



# Managing Knowledge

IN OUR COMPETITIVE BUSINESS environment, fewer staff spread over different sites and business units must access and analyze a huge amount of information without being overwhelmed by it. To remain informed, proactive, compliant, safe and profitable, energy companies are increasingly turning to innovative Knowledge Management solutions.

Knowledge Management enables people throughout these organizations to access, share and analyze data about customers, employees, partners and trade associations, as well as relevant material from competitors, news media and governments.

It can also include data from all other enterprise wide resource planning systems such as CRM (customer relationship management), personnel and financial packages and client data warehouses.

## A knowledge management *solution unlocks the collaborative value of this information.*

A Knowledge Management solution unlocks the collaborative (and competitive) value of this information. As a result, companies experience sharply reduced search time and better competitive intelligence. They can also develop a more accurate, comprehensive basis for decision making. For example, my company, Cedar, worked with one international energy company to help it visualize its available internal and public domain knowledge regarding LNG – the markets, the buyers and shippers, the technology, regulations and sources of gas. This process revealed a series of news releases on a previously unrecognized competitor in the LNG shipping chain. As a result, the company could allow for this competitor in new business alternatives and scenarios, avoiding costly miscalculations.

### BUILDING A HIGH PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

To achieve the necessary speed, flexibility and effectiveness energy companies will require a Knowledge Management system with the following technology modules:

- Intranet / extranet web portal system
- Sophisticated search engine
- Visualization tools

This said, it is critically important to remember that an advanced Knowledge Management solution is not an off the shelf product you can simply plug in. The technology will need to be customized for your organization, keeping in mind there is a comprehensive strategic and change management process that must be undertaken to ensure that the solution delivers the value (and the ROI) you expect.

### THE PORTAL SYSTEM

A managed intranet and / or extranet is the IT infrastructure that connects all relevant documentation across the entire organization. All personal, departmental and project information can be accessed and archived with an on-screen browser. Portals can be custom built for key business areas –teams, departments, technologies, acquisition targets, competitor intelligence, regulation, safety, emergency response—and many others.

### THE SEARCH ENGINE

To mine these data stores, a sophisticated search engine tool set is incorporated into the intranet system to enable users to rapidly identify the latest and most relevant documentation of key performance indicators (KPI's) whether from the internal databases or from 'spidering' (an automatic indexing) of the wider world wide web.

The latest search engines are customized to the needs of the organization and include thesauri tailored to frequently used words and abbreviations (taxonomy), which allow for multi language content, misspellings and semantic phrases (British staff would search for content on 'petrol' rather than 'gas' in the US). This provides quick access to all the relevant research and documentation involving a number of linked key phrases. For example, finding a Spanish speaking, media relations trained, pipeline engineer, experienced in dealing with custody transfer issues.

### VISUALIZATION TOOLS

Visualization tools create novel two and three dimensional maps on screen that enable masses of complex data to be categorized into practical areas by topic. Such powerful capability provides identification of new trends and relationships between areas of interest. This stimulates further opportunities to create new business, identify skill sets, pre-qualify vendors, proactively prepare for competitive threats and anticipate legislative and regulatory developments.

### CONCLUSION

Knowledge Management promises significant competitive advantage. A well-designed solution will enable employees to extract new and valuable business insights from a huge and varied store of information. ■

---

*Patrick Hogan is Vice President for Content Value Management (CVM) for Cedar, a knowledge management portfolio that integrates Cedar's other enterprise technologies and IT consulting services. Prior to joining Cedar, Hogan gained extensive experience in the energy industry with British Gas International (BG Group) in Europe and the U.S. patrick.hogan@cedar.com www.cedar.com.*