



# Knowledge Management

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How to transform your company's knowledge management into a key competitive advantage

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## About Learn Amp

**Learn Amp is an award-winning People Development Platform. Learning, employee engagement and performance management — all in one.**

We're on a mission to make work life, work better. We make it easy to map out and deliver the best employee journey. Learn Amp combines learning, engagement and performance management tools in one seamless platform, driving better business results and higher employee retention.



# Introduction

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**Knowledge management** is one of the top three issues influencing company success, yet **fewer than 10%** of today's organisations feel they are addressing it effectively<sup>1</sup>.

Knowledge management is a uniquely complicated issue, requiring companies to identify and strictly adhere to the right behaviours, processes and tools. For today's information-rich businesses, there is a tendency for knowledge to accumulate in siloes, or even remain locked in heads of individual employees, only to walk out the door when they move on.

In this white paper, we'll explore why getting knowledge management right is key for the future success of your company. We'll offer you some examples of how our clients have transformed their businesses by improving the way that their employees store and share knowledge. Finally, we'll provide a step-by-step guide to implementing a comprehensive but flexible approach to knowledge management.

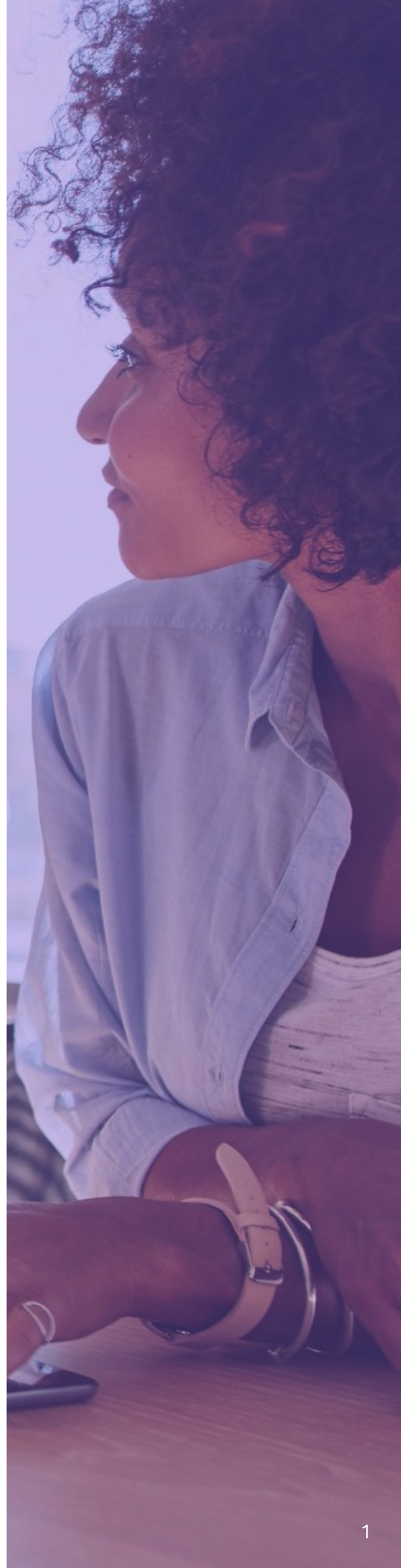
Knowledge management can be complex – but with the right processes in place, it can become your major competitive advantage.



**Chris Dwyer,**

Learning Systems Manager, Specsavers ANZ

“With Learn Amp, we've been able to decentralise knowledge management and drive our culture of learning. We can store and share knowledge across our distributed workforce easily, where previously valuable knowledge was being lost.”



# 1. Knowledge Management Today

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The role of knowledge management is changing in today's organisations. Knowledge management is no longer simply a question of effective document storage – although for many organisations, this is still an on-going struggle.

However, to remain competitive, today's businesses need to go further – to develop an approach to knowledge management that supports business agility, promotes organisational performance, and inspires employees to share knowledge and be proactive about their use of the knowledge management tools available.

For many organisations, knowledge management must also be redesigned for a newly hybrid workforce – in other words, knowledge must be accessible, digital, flexible and decentralised.



# 1.1 What is knowledge management?

*“Knowledge Management is the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge.”*<sup>2</sup>

It sounds simple enough – but in practice, knowledge management can be a little more complicated than that.

Effective knowledge management involves a number of intersecting factors:

- An organisational culture that prioritises knowledge sharing;
- Employee behaviours that support the communication and retention of knowledge;
- An accessible, centralised system to store and access organisational knowledge; and
- An explicit process that ensures that these processes and behaviours are maintained over the long term.

## **Knowledge management is the process of transforming information into organisational value.**

Information is only valuable if it is put to use. Information is made up of units of data – it is knowledge that transforms that information into useful, practical conclusions.

For example, you may have the information that more customers are buying your products in December – but it takes market knowledge to relate that information to the fact that December is the month in which many of your customers are celebrating Christmas, and that your product is perceived as a good gift choice.

Information is easy to reproduce, whereas knowledge is unique, specific, and often tied to individual employees. Knowledge is the process of remembering, understanding, applying, analysing and evaluating information.

Knowledge management, therefore, involves developing methods to capture knowledge, not just information. Organizations must find methods to store the cognitive processes of individuals and teams when they interpret information. Otherwise, this crucial and valuable resource will simply leave the company when the employees with the knowledge decide to move on.

## **Knowledge management involves the storage and distribution of two types of knowledge – explicit and implicit.**

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that exists physically – the facts and figures logged in spreadsheets, data files, desktops and in-trays. For example, the number of clients in a particular geographic region, or the details of the contract signed by your reseller partners, are both kinds of explicit knowledge.

Implicit knowledge, also known as tacit knowledge, is harder to access. This is the knowledge that results from experience and training, and usually remains in employees’ heads. Examples of implicit knowledge include the most effective way to present information in sales meetings, or the best way to train a new recruit to use the in-house software.

A comprehensive knowledge management system isn’t just about finding good ways to store explicit knowledge in a centralised, accessible way. It’s also about making sure that employees share and distribute their implicit knowledge, so that this unique and valuable input can benefit the company as a whole.

## 1.2 Why is knowledge management important?

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### Knowledge is the lifeblood of your organisation.

Every decision, strategy, client interaction, and sale in your company depend on the knowledge of your organisation. After all, when we talk about knowledge, we're essentially talking about the ways in which your employees have taken in the information about your business and processed it into value. It is what makes human workers different from robots – the capacity to respond to novel situations or complex interactions by drawing on experience, problem-solving and professional skills. Failing to manage employee knowledge is a way to severely limit the positive impact your employees can make on your business.

### Knowledge management is a major driver for organisational performance.

Research consistently shows that companies with a knowledge-focused culture (a culture with the tools and behaviours in place to promote the retention and distribution of knowledge) outperform their competitors. Knowledge management is a significant indicator of improved organisational performance across every metric you can think of – sales, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, innovation, and product quality, to name a few<sup>3</sup>.

This makes intuitive sense. After all, a sales rep who knows where she can find examples of winning sales presentations, and use them to build her own, is more likely to close the deal. Customer service teams who have easy access to frequently asked questions will be better able to deal with customers promptly and effectively. Employees who know where to find the knowledge they need to succeed on the job will be more engaged and satisfied than those forced to flounder on their own. And teams

greater access to organisational learning – what has worked before, what failed and why – can avoid reinventing the wheel and deliver more innovative solutions and better products.

### Better knowledge management can make your business more agile.

Organisational agility – the ability of a company to operate, iterate and embrace market change, at pace – may be the most critical capacity for today's businesses. The more agile the company, the faster it can deliver value to its customers, respond to changing market demand, adjust to dramatic changes such as the global pandemic, and optimise its use of resources.

Organisational agility requires an agile approach to knowledge management. Your employees will only ever be able to move quickly and embrace an agile methodology if they have access to the knowledge they need. Christopher Tozzi of Stack Overflow proposes that an organisation aiming to be agile needs a knowledge management system that is simple, continuously improving, self-service, and available when needed<sup>4</sup>.

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“Before Learn Amp, I wasn't sure where to look for articles or videos. I like that it recommends article and videos to me for my role.”

**Casey Cumming,**  
Employee, nbkc bank

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## 2. Knowledge management best practice

Fewer than 10% of organisations feel like they're managing their knowledge effectively. To make sure that your company is harnessing your most valuable resource – your employees' knowledge – successfully, we've broken down what best practice knowledge management should look like. In this section, we've also included a step-by-step guide to upgrading your knowledge management strategy, including a handy checklist for your knowledge curators. Finally, we've shown you how you can use a learning solution like Learn Amp to make the most of your organisational knowledge while still keeping costs down.





# 2.1 What good knowledge management looks like

## How do you know if your knowledge management system is working?

75% of today's organisations say that creating and preserving knowledge is very important for their success – but only 9% believe they are truly ready to effectively manage their knowledge<sup>5</sup>. Addressing this major gap between importance and readiness starts with defining what a strong knowledge management program actually looks like. **To check the level of your knowledge management program, ask yourselves the following questions:**

### 1. Do you have a centralised, accessible knowledge repository?

Effective knowledge management starts with knowing where your explicit knowledge is. Too many of our clients struggle with even the most basic foundation of knowledge management – having a unified, accessible and centralised knowledge hub so that employees can find the information they need when they need it.

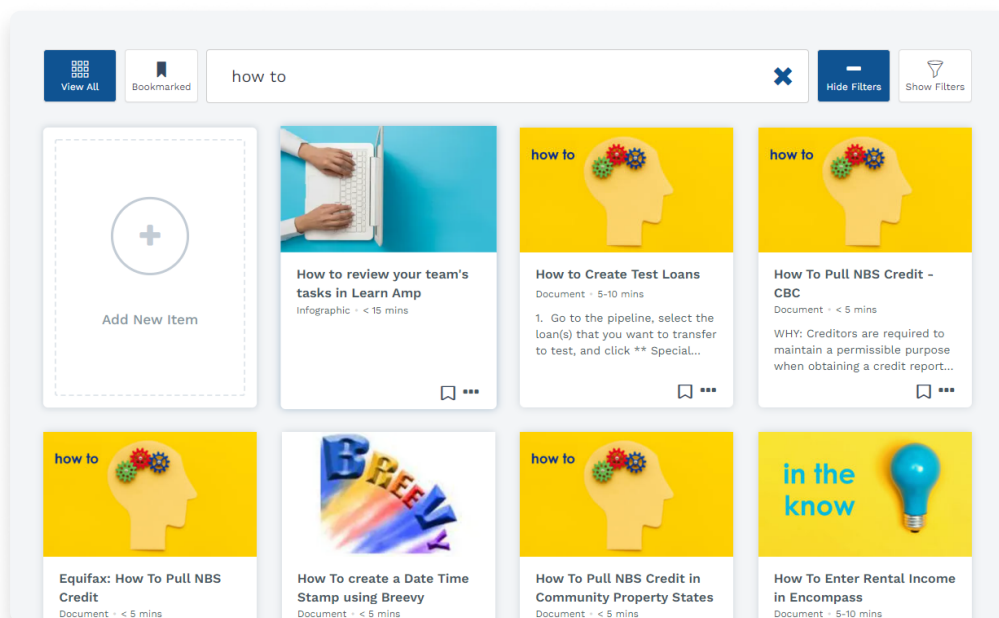
This is often the result of organic systems growth. As a start-up, your company may only have needed a

file sharing system like Dropbox or Google Drive. However, as you grow, you may add other systems for storing knowledge – an intranet on Jira or Notion, a CRM system, an email system, a learning management system, and so on.

All these disparate systems contain vital company knowledge, but as they don't interact, don't share a single taxonomy of organising the information, and don't support knowledge dissemination, they will make it increasingly hard to manage your wealth of company knowledge as you continue to grow.

On the other hand, a best practice knowledge management system starts with a centralised knowledge hub that every employee can access, both remotely and in the office.

For companies in heavily regulated industries, knowledge must not only be accessible, but also easy to manage. Your knowledge hub should include details like review dates and information expiry dates, to make sure that every employee is up to date on the latest regulations. Failing to implement content governance in your knowledge management processes places your business at serious risk of non-compliance.



A screenshot of nbkc bank's implementation of Learn Amp – simple, well-organised and accessible



## 2. Does everyone on your team know where to find the information they need?

If your knowledge management system is working, every employee can put their hands on the knowledge they need when they need it. However, only 44% of organisations believe that they effectively preserve knowledge for future use<sup>6</sup>.

If you don't have a tool or system that allows employees to access the knowledge of others, you are forcing your team to continuously reinvent the wheel. By contrast, a knowledge platform that allows your employees to find the information they need will make them far more productive and effective.

For example, an employee who has to deliver a client sales presentation will know where to find examples of previous effective presentations. An employee dealing with a difficult client query will know where to find the answer. An employee struggling with a product development challenge will know how to find the appropriate in-house subject matter expert.

In fact, a truly first-class knowledge management system will go one step further and provide employees with the knowledge they need even before they go looking for it. For instance, if you tie your knowledge management system into an advanced learning platform, you can recommend learning resources or helpful data sources to employees based on their role, current project, or development milestone.

## 3. Do your employees use company knowledge to inform their decision-making?

Data and information that isn't put to use is essentially redundant. Yet only 36% of organisations define knowledge management as the capacity to derive value from knowledge.

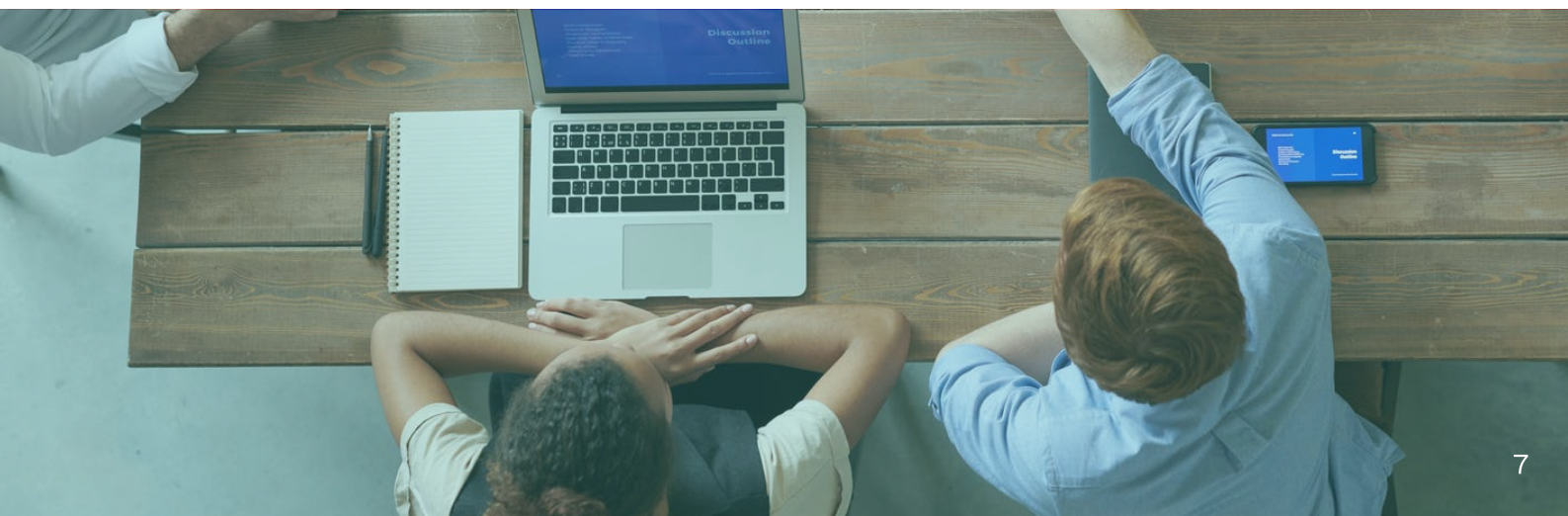
The State of Dark Data Report found that more than half of all enterprise data goes completely unused<sup>7</sup>. The researchers discovered that, while almost every organisation agreed that data was extremely important to their long-term survival, most companies failed to make use of the knowledge they collected. Employees were either struggling to find the information they needed or struggling to make sense of it because of a lack of data analytics skills.

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“We chose Learn Amp as historically we've had training and content scattered around and much of our valuable knowledge sharing has been lost. Now we can store and share it with all the great additional functionality you just don't get with intranets or shared drives.”

**Diane Young,**  
CEO, The Drum

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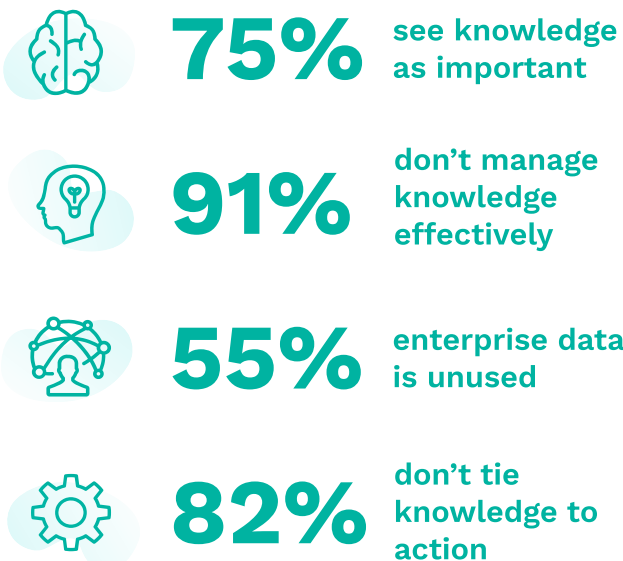
## 4. Would your organisation pass the “Bus Test”?

Coined by the founders of talent marketplace Crew, the Bus Test is a simple way of checking the calibre of your knowledge management program<sup>8</sup>. If any member of your team were hit by a bus tomorrow, would you be able to carry on working? Are there some employees who are carrying mission-critical knowledge in their heads?

To pass the Bus Test, argue the Crew team, “Knowledge should be duplicated between multiple team members. Knowledge doesn’t just mean facts and history, it also means processes, development, and access to accounts, to name a few.”

In other words, a comprehensive knowledge management program doesn’t only involve storing and distributing explicit knowledge. It also involves capturing and disseminating implicit knowledge – the kind of information that employees don’t usually think about as knowledge, but that the company can’t do without.

In the next section, we’ll look at how to build the kind of knowledge management process that will help you answer “Yes” to all four of these questions.



## 2.2 The solution to knowledge management struggles

The ideal solution for knowledge-intensive businesses is a comprehensive learning platform.

Well, we would say that, wouldn't we! But here's our reasoning.

By combining your knowledge storage and your learning management systems into a single, unified learning hub, you place your company knowledge at the fingertips of your employees at the point of need. You enable your company to stand out from the competition by actually putting your most valuable asset – your employees' knowledge and expertise – to active use.

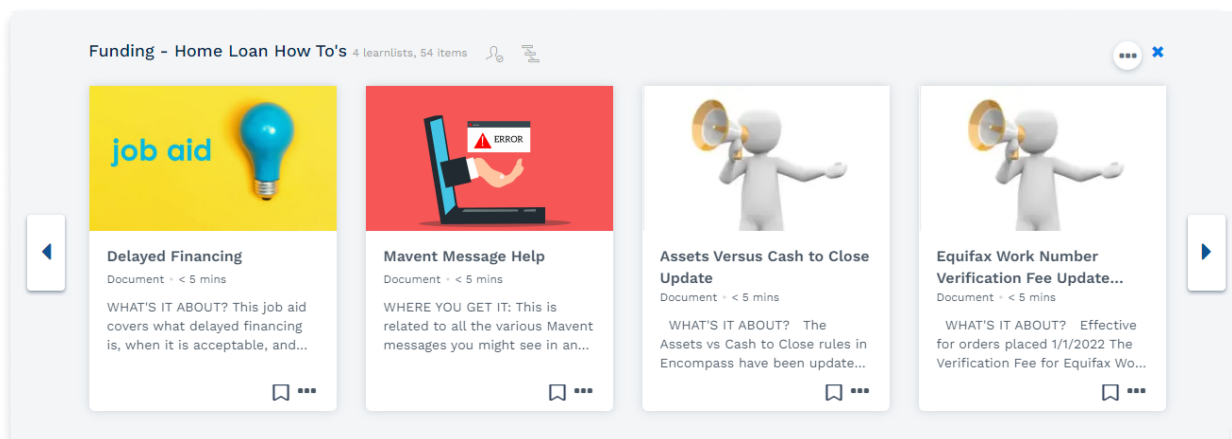
A leading-edge learning platform like Learn Amp can completely transform your employees' experience, as well as empowering every team member to reach their full potential. With a well-organised and centralised learning hub, you make it easier to find information, easier to organise information, easier to collaborate, and easier to innovate.

If you have multiple ways of storing knowledge, there's no need to change your entire operation – simply add links within your central knowledge hub to redirect employees to the appropriate knowledge source.

Empower your employees to take ownership of their knowledge.

A truly effective knowledge management solution places the reins in the hands of your employees. Employees can help themselves to the information they need by running a quick and intuitive search within your central knowledge hub. What's more, if you have a flexible learning platform set up, employees can self-record and upload video walkthroughs or screenshares, instead of keeping their knowledge in their heads. **Employee-created content is incredibly powerful because:**

- It addresses the issue of tacit knowledge that disappears along with an exiting employee.
- It saves the employee themselves hours of time – for instance, they no longer have to explain the same process to each of their colleagues individually.
- It captures more than the 'information': it captures the understanding, the application, the analysis and evaluation of the team or individual.
- It can also be very motivational and lends itself well to gamification.



An example from nbkc, showing links out to other useful and updated resources, like the current tax table



- For example, employees who wish to be seen as subject matter experts can create and upload content to share their expertise with others, gaining themselves recognition.
- To encourage employees to create learning resources to share and distribute their knowledge, you can run a leader board to showcase employees who invest more time in developing learning assets or offer prizes or rewards to top contributors.

If you're rolling out employee-created content for the first time, we recommend running a pilot with a team as your 'knowledge champions.' Provide your people with a framework to help them structure the knowledge they have. For example, you could use Bloom's Taxonomy to create a checklist or list of questions for employees to make sure they cover when creating content (see 3.4 A checklist for knowledge curators for an example of how to do this.)

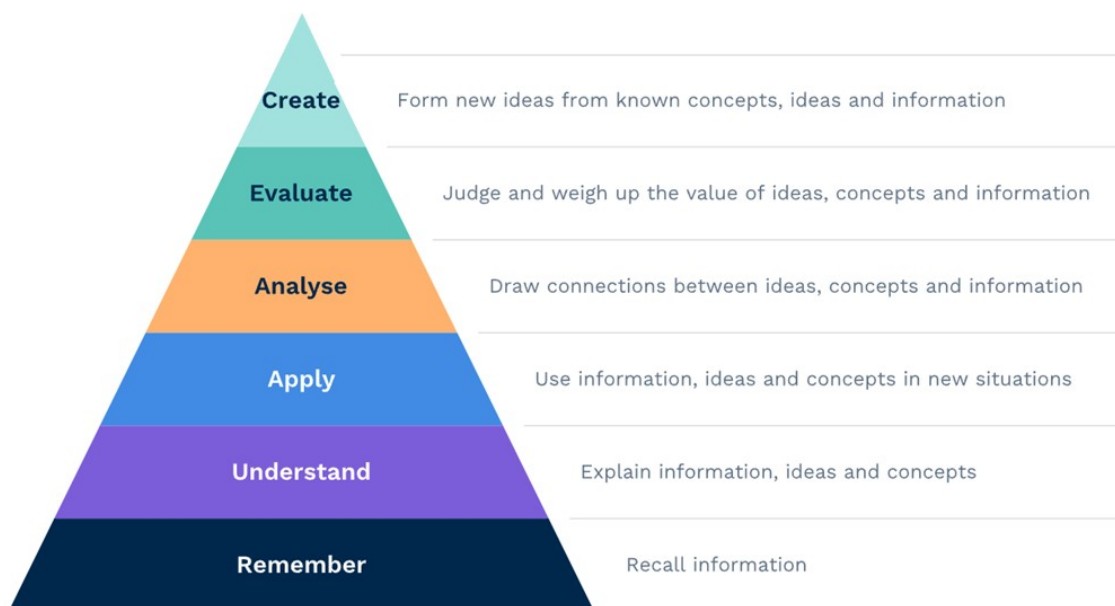
A culture in which knowledge management is an attitude, not a tool, is great for every business. However, it's particularly critical if you're transitioning to a hybrid or remote working environment. By creating a central knowledge hub, you give every employee a cohesive experience, no matter where they're working.

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“The world continues to evolve, and so do the skills we will need, to fulfil the challenges we face as a globally united company. Therefore, we deem it very important to ensure that our people are up-to-date, and remain so, in their personal and professional development. The new University we launched with Learn Amp is a great tool to help people learn and grow their expertise continuously.” ”

**Pjotr Hoekstra,**  
Group HRD Manager at Royal Boon Edam

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*Bloom's Taxonomy for learning*

## 2.3 Case study: nbkc

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### Knowledge management in the new normal

#### **Innovative nbkc bank needed a combined knowledge management and learning hub.**

The team had ambitious goals for an online knowledge hub to support their employees. The system would need to be both flexible – to suit their fast-growing distributed and newly hybrid workforce – and centralised – to ensure they maintained compliance in a highly regulated industry.

They defined the following project objectives:

- Create an easy-to-use, searchable, central source for all things Learning and Development;
- Develop a more interactive knowledge base for Operations staff and encourage employee engagement;
- Distribute knowledge, learning and information across the hybrid workforce, and encourage employees to proactively share knowledge with each other.

Learn Amp was selected as the ideal solution, because unlike other LMS and LXP offerings, our software combines learning, engagement, and performance tools in one unified platform. With Learn Amp, nbkc could offer their employees a learning and knowledge management hub that was simple, accessible and engaging.

#### **Decentralised learning, centralised knowledge**

By providing an easy-to-use, accessible and unified knowledge and learning hub, nbkc has encouraged employees to take responsibility for their own learning and for sharing their knowledge with colleagues.

#### **Proactive knowledge sharing**

Employee engagement and proactive knowledge distribution have increased with the new centralised knowledge hub. Everyone knows where to go to find the information they need when they need it.

#### **Major time and cost savings**

Gains in operational efficiency, thanks to a unified knowledge management strategy, have resulted in annual cost savings of over \$12,000, and freed up significant time for the L&D team and managers.

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**“We have achieved our goals swimmingly with Learn Amp! Our unique implementation was engaging, simple and fun for our employees to partake in.”**

**Megan Galloway,**  
Director of Training and Development,  
nbkc bank

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## 2.4 Knowledge management: A step-by-step guide

To upgrade your knowledge management strategy and future-proof your organisation, here is a straightforward guide you can put into practice right away.

### STEP 1 – Knowledge audit

You have to centralise before you can decentralise. In other words, before you can start to build a solid knowledge management system (or indeed any learning and development program) you need to understand what information you have, where it is, and who has access to it.

### STEP 2 – Secure buy in

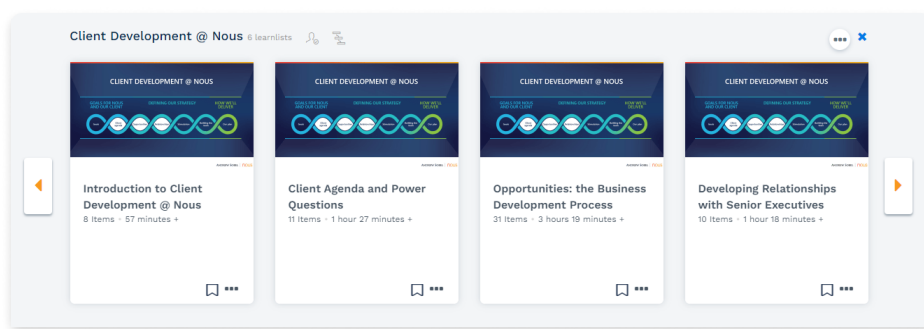
A knowledge management system will only work if it is used consistently. Before implementing any changes, you need to make sure that you have full buy-in from both leadership and employees in general. Find out what the current pain points are by using pulse polls and surveys. Run focus groups to find out what issues your existing set-up is causing your employees. Do they struggle to find the information they need? Do they have trouble keeping knowledge up to date? Are they concerned about compliance?

### STEP 3 – Design your structure

What information would work best in a centralised knowledge and learning hub – and what information needs to remain in a separate system? For instance, you may want to keep customer records in your CRM, your content marketing strategy in your Monday.com account, or your software tutorials in GitHub. With Learn Amp, that's not an issue – just add links to your other platforms where appropriate.

Next, identify how you want to group your information. Does it make sense to segment your knowledge by company, by branch, by geography, by team, or by role? Or do you prefer to group information into topics, learn lists, and items? In Learn Amp, it's easy to use permissions to make sure that the right information is in front of the right people.

Here's an example of how Nous, one of our top customers, has organised their knowledge around client development for their account executives.



◀ *The Client Development channel – including both factual information on their processes, and more intangible knowledge about “how they do things”, such as power questions and relationship management techniques*

▶ *A learn list to organise the knowledge into an easy, usable framework*

### Introduction to Client Development

☆☆☆☆☆ 57 minutes +

0% of content complete

#### Client Development Framework

- Welcome and introduction to Client Development
- Navigating the Client Development toolkit
- Familiarise yourself with: Client Development Toolkit

#### Learnlist overview

Welcome to the Client Development program! We are excited that you're here and look forward to working through the program with you in the coming weeks.

A few principles to keep in mind throughout the program:

- Client development is **the purposeful cultivation of relationships leading to influential projects**
- The best time to do client development is any time** you have an opportunity for direct contact with clients. This is easy when you are working on projects with them
- Client development is a team sport.** It requires each individual player to perform, but that does not make it an individual activity. Be quick to draw in other colleagues to bring the best of to our clients.



#### **STEP 4 – Define content management policies**

To create a useful and accessible knowledge management hub, you'll need to make sure that every piece of content is added correctly. For instance, every file uploaded must have a title that clearly explains what it is. In Learn Amp, you can also add tags to make resources extremely easy to find. Content governance is also critical here – for instance, make sure that every resource shows a review date. If necessary, control edit permissions for content that is subject to regulatory compliance. You can also make sure that topical resources have an auto-expire date, so that no employee can get hold of out-of-date information.

#### **STEP 5 – Assign roles**

Your HR or L&D team will need to take the lead on the development and roll-out of your new knowledge management platform. However, if you position L&D as the information “gatekeepers”, you risk creating a knowledge management bottleneck. Updating, curating and managing a rich and accurate knowledge hub requires a decentralised approach to knowledge management, coupled with top-down monitoring, control and strategy-setting.

We therefore recommend that all our clients appoint knowledge curators, who can upload information, make sure nothing is missing, and conduct quality control on resources before they are uploaded to the knowledge base. Depending on your company size, this may be a company level role, or handled at the team level. You can even appoint curators for each knowledge section. You will also need to decide who is allowed to create and upload knowledge assets. We recommend that your L&D team or knowledge admins are primarily responsible for the creation of content. However, we recommend that you allow all employees to create additional knowledge assets, which must be approved by a curator before upload. That way, you get the best of both worlds – a carefully designed learning resource, supported by employee-generated content that captures tacit knowledge.

Subject matter experts (SMEs) can be an invaluable addition to your knowledge management process. Transform your internal directory into a LinkedIn-style platform. Employee profiles can be enriched with their subject matter expertise, so that employees always know which colleague to reach out to for any given topic. With in-app messaging, your employees can connect with internal experts quickly and get immediate access to their knowledge and mentorship.

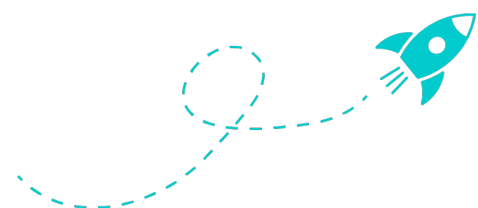
#### **Step 6 – Knowledge dissemination**

To make sure that knowledge is used, not simply gathered, you need to plan how you will surface the knowledge you have accumulated. In Learn Amp, one of our most popular features is the Recommendations tool. The platform will recommend content to employees, based on their current level of skill, their role, their time in the company, or other relevant criteria.

You should also consider how to capture knowledge that is exchanged or developed during meetings and other events. For instance, in Learn Amp you can integrate Zoom so that your recorded video conferences can be stored for future reference.

Social features such as a Q&A function, content rating tools, a discussion panel or a share function can encourage employees to engage more actively with company knowledge and collaborate to optimise your learning resources.

To transform passive knowledge into active learning, use channels and learn lists to group information into a curated learning journey.



## 2.5 A checklist for knowledge curators

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It's worth creating guidelines and checklists to help your curators fully capture knowledge when creating content. This will also help keep the format of the content consistent, even when the content itself covers varied and distinct topics. One way to create this checklist is to use Bloom's Taxonomy to create a series of questions for curators to ensure they answer.

**Here's an example below:**

### Remembering

- What are the facts, terms or information that need to be defined and remembered?

### Understanding

- How would you summarise this knowledge, and will the learner be able to give their own accurate summary on completing the content?
- Is it entry-level knowledge, or more advanced?
- If more advanced, what will the learner need to know first?

### Applying

- How will the learner apply this knowledge – in which situations?
- Have you given examples, visual guides, case studies and opportunities to practice?

### Analysing

- How does this knowledge relate, compare or contrast with other knowledge areas?
- How would you categorise this knowledge?

### Evaluating

- Are there any considerations, criticisms or caveats to bear in mind when applying this knowledge?
- Are there any other ways to look at this knowledge or to reframe it?
- Why is this knowledge valuable?



## Conclusion

# Isn't it time to make the most of your employees' knowledge?

### The right tools will transform your organisation into a knowledge powerhouse.

Knowledge management can be tricky, especially for today's knowledge-heavy, data-rich organisations. However, failing to capture, share and utilize your employees' knowledge means letting your company's most valuable resource walk out the door.



The good news is that knowledge management isn't rocket science. If you put user-friendly, well-designed tools in the hands of your employees, you'll make it easy for them to capture and share their unique insights into your company's information. Coupled with a culture that values knowledge sharing and a few simple policies, you can quickly become one of the 9% of organizations with an outstanding knowledge management system in place.

“Our people at Boon Edam are at the heart of our organisation. They can make us successful, in various teams as well as individually. We are really happy to see that people are amazingly quick to adapt to the Learn Amp platform, and share tips and knowledge with each other.”

**Pjotr Hoekstra,**  
Group HRD Manager at Royal Boon Edam



# About the Authors

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## About Learn Amp

**Learn Amp** is an integrated learning platform that makes life easy for L&D and learners. Our award-winning suite of people development tools energise L&D teams, engage learners and scale with growing businesses.

With Learn Amp, you can drive long-term engagement by embedding learning into your company culture. Our unique toolkit lets you tie learning to performance development and build a long-term alignment between your learners and your organisation.



### ALICE MENHENNET

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As a Senior Customer Success Manager, Alice draws on her background in higher education to advise our customers on how to get the best out of our platform. 5 years as a qualified teacher have given Alice an in-depth understanding of learning systems that support learner engagement and development.

Learn Amp is a platform made by L&D people for L&D people – and Alice excels at applying L&D best practice to real-world business challenges. She focuses on developing true partnerships with our customers, so that they can use our platform to build the world-class learning programs their organisations need.



### JOE HILL-WILSON

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Joe is Chief Commercial Officer at Learn Amp. He has spent the last 14 years helping global scale-ups in people and organisational development.

As a previous Head of L&D for a global services business, Joe is experienced in building a learning and development culture from the ground up. Working on 4 continents as a partner in a consultancy, he has developed a deep interest in how culture, ways of working and technology drive performance.

He has also been a judge for the UK Customer Experience Awards and regularly writes and speaks about the link between customer experience and employee experience.

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Our award-winning suite of people development tools energises L&D, engages learners and scales with growing businesses.

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# Making work life, work better

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