

Assessing Readiness



Description

Why should you take the time to complete this assessment? Regardless of how far your organization has progressed in knowledge capture, the assessment will help you identify key elements that can potentially:

- hinder your progress, or undermine your success.
- serve as a source of strength in supporting your successful implementation.



If your organization values the expertise that resides inside the heads of its most knowledgeable people, and wants to...

- harvest that expertise so that it can be shared by stakeholders who "need to know"
- capture and preserve that expertise in "knowledge assets,"
- evolve that expertise into property of the organization,
- stop the endless cycle of "re-inventing the wheel,"
- improve competitiveness,
- reduce costs,
- provide the foundation for organizational learning,
- take the next step beyond document management systems, knowledge management systems, and groupware,

...then it's likely that you are ready for Knowledge Harvesting.

Successful implementation of a new Knowledge Harvesting system requires major strategic change within most organizations. This "Assessing Readiness" is designed to help you carefully look at key elements within your organization that form the foundation for successful implementation of the initiative. As always, stakeholder sponsorship of Knowledge Harvesting is a primary issue in its success.

The "Assessing Readiness" process can be administered via paper worksheets or software. The assessment elements are divided into seven dimensions:

1. Knowledge Orientation
2. Climate
3. Culture
4. Daily Operations
5. Information Architecture
6. Leadership
7. Magnitude of the Proposed Change

You may decide to have one person (such as a senior executive) complete the assessment. You may also choose to have several people complete the assessment independently, and then meet to compare (and even combine) scores. Or you may convene a group, and have group members work together to complete the assessment.

Typically, the group setting is a good way to administer the assessment. This is due to the fact that the Assessment questions help to prompt discussion around the relevant knowledge capture issues.

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Purpose

This assessment process will help you identify your organization's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in preparation for beginning a Knowledge Harvesting initiative.

The GOAL is to make obstacles apparent. Based on this awareness, you can take action to eliminate or minimize the risks associated with these issues.



Definitions

Knowledge Orientation	The extent to which the organization gives priority to deliberate efforts to manage knowledge as an asset in order to fulfill its mission.
Climate	The extent to which the people in the organization are receptive to change.
Culture	The extent to which the organization's vision, mission, business strategies, policies, and procedures (what we say) support change.
Daily Operations	The extent to which the practical aspects of managing daily operations of the organization (what we actually do) support change.
Information Architecture	The extent to which the systems, policies, and procedures affecting the flow and availability of information within the organization support change.
Leadership	The extent to which the individuals in leadership positions support change.
Magnitude of the Change	The number of people in the organization who will be affected by the proposed change, and the extent to which they will need to shift paradigms to accommodate.



Inputs

To accomplish this work, you need a group of stakeholders who can accurately assess the organization's readiness. This is a discussion tool. Therefore, it should be used in a group setting when all stakeholders can sit down and discuss their responses. It is likely that the individuals who participate are either senior managers or members of the Knowledge Harvesting Team.



Results

When you complete your ratings of the key elements in this assessment tool, you will have:

- rated your organization's readiness in seven areas.
- created a "gap analysis" between where you are now versus where you want to be, and
- developed focused action plans to improve or maximize performance.



Performance Measurement

You will know that your performance of the tasks in this module is satisfactory when you have

1. calculated your scores.
2. determined your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.
3. completed focused Action Plans to address problem areas.



Consequences

You can begin a Knowledge Harvesting initiative without completing the Assessment of Readiness, but you will run the risk of overlooking important factors that can undermine your initiative's success. There is also the potential to overlook the areas of strength that should provide the foundation for the initiative.



Emotions

This assessment is designed to reveal flaws in a number of important areas in your organization. If there are many areas in which improvement is needed, beginning the assessment process may seem daunting—having flaws revealed can be uncomfortable. However, please bear in mind that your organization's strengths will also be revealed. This knowledge can be equally valuable to you, and should serve as a source of pride!



Estimate of Time

The time required to complete all the tasks in this module will vary, depending on the number of people who participate in the assessment process, and the number of action plans that must be developed.



Estimate of Cost

The cost involved in completing this module is related to the cost of the time of those involved in the assessment process.



Guidance

You should complete all tasks in this module in order, from beginning to end. Ideally, you will use this assessment before beginning your Knowledge Harvesting initiative. But even if your project implementation is already underway, the knowledge of your organization's strengths and weaknesses will allow you to develop action plans to maximize your potential for success.

- 1) Enter a rating number for each key element.

- 2) Document your notes about comments heard from all participating participants.
- 3) Calculate your assessment scores for each key element category
- 4) Interpret your assessment scores.
- 5) Create action plans to improve low scores.

Rate the key elements.



Description

As you work through this task, you will assign a numerical rating to each of the key elements in the assessment, based on your judgment of your organization's current status.



Purpose

The purpose of this task is to help you assess your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement with respect to the key elements required to manage corporate memory.



Definitions

Key Elements—Factors in seven dimensions that have a direct influence on the success of an organization's Knowledge Harvesting initiative.



Inputs

When you begin this task, you will have reviewed the list of Key Elements in this assessment tool, and the support information that goes with each.



Results

When you complete this task, you will have rated each Key Element on a scale of 1—5, based on your assessment of where your organization is *now*.



Performance Measurement

You will know that your performance of this task is satisfactory when you have entered a carefully considered rating for each key element statement in the assessment tool.

**Consequences**

Carefully read each statement. Then, select a rating that truly reflects your organization's current status. Your thoughtful consideration of each key element and rating is essential if you are to focus accurately on your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

**Emotions**

If you find that you are entering ratings below 3 for many of the key elements, it would be easy to let yourself feel discouraged about beginning a Knowledge Harvesting initiative. However, remember to keep your focus on the underlying reason for completing the assessment, rather than on just the numerical ratings. The assessment will help you identify areas of your organization that offer opportunities to develop focused action plans, so that you can improve both the process and outcomes of your Knowledge Harvesting initiative.

**Estimate of Time**

We estimate that one person will be able to complete the ratings in 30-45 minutes.

**Estimate of Cost**

The cost involved in completing the ratings is related to the cost of the time of the person (or persons) who complete the assessment.

**Guidance**

1. Select the rating number for each key element that reflects your assessment of where your organization is **now**. Please use the following scale of one to five, as explained below.

5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree
2. Enter the number you select for each key element in the rating box to the right of the key element statement.

Knowledge Orientation—The extent to which the organization gives priority to deliberate efforts to manage knowledge as an asset in order to fulfill its mission.

Knowledge Orientation		Rating	
		5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree	
1)	We recognize the importance of deliberately managing knowledge as an asset. This need may be attributed to high level of knowledge required in the work process and/or the product. If this is a global organization, then it is likely that there is a greater need for harvesting and deploying formalized know-how around the world.		
2)	We have incorporated knowledge sharing and creation of knowledge assets into our strategic plan.		
3)	Our Knowledge Harvesting initiatives are tied to the achievement of our strategic and operational performance measurements. An organized approach to knowledge management will provide our stakeholders with the knowledge support they need to accomplish results successfully in their daily work.		
4)	We will commit sufficient financial and human resources to succeed with Knowledge Harvesting initiatives. We have the cooperative working support of MIS, HRM, and at least one high-profile senior executive.		
5)	We possess a process-centric view of work. - We have institutionalized a formal TQM process. We are well down the quality trail and understand the importance of process. - We have purposefully evolved our core processes, and “bought into” the idea of process. - We know our most important work processes. - We know the costs and results of key processes.		
Knowledge Orientation TOTAL SCORE →			÷ 5 →

Climate—The extent to which the people in the organization are receptive to change.

Climate		Rating	
		5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree	
1. We experience (or may experience) significant loss of expertise from downsizing, retirements, resignations, etc.			
2. We recognize the importance of capturing the expertise of our organization's most knowledgeable stakeholders.			
3. We recognize our need to share what we know with our customers and other stakeholders.			
4. We intend to maintain greater knowledge of our business processes than our suppliers and distributors.			
5. We intend to maintain greater knowledge of our processes than our competitors.			
6. Now is a good time to implement Knowledge Harvesting.			
Climate TOTAL SCORE →			÷ 6 →

Culture—The extent to which the organization's vision, mission, business strategies, policies, and procedures (what we say) support change.

Culture	Rating	
1) We place high value on the knowledge that resides inside the heads of our most knowledgeable stakeholders. The emphasis on the individual can be inferred in how organizations recruit, retain, educate, and compensate organizational members. It is important to value individuals because the goal is to personalize learning. As an extension to this, these organizations must be capable of operationalizing a reward/recognition system that promotes effective use of the technology. The organizational culture must support the paradigm shift away from traditional training and development approaches toward Just-in-Time performance support.	5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree	
2) Our stakeholders value collaboration over competition as the most effective way to achieve our goals. Effective Knowledge Harvesting requires creating a supportive, collaborative culture and eliminating traditional rivalries. For some employees, this may mean painfully "unlearning" long-standing work habits and behaviors.		
3) Our organization's stakeholders work effectively in teams. There is a high degree of trust between and among all stakeholders in our organization. Someone who interprets the old axiom "Knowledge is power" to mean "To stay strong, I've got to hide and protect what I know" isn't likely to embrace the concept of sharing resources.		
4) We have altered our compensation system to recognize and reward knowledge sharing.		
5) We have people who are qualified for, and interested in, performing the roles required to capture and share knowledge.		

6) We have or can align our intellectual property practices with the goals of knowledge capture.		
7) We have a history of success in implementing organization-wide change initiatives. - History of Successful Implementation - The organization has previously deployed consequential changes in its work processes and achieved good results. - Major Change Initiative - A project that seeks to make changes in deeply rooted aspects of the organization's operations. Examples of major change include implementing change management or total quality or shifting from hierarchical management to team-based management.		
8) We view ourselves as a "learning organization." Although some of the concepts and models of learning organizations to date are often shallow, they have achieved widespread attention in both academic and business press. If your organization is a learning organization, then you are a good candidate for Knowledge Harvesting, because you have demonstrated an openness and value for the process of learning in our rapidly changing world.		
Culture TOTAL SCORE →		÷ 8 →

Daily Operations—The extent to which the practical aspects of managing daily operations of the organization (what we actually do) support change.

Daily Operations		RATING 5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree
1) Our business processes are both numerous and complex.		
2) Our stakeholders must access the most current know-how and expertise to successfully accomplish their daily work.		
3) Some of our work processes are potentially hazardous and must be clearly articulated.		
4) We recognize the importance of organizing our know-how so that it is clearly aligned with our work processes.		
Daily Operations TOTAL SCORE →		÷ 4 →

Information Architecture—The extent to which the systems, policies, and procedures affecting the flow and availability of information within the organization support change.

Information Architecture		Rating	
		5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree	
1)	We have information technology in place that can serve as an infrastructure for managing knowledge assets.		
2)	We have invested in web-based systems and browsers for all stakeholders.		
3)	We have drafted or implemented metadata standards for managing our documents.		
4)	We recognize the need for or have installed a knowledge portal that serves as a singular interface for accessing our knowledge assets.		
5)	We utilize performance-support software as a primary way to support learning and doing.		
Information Architecture TOTAL SCORE →			÷ 5 →

Note: Beware of leading a knowledge capture initiative with primary focus on information technology! Yes, it is vital when it comes time to craft a communications medium that will serve as a way to distribute vital know-how. But, many knowledge management projects in the recent past have emphasized technology over people and process.

Leadership—The extent to which the individuals in leadership positions support change.

Leadership		Rating	
		5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree	
1)	Our senior managers are visionary people who are eager to explore new alternatives for achieving our strategic plan.		
2)	Our senior managers see Knowledge Harvesting as a viable approach for achieving our strategies.		
3)	There is at least one executive-level person who is sponsoring our Knowledge Harvesting initiative.		
4)	Our line managers have a history of effectively implementing organizational-change initiatives.		
Leadership TOTAL SCORE →			÷ 4 →

Note: It's not just "top management support" that is really critical. The critical action that comes from leaders is the clear, concise story of why it is important to deliberately capture and organize know-how. The module called "Crafting the Story" will help with this task.

Magnitude of the Change—The number of people in the organization who will be affected by the proposed change, and the extent to which they will need to shift paradigms to accommodate.

Magnitude of Change		Rating
		5 = S. Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = S. Disagree
1) The number of our departments/divisions/locations affected by changes is less than 25% of the total.		
If less than 25% of the organization's departments or divisions, then it cannot be considered a strategic or radical change.		
2) The proposed change in our organization's Knowledge Harvesting system will affect less than 25% of the organization's employees.		
If a new system affects less than 25% of the organization's employees, then it cannot be considered a strategic or radical change.		
3) Our proposed new system will require minimal paradigm shifting within the organization.		
- Paradigm Shift – A change in perceptions and behaviors that must occur for an organization to make changes in its core business methods, processes, and approach. - Minimal Paradigm Shifting – The existing corporate memory system is very similar in process and/or content to the proposed new system. Implementation will not require radical changes in employee or manager behaviors.		
Magnitude of Change TOTAL SCORE →		÷ 3 →

Note: Unless this is a large R&D organization, it is rare to have more than 1/3 of the organization participate (use one or more of the three primary knowledge capture tools – work profiling, process mapping, knowledge harvesting).

Calculate your assessment scores.



Description

Now it's time to "do the math!" Although you will focus on the calculation of scores in this task, remember that this is just a stop on the road to a more important destination—the identification of your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.



Purpose

The purpose of this task is to perform the mathematical calculations that will yield the average score for each dimension, and the overall score for the assessment.



Inputs

When you begin this task, you will have entered a numerical rating for each key element statement in all seven dimensions of the assessment.



Results

When you complete this task, you will have calculated the average score for each dimension, and the overall score for the assessment.



Performance Measurement

You will know that you have achieved satisfactory performance in this task when you determine that the average score for each dimension and the overall assessment score have been calculated accurately.



Consequences

Inaccurate calculations have the potential to direct your attention to the wrong areas of concern within your organization, and cause you to overlook areas of strength.

**Emotions**

As in the previous task, it may be discouraging to you if you have scores below 3 in many areas. But remember, the good news is that you will be able to address these areas with focused action plans. Also, you will be able to define your organization's areas of strength.

**Estimate of Time**

Our estimate of the time required to complete the calculations is 10 minutes.

**Estimate of Cost**

The cost involved in completing this task is negligible—it is a function of the time of the person who completes the calculations.

**Guidance**

1. Enter your average scores for each key element dimension of the assessment in the blanks below.
2. Then add these scores to produce a TOTAL SCORE.
3. Finally, divide the TOTAL SCORE by 7 (the number of dimensions) to calculate your OVERALL ASSESSMENT SCORE.

Calculation Form for Assessment Scores



Enter the scores for all seven sections/elements:

• Knowledge Orientation	_____
• Climate	_____
• Culture	_____
• Daily Operations	_____
• Information Architecture	_____
• Leadership	_____
• Magnitude of the Proposed Change	_____
TOTAL SCORE	_____
Divide the total by 7	_____ = Overall Assessment Score

Interpret your score.



Description

What do these scores mean for your organization? As you interpret your assessment scores, remember that your organization's scores in the following three key element categories are critical - Climate, Culture, and Leadership. Low scores in any of these three areas indicate a need for your organization to create action plans to address these areas of weakness BEFORE trying to implement a Knowledge Harvesting initiative.

Now you can determine your organization's potential for successful implementation of a Knowledge Harvesting system by comparing your scores to the ranges of scores described below. Look carefully at your scores for each category, as well as your overall score.



Purpose

The purpose of this task is to compare your organization's score to the ranges of scores described below, so that you can interpret the meaning of your scores.



Inputs

When you begin this task, you will have calculated the assessment score for your organization.



Results

When you complete this task, you will have compared your organization's scores to the ranges of scores described below, and identified areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.



Performance Measurement

You will know that you have achieved satisfactory performance of this task when you have successfully identified your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

**Consequences**

It is critical that you examine your organization's assessment scores very carefully, so that you can accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement. Look for the presence of patterns and trends in the scores. Failure to examine the scores with care has the potential to undermine the success of your Knowledge Harvesting initiative.

**Emotions**

If you have identified many areas with scores less than 3, it will be tempting to rationalize their cause and gloss over the need for corrective action. However, if your Knowledge Harvesting initiative is to have the best chance for success, you must face any unpleasant results, and deal with them directly.

**Estimate of Time**

Our estimate of the time required to complete this task is 1-2 hours for one person. If a group is responding to the assessment scores, more time will be needed—perhaps 4-6 hours.

**Estimate of Cost**

The cost of completing this task is a function of the time of the person (or persons) examining and interpreting the assessment scores.

**Guidance**

Interpret your overall score based on the following.

1.0—2.0

POOR

Few of the key elements are in place within the organization. A great deal of preparation is needed in many assessment categories to improve low scores, so that implementation of a Knowledge Harvesting system will be successful. If the majority of the low-scoring key elements are addressed prior to implementation, the chances for successful implementation will increase.

2.1—3.0

FAIR

The organization has some of the key elements in place. However, significant preparation is needed in some assessment categories to improve low scores, so that implementation of a Knowledge Harvesting system will be successful. If the lowest-scoring key elements are addressed prior to implementation, the chances for successful implementation will increase. However, some of the key elements may be addressed concurrently with implementation of the Knowledge Harvesting system.

3.1—4.0

GOOD

The organization has many of the key elements in place. Preparation is needed in some assessment categories to improve low scores, so that implementation of a Knowledge Harvesting system will be successful.

4.1—5.0

EXCELLENT

The organization has most of the key elements in place. Minimal preparation is needed for successful implementation of a Knowledge Harvesting system.

Comparing your organization's scores to these ranges of scores will enable you to identify strengths and weaknesses related to readiness for change. Then you can make better decisions regarding any preparation needed prior to implementing your Knowledge Harvesting system.

Take action to improve scores.



Description

Now that you know the location of your low-scoring assessment dimensions, you are ready to develop action plans to improve your organization's performance in these areas. Depending on your scores, you may choose to work on these areas before you begin your Knowledge Harvesting project, or concurrently as you begin project implementation. Use the Action Plan Form to “drill down” directly to any of the key element dimensions, and develop focused action plans to improve your organization's potential for success. Remember, if you have low scores in any of the three critical categories, you will want to create action plans for these categories first:

- Climate
- Culture
- Leadership



Purpose

The purpose of this task is to plan decisive actions to address opportunities for improvement that were revealed in the assessment scores.



Inputs

When you begin this task, you will have identified your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.



Results

When you complete this task, you will have developed focused action plans to address opportunities for improvement. Through these action plans, you will maximize the potential for success of your organization's Knowledge Harvesting initiative.



Performance Measurement

You will know that you have achieved satisfactory performance of this task when your action plans begin to yield positive results, and you see improvement in the areas identified.

**Consequences**

Failure to plan decisive action that addresses areas that need improvement can seriously undermine the success of your Knowledge Harvesting initiative. And even if this were not the case, these areas of below-average performance have the potential to negatively impact your organization's financial results.

**Emotions**

If you have identified many areas for improvement, it would be easy to become discouraged over the amount of planning and work required to support improvement. However, it is essential that you muster your courage, and begin work immediately. If there is much work to be done, you may need the help of others within the organization. Call on the talents and strengths of your organization's most capable people to help you accomplish this work.

**Estimate of Time**

The time required to complete this task will vary, depending on the number of action plans that you will develop.

**Estimate of Cost**

The cost of completing this task is related to the number of action plans that must be developed.

**Guidance**

- 1) Review the "Calculation Form for Assessment Scores" and identify the questions with scores of "3" or less. These are likely candidates for improvement.
- 2) Create an action plan for improving each "low score."

Date Entered:

Date Implemented:

Date Completed:

Issue or Problem: Low assessment scores in

_____ category.

Enter a name for this action plan:

What actions are needed to clarify, correct, or improve this issue or problem (low score)?

What resources (human and material) will be needed to implement this action plan?

Who is responsible for implementing this action plan?

How will we track progress?

How will we know if the goal is accomplished?