

Connecting Knowledge: A Knowledge Leadership Framework for AUT University

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Abstract:

Knowledge Management (KM) is about recognising the value of intellectual assets, the information and knowledge available in an organisation and then finding a way to awaken and apply those assets to benefit the organisation - financially, physically and culturally. KM is therefore about strategic and tactical issues, in part systemic and technical, but also in part about changing individual and institutional behaviour.

Knowledge Management as a discipline has developed to a stage where real and tangible benefits are being achieved by organisations investing wisely in KM programmes. These benefits include:

- More informed decision-making
- Avoiding wasteful duplication of resources
- Avoiding loss of commercial opportunity, and loss of knowledge when staff exit
- Increasing accessibility to the organisation's recorded internal knowledge
- Improving information literacy of researchers, learners, administrators
- Increasing the discovery, transmission and use of recorded knowledge (learning)
- Increasing the dissemination of new knowledge (research)

The first four of these apply to any organisation. The last three apply particularly to universities. Although the application of KM has been common in business, it is not generally well developed in universities. Auckland University of Technology (AUT) has identified KM as a priority, focussing on KM for management, but also for learning and research. Managing the information and knowledge environment, will bridge the gap between what AUT currently knows and what it needs to know.

The creation of a position of Director of Knowledge Management signaled an intention to adopt KM best practice across the organisation and to reap the benefits of an integrated KM Framework. A Knowledge Management Working Group was established with the purpose:

"To create and maintain a framework in which all members of the University are encouraged to share and use knowledge for the benefit of teaching, learning, research and business goals and which allows them to seamlessly and easily connect to the information they need, whenever they need it and wherever it is located."

Developing the Knowledge Management framework fits within the context of the University's Strategic Plan. In order to consolidate AUT's position as a university with a distinctive approach to knowledge management it has been recommended that the Strategic Plan include the goal:

To demonstrate leadership in the management and dissemination of knowledge, nationally and internationally

KM at AUT is also about empowerment of the university's stakeholders. In making information and knowledge more readily available, and by harnessing the rich repository of advice, information, research, reports and policies, KM promotes inclusivity and an information literate community.

The Knowledge Framework establishes a roadmap for KM within AUT University. It considers the governance structure appropriate to a university, as a relationship organisation, not a process organisation. It outlines key initiatives to build the KM Framework and discusses the plans required to operationalise KM within AUT.