



YOUR KNOWLEDGE VISION

THE ESSENCE OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY

What a “Knowledge Vision” is, why it is useful and how to create one.

YOUR KNOWLEDGE VISION

THE ESSENCE OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY

What is a Knowledge Vision?

A Knowledge Vision captures the essence of your knowledge strategy.

It is aspirational in explaining what knowledge-related working life will be in the future.

It requires an understanding of your firm's knowledge now, what knowledge will be needed in the future for a resilient and successful firm, and how you will meet the firm's knowledge needs along the strategic journey from present to future, **but it isn't the plan itself.**

“connect people to the processes and technology that will help them to work effectively with partners to accomplish our mission”

“to create a world class knowledge-sharing culture and environment that contributes to our success”

“collective knowledge at everyone’s fingertips ... via a healthy balance of connect and collect behaviours ... leads to better and faster decisions”

What sort of firm will your firm be ...?

What sort of firm does your leadership team want your firm to become?

Will your firm be a knowledge innovator with valuable proprietary knowledge, key to your competitive edge?

Will you have highly skilled/trained/knowledgeable experts working at and pushing the boundaries of existing knowledge? Will knowledge experts fight to join your firm to support your innovative working? Will key clients choose you to partner with because of your renown knowledge? Will you be speaking at KM Legal about your cutting-edge KM activities?

Alternatively, will your knowledge strategy be functional and lean?

Will it be exactly what is needed, when it is needed, and no more? Will you cut the frills and ensure its ROI (and your profit) is through the roof?

Will your business be filled with pragmatic people who understand how to deliver results?

Or something in between which suits your firm, your people and your particular clients perfectly.

How can you decide on your knowledge vision?

The creation of a knowledge vision is best done as part of the creation of your practical KM Strategy, towards the end of the process.

For a KM strategy that works, you need:

1. a deep understanding of your internal knowledge assets,
2. an assessment of the external environment you currently compete in and wish to compete in, and
3. a clear business strategy for creating an agile, resilient, profitable and creative future.

Your vision is the essence of your strategy - two or three sentences which sum up your knowledge hopes and plans.

It sounds like a tall order, but usually, the process of creating the KM strategy causes most people's knowledge vision to "emerge" quite naturally.

When you understand your existing internal knowledge assets, external environment and business strategy, and have identified your knowledge needs, the knowledge vision which suits your firm best becomes more obvious.

If you are struggling, the following three approaches can help.

1) Use your strategy data.

Review the interviews and surveys you have undertaken as part of understanding your internal knowledge assets and look for commonalities.

How did people criticise current knowledge tools and what were they hoping for? What language did they use?

Craft a vision from this written evidence and then test-run and sense-check it with stakeholders, particularly with your frontline workers. Does it chime with them or do they think it is platitudinous?

Use their feedback to craft something that really works.

2) Make a vision board.

Pin/write up all relevant information as you come across it during your strategy process.

Keep tinkering with it and inviting comments from stakeholders during the investigations for your strategy.

Finally, create something yourself from this vision board then test-run it with stakeholders.

3) Have a workshop.

Ask all those involved in the KM Strategy creation (business leaders as well as KM leaders) to write their own knowledge vision, then compare and contrast.

What thoughts were most common, what were the outliers? Which words do people feel passionately about and which were a bit "meh".

Keep questioning and digging into the words until the "essence" emerges.

This is best done in a workshop rather than over time by email/online discussion.

Making it work

You do not want your knowledge vision to be one of those meaningless corporate-speak "statements" that invite derision from within the firm and outside.

The following* are needed to ensure your vision is workable and useful:

- **Meaningful Style** - it works with your current and aspirational culture, memorably encapsulating your KM strategy in words that are meaningful for your business. It isn't a meaningless "bolt-on".
- **Commitment to competitive edge** - your knowledge vision aligns to your business strategy and supports your firm's competitive edge.
- **External communication of values** - it signals to all stakeholders what your knowledge vision is and how it supports your business strategy. It draws the right clients to you.
- **It has "backbone"** - there is top down support for the knowledge vision, including budgetary support.
- **Inspirational** - it inspires innovative ideas and new thinking - it creates "aha" moments.

Lastly, you need to keep your vision, like your KM strategy, under review.

As markets change, adapt and are disrupted, and your business spots new opportunities, your business strategy will need to adapt, so your knowledge vision and KM strategy will need to adapt to support your new direction.

* this is adapted from Nonaka et al's "Enabling Knowledge Creation" to suit law firms (see pages 104 onwards).

What now?

Share -

Do you have a Knowledge Vision as part of your KM Strategy? If so I'd love to hear about it in the comments on the [blog post](#). How difficult was it to create? Does it meet the 5 criteria above? Are those criteria useful to you?

Read more -

- Nonaka et al "Enabling Knowledge Creation"
- Barnes & Milton "Designing a successful KM Strategy"
- My [previous posts](#) about strategy

Sign up to my busy-person's monthly summary or follow the blog.

Learn -

Come along to a [workshop on KM Strategy](#).

Arrange an [in-house bespoke workshop](#).

Get help -

I can help you write your KM Strategy and vision. [I can do it for you entirely](#), work alongside you or coach you through the process. [Contact me here](#).



Hélène Russell

Tel: 07976 360 348

helenerussell@theknowledgebusiness.co.uk

The **Knowledge** Business 