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Knowledge Mapping – useful basics

A   Background

The current political and institutional environment of public institutions and companies demands a constant focusing of their services on clients' needs and enhanced efficiency due to financial constraints and increasing transaction costs.

We are in a new communication era that has increased the flow of information, opened the access to numerous sources of information and improved opportunities for **sharing knowledge** and experience. But the knowledge age awakened corporate managers and project leaders to the fact that bits of knowledge should be shaped into KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS.

Knowledge Products when shared meaningfully within the organization help teams build new ideas to innovate, in the overall horizon of the organization they help to build up an intelligent, learning organization, able to adapt its structure, processes and culture to future challenges.

Be aware that the transformation of implicit knowledge into palpable ecplicit knowledge is key. Apply narrative methods such as Story Telling and provide special informal events where knowledge adquired through empathy and intuition can be shared.

But how do you get those Knowledge Products? And how can we link the cycle of Konwledge Management – from scanning information to knowledge sharing - to our own strategy?

B   Procedure: Everybody is a KNOWbody

The following key concept for implementing a Knowledge Cycle Management (KCM) is based on **Knowledge Mapping**. What are the **driving forces** leading towards a comprehensive KCM?

1
We act upon of what we know. And we control our performance upon our knowledge we might have about the required performance standards.
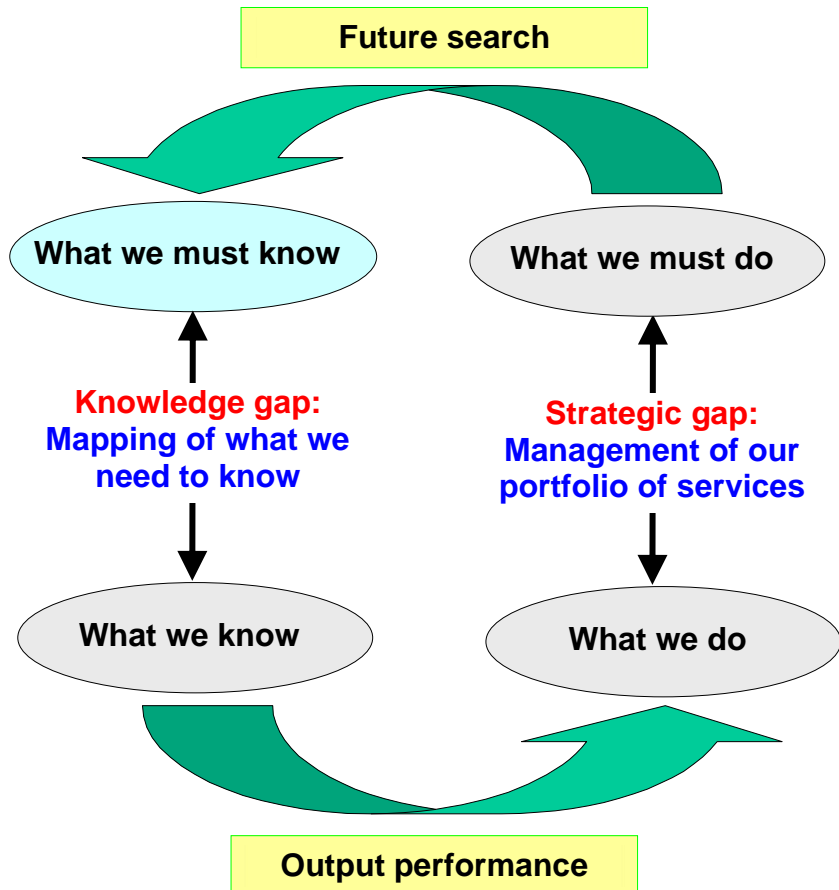

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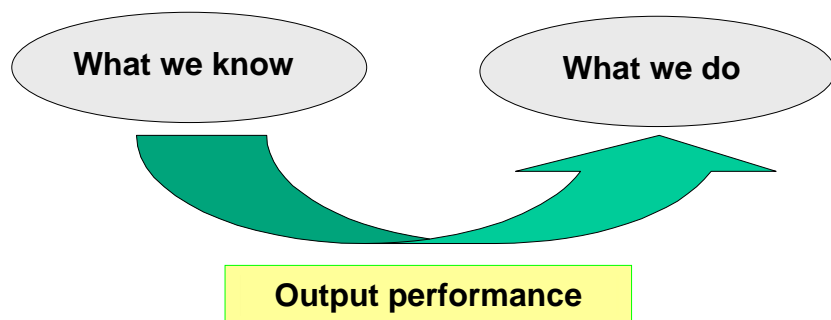
2

Looking at what we must do
we observe a difference to
what we are doing.
And we try to close
this strategic gap
by re-orienting our
portfolio of services.

What we must do

Strategic gap:
Management of our
portfolio of services

**What we know**

What we do

Output performance
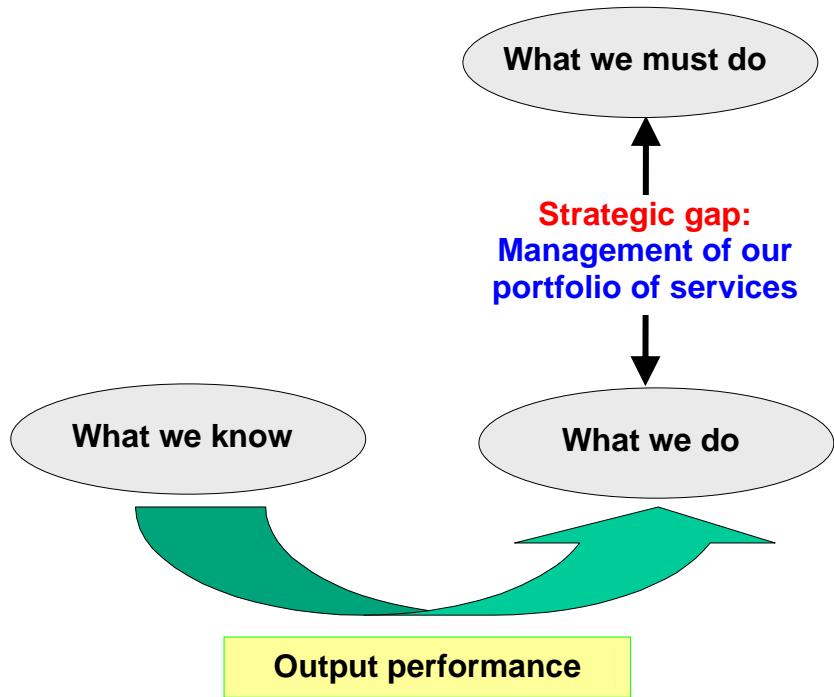
3

When we see what we
must do, we can ask
ourselves, what we must
know in order to be able
to do it.
This future search
reaches out to identify
what knowledge we
are lacking. Compared
to what we already
know widens up a
knowledge gap which
we can present as a
map of knowledge.

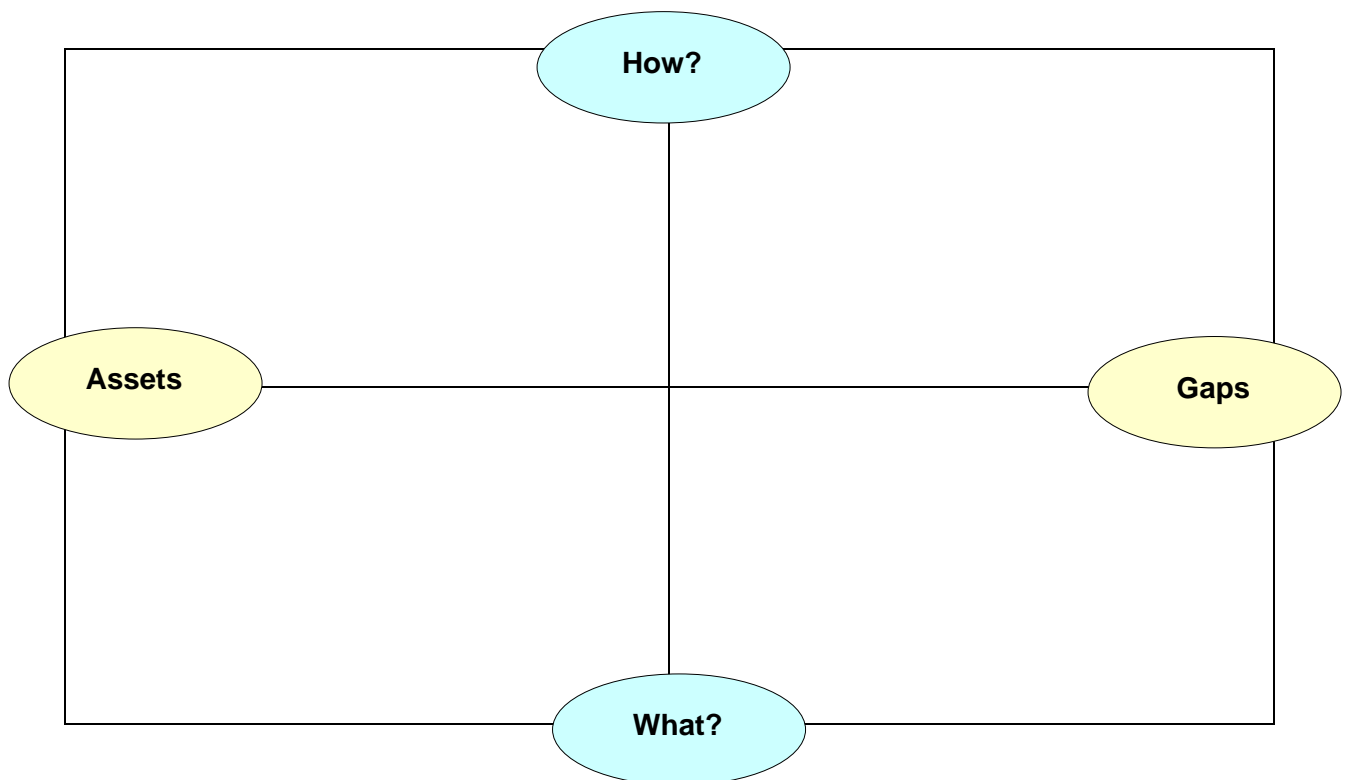**Future search**

What we must know

What we must do

Knowledge gap:
Mapping of what we
need to know

Strategic gap:
Management of our
portfolio of services

What we know

What we do

Output performance

4

Considering the knowledge demands from the **clients and users**, the knowledge mapping circle can be used to illustrate **pulling mechanisms** that are relevant to achieve quality in terms of a comprehensive map of needed knowledge and problem solving services.
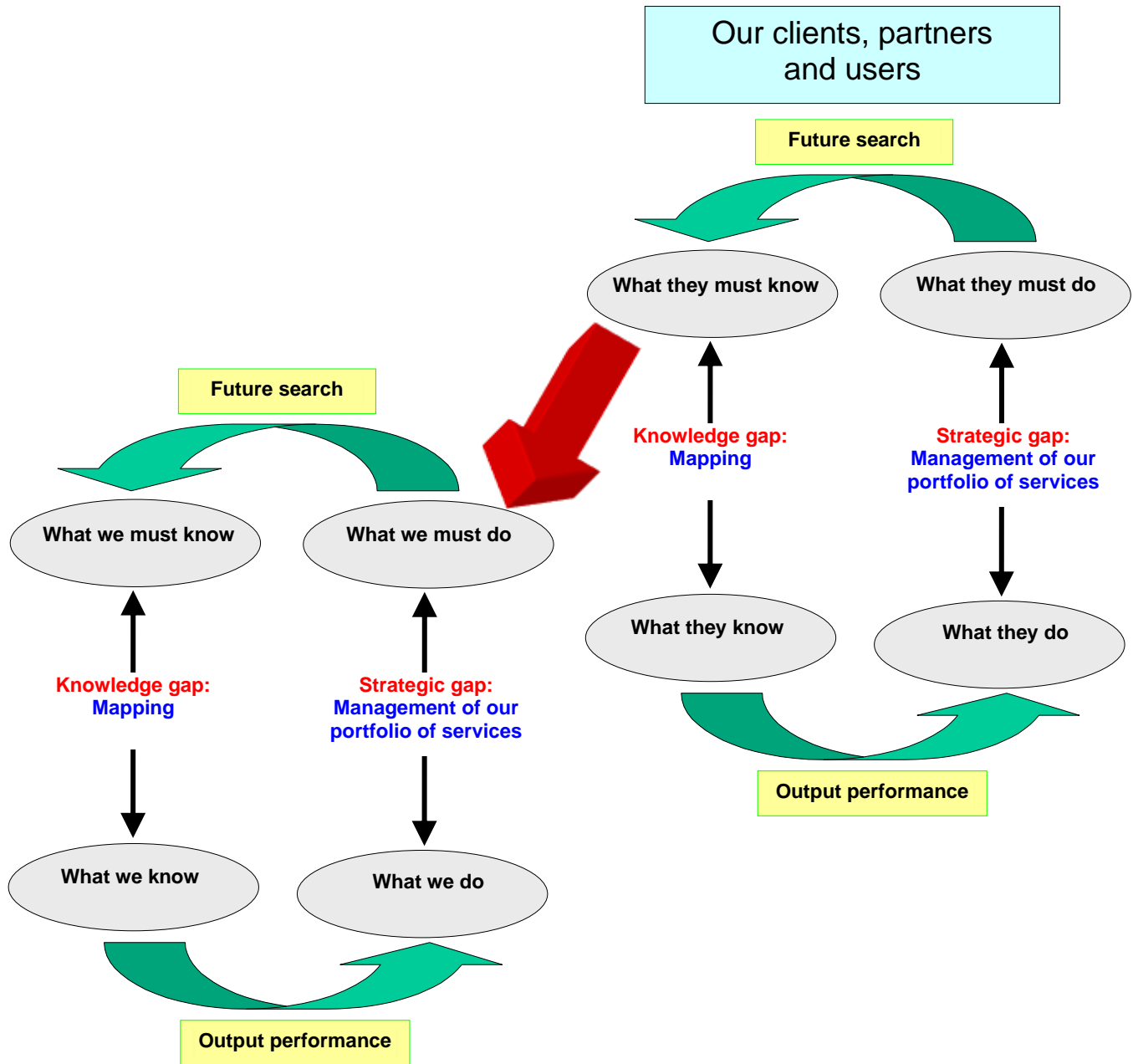
C Results

Knowledge maps are valuable tools in Knowledge Cycle Management. They are highly practical and graphical means which can be used to obtain, share, learn and create knowledge. They can not only identify gaps in knowledge but also determine ways to close these gaps. Maps can also assist in aligning needs to goals, understanding obstacles to successful learning and determining how to make better decisions by seeking out and using the knowledge needed. In the initial phase, the graphical presentation of a **Knowledge Map** can be concentrated on a simple **matrix**:

```
                        ( How? )
                           |
                           |
  ( Assets )───────────────┼───────────────( Gaps )
                           |
                           |
                        ( What? )
```

Knowledge mapping has been used in the following ways
- by teams to facilitate common understanding
- by professionals to ensure relevant knowledge has been gathered
- by organizations to find the gaps, sinks and stops inhibiting the flow of knowledge
- by individuals for career planning, resume development and training needs assessment
- by strategic planners to propose better decisions based on understanding of risks and opportunities

Iinitial actions in KCM should be complemented with training and coaching activities in order to
- explain the concepts, benefits and problems linked to KCM,
- improve awareness and understanding about KCM and its potential for reinforcing formal and informal knowledge sharing within the organization, with its partners and across,
- to take decisions on options about of communities of practice and other tools.

The knowledge maps indicating the knowledge **gaps** and knowledge **needs**, should help management in the strategy to focus and adjust their projects and services. It should facilitate better common understanding of the needs of the users and how to respond to them. The exercise should also improve the interaction between the management and other members of their organization to ensure a better flow of knowledge and information and bring knowledge products together.

Knowledge mapping can be performed through **surveys**, which will be adapted according to the groups targeted. Finetuning a knowledge map, the following taxonomy can be used to measure and differentiate knowledge levels:

Passive knowledge	**1**	**to know**	Being able to remember words, facts, dates, standards, classification, principles, theory
	2	**to understand**	Being able to transpose, interpret and extrapolate from some knowledge
Know how	**3**	**to apply**	Being able to remember knowledge and principles for solving a problem
	4	**to analyze**	Being able to identify the elements, the links and the principle of a situation
Know to lead and teach	**5**	**to synthesize**	Being able to produce an original work after having conceived a plan of action
	6	**to evaluate**	Being able to give a critical opinion based on internal and external criteria

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