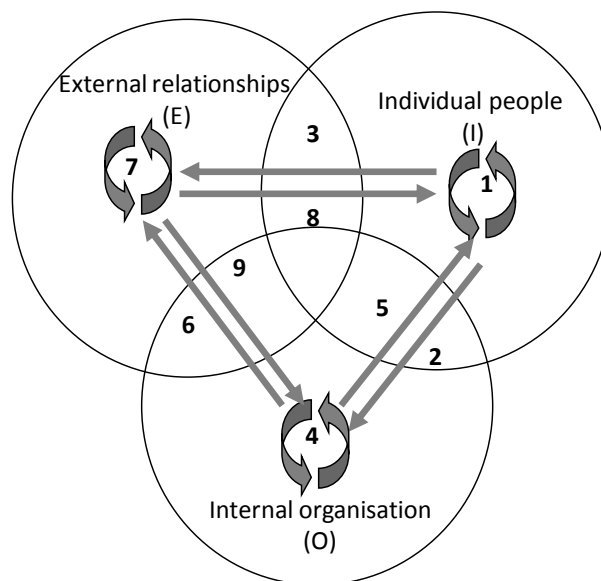


Henley KM Forum - Making a comprehensive assessment of knowledge flows

There are nine different value generating routes along which knowledge can flow within and between three knowledge domains: individual people (I) working for the organisation (sometimes called human capital), the systems and processes of the organisation (O) (sometimes called structural capital), and the external relationships (E) of the organisation (sometimes called relationship capital). This is illustrated in figure 1.



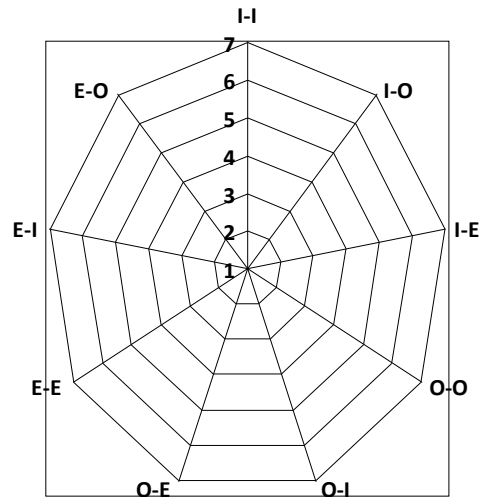
Nine value generating knowledge flows associated with an organisation ¹

The beneficial purpose of each numbered flow, in other words how it can generate value for the organisation, is explained more detail in chapter 2 of *Knowledge Works*.

The survey allows you to collect information about the strengths and weaknesses of different parts of the organisation.

There are no right or wrong answers in this approach. Not all flows will have a desirable rating of 7, it depends on the level of contribution each makes to organisational performance. The objective is to achieve consensus about the ratings for each knowledge flow. Significant differences between interviewees or within a workshop setting provide an opportunity to explore the reasons for the different perceptions. Once approximate agreement has been reached, then transfer your desirable and actual ratings for each knowledge flow for each part of the organization of interest onto a radar chart like that shown below by plotting each one against the appropriate axis and joining up the points. This allows you to visualise the whole picture.

¹ Developed from Sveiby, K.-E. (2002) 'Creating Knowledge Focused Strategies: Good and Bad Practices.' Henley KM Forum 2nd Annual Conference, Henley Management College, UK. See also, Sveiby, K.-E. (2001) A Knowledge-based Theory of the Firm to Guide Strategy Formulation, *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 344-358



Plotting the knowledge flow ratings

The gap between desirable and actual ratings will be a useful pointer to areas where attention is required – the biggest gaps indicate the priorities. When all the knowledge flows work together the value creating potential is increased. If the pattern is different for each part of the organisation, then look for opportunities to understand why some flows work well in one place and not in others and whether experience and good practice can be transferred. *Knowledge Works* provides further information about what enables and blocks knowledge flows.

Template for a survey to collect information about the effectiveness of knowledge flows in the organisation

	Low			Medium			High	Rating
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. I-I Knowledge flows between individuals in my organization.	Little knowledge sharing due to insecurity, politics etc.			Knowledge mainly shared with local trusted colleagues.			Widespread and active participation in mentoring, coaching, communities etc. demonstrating a high level of trust between people.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>
2. I-O Practices that ensure that the knowledge / experience of individual employees flows to where it is needed internally.	Limited use made of mechanisms (like databases or communities) to access or share knowledge across the organization.			Local initiatives to spread individual knowledge becoming more evident. After-action reviews completed for major projects. Incomplete coordination.			Accessing and sharing knowledge is embedded in core processes and carried out as a matter of course.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>
3. I-E Knowledge flows from people employed by my organization to external customers / suppliers / alliance companies (all classed as partners here).	Employees are not able to build relationships externally due to lack of time or poor processes.			Increasing evidence of employees forming relationships with external partners, but this is incompletely coordinated rather than part of the knowledge strategy of the business.			Employees are expected to form trusting relationships with key partners and this is supported through the knowledge strategy. Participation in professional bodies and networks likely to be common practice.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>
4. O-O The systems, structures and processes in my organization that help knowledge flow from one place to another.	Isolated examples of knowledge sharing systems and process. No integration and much "reinventing the wheel."			Cultural initiatives starting to support infrastructure and process initiatives. Incomplete coordination though.			A fully integrated system with cultural initiatives supporting process and infrastructure investments.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>

	Low			Medium			High	Rating
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. O-I Practices that ensure that knowledge available in the organization improves the competence of individual employees.	Few supporting structures available to help individuals know what to do.			Some best practices and templates and other resources available for core activities. Incomplete coordination of investments in learning and development.			Developing employees is a business priority. Best practice guidance widely available and readily accessible. Learning encouraged, appropriate resources available.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>
6. O-E Systems and to make knowledge available to external customers / suppliers / alliance companies (all partners here).	No support for customers / suppliers / partners, eg. by providing access to update, status, diagnostic, delivery etc. information.			Increasing evidence of facilities for external organizations to access and use essential information from within your business.			Your business model drives the enhancement of secure systems to allow external partners to access all necessary supply / diagnostic / status etc information.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>
7. E-E Knowledge flows between other companies in my industry (including suppliers, customers and competitors).	No significant conversations evident between players in the industry.			Adhoc conversations and meaningful relationships becoming increasingly evident.			External relationships between players in the industry are vibrant and productive.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>
8. E-I Knowledge transfers from external customers / suppliers / alliance companies (all classed as partners here) to individual employees in my organization who need it.	Individuals isolated from external partners (customer/supplier or other partner) or professional knowledge networks.			Systems, processes and resources increasingly available to allow some key individuals to learn from external partners or professional networks, but activities are incompletely coordinated.			External liaison roles have been created and are coordinated effectively. Employee development includes participation in external professional knowledge networks.	<i>Desirable Rating:</i> <i>Actual Rating:</i>

