linguistic
- Different modes? Or just reading text on the screen?
- Periphery – digital divide
  - Socioeconomic, gender, seniority,
- Cultural (including micro-cultures)
- How do we define expertise?
  - Who is an expert?
  - Frontline knowledge workers?

Diversity Equity Inclusivity

KM Trend #4: AI & KM

- Data mining of organizational legacy content
- Chatbots that mimic conversational interactions to interface with KM systems
- Improve findability of knowledge in all its forms
  - Not just text and documents, but images, videos, sound clips
- Enable & accommodate more than one language
  - Search knowledge in multiple languages
  - Cross-reference and update across languages

Information overload

KM Trend #4: Tacit knowledge

- Do we know who knows what?
  - Increasingly difficult when not face-to-face
  - Very difficult for those who were hired during the pandemic

Expertise Locator Systems

KM Trend #5: Formalization of KM

- KM as an academic discipline
  - Business, management, computer science, information science
  - Certificates
  - Can also think outside the course box: KM as a horizontal skill (e.g., required cyberbullying, information literacy and other workshops in order to graduate)
- KM as a field of research
  - Increasing # of publications, PhDs
- KM as organizational practice
  - ISO 30401 (focus on KMS)
  - Increased need for KM auditors

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Future of KM: More is better?

- Integrated, even invisible KM, that permeates organizational structures and processes
- Increasing scope
- Increasing inclusivity
- Out-of-the-box KM – KM tools during global disruptions
- More intelligent KM tools
- Evolution of KM from creative reactive craft to more formalized standardized practice

What do you think?

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Some Resources

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