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Knowledge Management Leadership In Australia: The Understanding Of Knowledge Management Roles & Responsibilities

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Abstract: Leadership is considered a vital success factor for any KM initiative. Top management leadership enables the effective promotion of knowledge creation and sharing as essential components of knowledge management strategy implementation through creating an appropriate organisational culture. Such culture does not automatically exist in any organisation, but requires nurturing through appropriate governance and specific leadership initiatives. This study examined the roles and responsibilities of top managers with respect to KM strategy development and implementation. It is based on a survey data collected from leading Australian companies in 2005.

Key words: Knowledge management, survey, leadership, strategy, implementation

1. Introduction

Knowledge management (KM) is increasingly being identified as the significant element to support any organisation in achieving competitive advantage. Its uptake has increased significantly over the past decade within Australian organisations and managers understand KM as a business focused approach [1]. Now that this understanding has been acknowledged, it is important to ensure that this understanding remains and is being evolved to assist Australian companies in becoming more efficient and effective in what they do with their knowledge and implementing KM initiatives.

Emphasis on KM leadership as a key factor in the success of KM is evident within the literature [2]. Despite several studies undertaken in determining the ideal KM roles and responsibilities for effective knowledge management, it is still difficult to propose or recommend roles and responsibilities required for the KM team. The KM team is unique and designed and customised specifically for that particular organisation.

Although there is literature available to help guide organisations and management towards a successful design of the KM roles and responsibilities, there is little research undertaken in capturing the awareness and understanding of KM teams and their responsibilities within Australian organisations. An examination of the current awareness and understanding of KM roles and responsibilities in Australia is required. The findings will assist in the understanding of the factors and characteristics of the organisations that shape different KM teams.

This study was undertaken in Australia and assumes that there is a level of understanding and acknowledgement of KM as an organisational tool within Australian organisations as demonstrated by the earlier study conducted by Zyngier et. al. [1]. This recent research identified and measured the current level of understanding of knowledge management, its roles and responsibilities within Australian organisations.

There is a noticeable increase in the number of knowledge workers over the past five years in Australia. Despite there being an increased interest in KM in Australia, the understanding of a variety of questions relating to KM remains unanswered. In 2001, Considine et al concluded that "Australia is falling well behind most of the major developed nations in investing in knowledge. As a result, Australia is putting its future position in a knowledge-based world seriously at risk" [3]. However,

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recent literature demonstrates that there is a high level of interest and activity in Australia in KM and that the issue of leadership in KM in Australia requires further research [2]. This study aimed at filling this gap by addressing the following questions:

1. Who has authority for the KM strategy within Australian organizations?
2. What scope is covered by this authority?
3. Who is responsible for the development of the KM strategy within Australian organisations?
4. What tasks are involved in the KM strategy development?
5. Who is responsible for the implementation of the KM strategy within Australian organisations
6. What tasks are involved in the KM strategy implementation?

The aim of this research was to identify the responsibilities of individuals who play a dominant role in both the development and the implementation of KM within Australian organisations. The objective of this research is to investigate the different levels of understanding of KM roles and effectiveness of KM teams within Australian organisations. This study aims to establish evidence of the skills and competencies required for effective knowledge management. The results will provide management with guidelines for designing KM teams in their organisation.

2. The need for KM Leadership

Knowledge is the understanding that has been gained through experience and/ or study [4]. KM can be defined as the process of management of the knowledge of an organisation to create business value and generate a competitive advantage [5]. KM is a business focused approach that facilitates the sustainable transfer of knowledge and the flow of knowledge in its explicit, tacit and implicit forms [2]. Managing knowledge is a new fundamental for success in the new economy. Managing knowledge is a complex and difficult organisational issue. It is not just the practice of simple approaches or implementing new technologies. Technology creates an environment that enables organisational memory [4]. Of itself, implementing technology is not KM [6]. KM is about improving the business processes with both people and technology in mind.

Although the KM field is fairly new, its awareness and acceptance has increased rapidly. In 1999 a study demonstrated that CEO's rated KM second on their lists of 'must-dos' behind globalisation [7]. It is evident in the literature that knowledge is quickly and increasingly being understood and identified as the significant element to support any organisation. Management now understand and have moved away from previous views of KM as being a technological concept, in which information technology plays a large role in the initiative. Rather, they view KM initiatives as a business focused approach that includes a collection of processes that govern the creation, dissemination, and utilisation of knowledge to fulfil organisational objectives [1].

Leadership is considered a vital success factor for any KM initiative. Providing leadership in an organisation towards KM enables the effective promotion of knowledge sharing through creating an appropriate organisational culture. This culture is developed through effective management and leadership. An organisation that demonstrates explicit, strong commitment and support from the top level and a "follow-me" leadership style is able to create the values and policies to enable knowledge sharing [2].

A KM leader's duties include promoting KM and attracting and retaining good knowledge workers. They also have the responsibility of investigating the need for KM within the organisation, aligning it with the organisation's strategic goals and planning and executing the management of knowledge [2].

Literature provides contrasting opinions towards KM and in particular on KM leadership. "Knowledge work requires smart leadership" [4]. Although leadership is acknowledged throughout the literature as being instrumental in the effective deployment of a KM strategy, there is evidence of researchers arguing and questioning the need for KM leadership [2]. Earl & Scott [8] and Hershel & Nemati [9] have questioned the need for a Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO). Some argue that assigning KM to the CKO is a means of allowing others free of liability for this responsibility. Where KM should be at the forefront of organisational concern, appointing a CKO boxes knowledge away from the organisation. In the ideal world, everyone should be doing KM [6]. Burstein et al [2] suggest that CKOs are seen as a "key player in the strategic leadership of an organisation" (pg.1) based on their findings and affirmed by those of an annual summit of CKOs conducted in the United Kingdom in 2004 [10]. The role of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) has also been debated. Research shows that

the responsibilities of a CIO are evolving and moving away from the traditional boundaries of information systems and contributing more in information management [8, 11, 12].

Literature identifies that KM systems are built on expertise, knowledge, understanding, skills and insights [5]. KMis moving from being an information technology issue to being a people issue. That is to say that KM will continually depend on people to manage knowledge throughout an organisation's lifetime [5]. Despite knowledge management's dependence on specific roles and responsibilities, researchers and writers argue that "KM is a self-eliminating field" [5]. Companies that accept knowledge practices will eventually enable KM to become second nature to their employees as the company evolves. It is suggested by some that this will eventually lead to a situation where the CKO or knowledge manager will no longer be required to manage knowledge [5]

Much of the research relating to KM roles has been undertaken in the past 10 years. The issue of KM roles within organisations and self-eliminating KM roles is a common theme throughout the literature, with the discussion of the most effective KM team under much debate. Despite some arguments, literature has agreed that KM leadership is a critical success factor for KM programs [13]

The KM environment includes a range of skills. The environment exploits the experience of numerous people who have diverse backgrounds and who are related to different aspects of information management. Interest levels in KM and the number of initiatives undertaken by organisations are increasing. This is evident in wealthier countries such as the USA where KM is considered the fastest growing employment sector [4]. This increasing interest has also assisted the KM environment in attracting individuals such as journalists and writers who can assist in KM projects such as capturing 'best practices' within the organisation [7].

3. KM roles

Literature provides different views and definitions of the term 'knowledge workers'. However, many of the definitions are similar in that they all embody or mention characteristics of the knowledge workers such as experience, innovation, creativity, and the ability to transfer experience into knowledge in order to leverage services and products. Many people tend to assume that a knowledge worker is someone who works particularly with computers. A knowledge worker is the "product" of experiences, values, processes, and education [4]. They have the ability to be creative and innovative as well as be in sync with the culture of the organisation.

New roles and responsibilities are evolving within organisations. KM is unique in each organisation, thus the variety of KM roles reflects this. Each organisation has a unique approach to KM that reflects their culture and business. Most organisations are still defining their KM team roles. These roles include varying job titles, some explicitly labelled KM. Within some organisations, KM roles are re-alignments or extensions of existing roles to reflect a substantial KM focus. However, newer specific KM roles are being created. These roles can be full-time or part-time whilst for some staff it is considered an additional duty. Within some organisations, human resources and IT Director positions are considered full-time KM roles. Some also suggest that learning and development positions will become the new KM role as their responsibilities include training employees about KM systems and how to use these more effectively [7].

Expertise can be drawn from several different sources within the organisation. These include internal, centralised IT departments, team-based local experts, contractors, external vendors, partners, consultants, end users and staff. The KM can be strengthened by drawing participants from both inside and outside of the organisation. Local experts notice limitations of existing systems and therefore can assist and recommend upgrades. Both local experts and the internal IT department possess a high level of technical knowledge. Non-local experts are effective and helpful for the KM team in that they can cut across functional boundaries and relate to people from different perspectives. They can act as an interpreter between people of different backgrounds, expertise and skills. Consultants can bring an unbiased and a balanced outsider perspective into the design process. The KM team also consists of a knowledge champion or a senior manager, IT staff and users. These members are considered as the core KM team members. The other team members are considered temporary and are usually involved in the starting phases of the project. However, they are sometimes called back in the later phases for further input [5].

There are varying KM titles and definitions of responsibilities, activities and few fully developed job specifications. However, Abell & Oxbrow [7] in the KM and Information Management consultancy TFPL developed and tested a generic framework of roles and responsibilities which can

be recognised by many organisations. Not all organisations have adopted all the aspects of the model, but have adopted various parts [10]. Roles that are emerging as generic can be described into four groups. These are:

1. KM champions and strategists
2. KM planners and facilitators
3. KM practitioners, and
4. Enterprise-wide knowledge workers.

The KM champions are drawn from top senior management. These individuals usually possess a vision for the organisation and are interested in change management. The KM facilitators and planners are the individuals who develop policies, tools and the standards for knowledge sharing within the organisation. The KM practitioners support the business units and communities. All employees of the organisation are considered as the enterprise-wide knowledge workers. These employees are the ones who create, share and make use of the knowledge [7].

3.1 KM skills and competencies

The KM environment requires a variety of skills. This environment can therefore take advantage of a number of people, whom have diverse backgrounds and experience and who relate to different aspects of information management. Despite the importance of information management skills, the people assigned to these KM roles are not necessarily from the information profession. The organisation may also have specific information and records management roles and/or other roles that are specifically designed to identify, obtain and supply information, knowledge or intelligence [7].

TFPL [7] demonstrated organisation-wide KM competence through their development of a model (p.15). This model showed the depth and level of KM skill and experience required in knowledge management. The model demonstrates that the skills required by knowledge practitioners, knowledge intensive roles, and knowledge workers (all employees) are KM skills, information management skills and information literacy skills respectively. These skills and competencies have been reflected at conferences, within media and in research relating to skills required to effectively enable creativity and innovation as well as that required for when creating a KM environment [7].
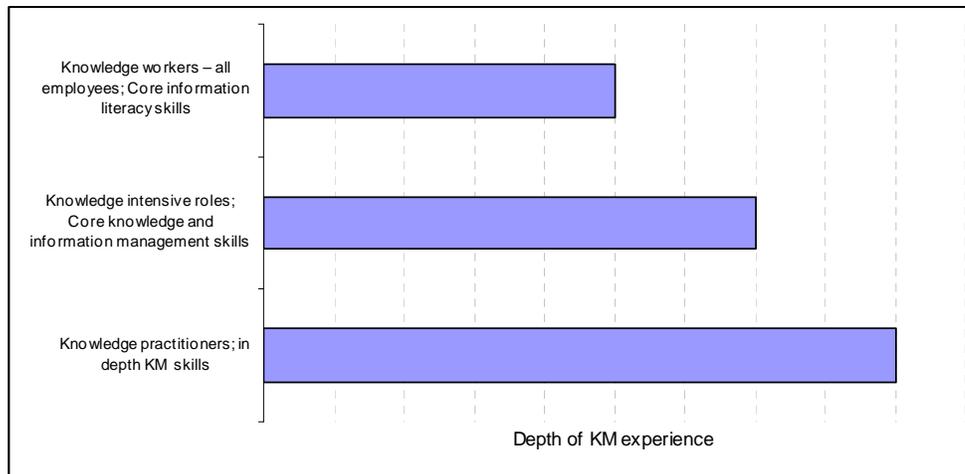

Figure 1 Organisation-wide KM competence (source: [7] p.15)

3.2 The role of the Chief Knowledge Officer

The CKO is a senior corporate executive whose responsibility is to leverage knowledge within the organisation usually by leading a KM program. He/she is responsible for developing the KM system and the organisational processes that are an integral part of regular, daily work. Theorists mention that a successful CKO is one who integrates KM tightly into the company's culture and processes that will eventually lead to the elimination of their own job. They are here to enable and not to control KM within the organisation [5]. A CKO focuses on helping everyone in the organisation take advantage of what the different and diverse work groups and people know and can do. This is done in order to improve and grow a better organisation and better serve its customers.

It is found that within some organisations, CKO's are self-made [5]. This is to say that these individuals created their own jobs, and at times have even designed their own job descriptions. The CKO tends to stay within the same organisation and go through many roles. However in other instances, it is the chief executive officer (CEO) who will create the position of a Chief Knowledge Officer. As CKO's are the first generation, organisations may have difficulty with those who have been hired internally as they may not possess any previous experience as a CKO [6]. Many successful CKO's come from within the organisation and very rarely from outside [5].

The role and responsibilities of the CKO can vary considerably. Organisations may believe that they do not have a CKO because there is no such position existing; however they may have someone who possesses similar tasks and responsibilities although it is not explicitly labelled as knowledge management. Common names include Director of Intellectual Capital, Director of Knowledge Management, Director of Organisational Learning, Director of Best Practices Management, Knowledge or Competence Evangelist, Director of Sales Enablement, Best Practices Manager, CEO or Strategic Knowledge Manager [5].

The role and definitions of the responsibilities for the CKO are still emerging both in practice and within the literature. Hence it is difficult to define specifically the role and responsibility of CKO's. However, it is crucial for an organisation to develop specific descriptions of the roles and responsibilities for its CKO. Although the backgrounds of the CKO are diverse, they do usually play common roles such as the evangelist, entrepreneur, persuader, communicator, IT savvy, change agent, investigator, listener and a politician who solves problems [4]. The CKO's responsibility is to inspire and attract followers, partners and sponsors. They have to translate often what may be considered by others as vague generalities into visions. They achieve this by defining what KM is and designing effective programs. CKO's influence rather than dictate [6]. The CKO is one who identifies real problems in knowledge sharing and find alternative solutions [4]. Employees are considered as volunteers; therefore the CKO must build relationships and gain the trust and commitment from the employees at all levels of the organisation (Tiwana, 2000). CKO's are effective communicators, and will use any means to spread the message. They are considered a link and therefore must retain good relations with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and collaborate with IT staff, human resources managers, departmental managers, etc. The CKO serves as the glue that binds stakeholders in a company (Tiwana, 2000). Therefore a CKO must be able to adapt to these different individuals and be able to speak their language and jargon [6]. The CKO must also manage people's expectations and the overall performance of the KM system [4].

The CKO has a breath of understanding of a CEO and the technological understanding of a CIO (Tiwana, 2000). Instrumental to the success of the CKO is his/her interpersonal skills. These include teaching, selling, communicating and understanding [4]. The CKO will have enough knowledge of technology and its place within knowledge management. The CKO will have an understanding of the capabilities of IT in that they are able to identify gaps in existing infrastructures, find new capabilities, solve IT issues and assist in making recommendations [6]. During the early phases of the KM development life cycle, a greater emphasis is on the use of the interpersonal skills. However, there will be more emphasis placed on the use of the CKO's technical skills during knowledge capture, knowledge storage, data mining and knowledge organisation [4].

Tiwana [5] identifies two types of responsibilities a Chief Knowledge Officer must undertake; namely organisational and technical. These are summarised in Table 1 below. The table suggest that the Chief Knowledge Officer's primary task is to enable KM through both these responsibilities rather than control KM

A more recent study [14] suggests that the role of the CKO can be generally described as the use of technical infrastructure to leverage explicit organizational knowledge, developing mechanisms to enable communication, transfer and exchange of tacit forms of knowledge embedded in know-how and learned skills. In relation to infrastructure activities, the CKO is seen as collaborating with the CIO and his team. Therefore to enable KM within the organisations, the CKO undertakes organisational responsibilities which aim to create an organisational culture that will permit knowledge sharing. The CKO also undertakes technical responsibilities which aim to create and manage an environment which will facilitate knowledge sharing within the organisation.

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Table 1 Summary of the responsibilities of a Chief Knowledge Officer (Tiwana, 2000, pg.400-402)

Organisational responsibilities	Technical responsibilities
Identify knowledge gaps	Build channels for distributing explicit knowledge and sharing tacit knowledge and document transfer
Create a culture for knowledge sharing	Build directories
Devise metrics for knowledge work and reward schemes for those who share	Extend the intranet
Develop communities of practice across the organisation	Provide collaborative technology tools and new policies to support group work
Diffuse best practices	Provide tools for collaborative problem solving
Conduct training	Support remote & distributed work, telecommuting
Structure processes and promotes better understanding of the types of knowledge created and their use	Build repositories to store lessons learnt
Remove technical and socio-cultural knowledge sharing barriers	Infuse external knowledge
Create process triggers to improve the level of reuse of existing knowledge	Enable tacit knowledge transfer by improving knowledge sharing tools - video-conferencing, whiteboards, mind maps, etc
Ensure KM is a part of routine work	Introduce cross-functional tools.
Maximise the return of investment in knowledge	
Promote and improve company innovations	
Minimise knowledge loss	

4. Research

A number of previous studies have examined KM leadership. The three studies most closely aligned with the current study are by TFPL [7], Zyngier, Burstein & Rodriguez [1], and Burstein, Zyngier, McCullough, Oliver, Symonds & Brown [2]. These studies examine the roles and responsibilities of knowledge management.

This study examined the roles and responsibilities of top managers with respect to KM strategy development and implementation. It is based on a survey data collected from leading Australian companies in 2005. Through identification of the roles and responsibilities of those who play a central role in KM in Australian organisations. The outcome of this research will provide guidance for the required skills and competencies in the operationalisation of KM strategies.

4.1 Methodology

The research collected data on the roles of those involved in KM initiatives and their associated responsibilities. In order to gain an insight of the current understandings of KM and leadership, a descriptive survey was selected as the preferred research technique for this study. The questionnaire was designed with responses based around scales and measurements, as this easily emphasised what the respondent considered more important. The questionnaire was divided into seven sections which clearly focus on a specific area related to knowledge management. These areas focus on:

- Acquiring information relating to demographics
- The organisation's involvement in KM
- Relevance of KM to the organisation
- Exploitation of knowledge
- KM strategies
- Managing knowledge
- Cultural aspects of knowledge management

The demographic information gathered from the respondents in section seven and the responses received in section four of the questionnaire (KM strategy – authority, development and implementation) provided the data required for analysis for this study. The responses to the six

questions included in section four enabled for the identification and examination of KM leadership in Australia.

The research population was the top 900 companies in Australia as listed by the *Who's Who in Business 2005*, ranked by profit. The questionnaire was distributed in a single-mail out in May, 2005. The questionnaire together with an explanatory statement was mailed out to three anonymous named positions in each organisation. These were the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Knowledge Officer or Chief Information Officer and the Director of Human Resources. This was found appropriate as KM is initiated at the senior management level. These individuals' responses represented either their organisation or themselves. This variation was taken into consideration during the analysis. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed electronically using a computer software package for Windows, SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Techniques were used to ensure that the qualitative data received is credible, reliable and can be confirmed. In examining the data, this research seeks to find indicative answers to the following questions – each comprising two parts:

1. Who has authority for the KM strategy within Australian organisations, and what is the scope of this authority?
2. Who is responsible for the development of the KM strategy within Australian organisations and what tasks are involved in that development
3. Who is responsible for the implementation of the KM strategy within Australian organisations, and what tasks are involved in the KM strategy implementation?

4.   Research Findings

Seventy-eight responses were received, accounting for a response rate of 8.7%. This is a low response rate, however, it still allows for a constrained level of meaningful analysis and provides a snapshot of the current situation in Australia in regard to KM roles and responsibilities. The 78 responses received are considered from 78 different respondents from 78 different organisations.

The purpose of this study is not for a direct comparison with the earlier study. Therefore no chi square tests are performed. The results provides an overview of the current practices in Australia by describing the respondent group characteristics, the respondent's understanding of KM leadership and the role of senior management in driving the KM strategy.

The results indicate that the majority of the respondents are senior executives between the age of 40 and 49 years, who have attained tertiary qualification, have been with their current employer for more than ten years and have held their current position for three or less years.

A majority of responding organisations are either publicly listed or private companies. Just over one third of the respondent organisations (34%) are publicly listed companies while 37% of the total respondents are listed as private companies. The results also indicated that a majority of the organisations operate within the south eastern region of the country. The highest responding organisations operated within Tasmania and Victoria (40%), and New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (37%).

Almost one-quarter (24%) of the respondent organisations represent the Manufacturing and Engineering sector. However, the most representation was received from the 'Other' category, representing 32% of the total respondents. The 'Other' category was made up of a large number of responses from 'Education', 'Government' and 'Mining' sectors.

Nearly half of the responding organisations are large organisations, with somewhat limited representation by smaller organisations. These large organisations are considered to have a large number of employees and operate multiple locations. 41% of responding organisations had more than 1,000 employees and operate more than 10 locations. Given the population this was expected by the researchers.

Question 1 - Who has authority for the KM strategy within Australian organisations?

The first research question aimed to identify who within Australian organisations (both private and public) has authority for the KM strategy. The results demonstrate that respondents believed that largely it is the Chief Executive Officer/ Managing Director or the executive group who has authority over the KM strategy. It was interesting to find, that one in five organisations do not have a formal role existing for authority over KM strategy.
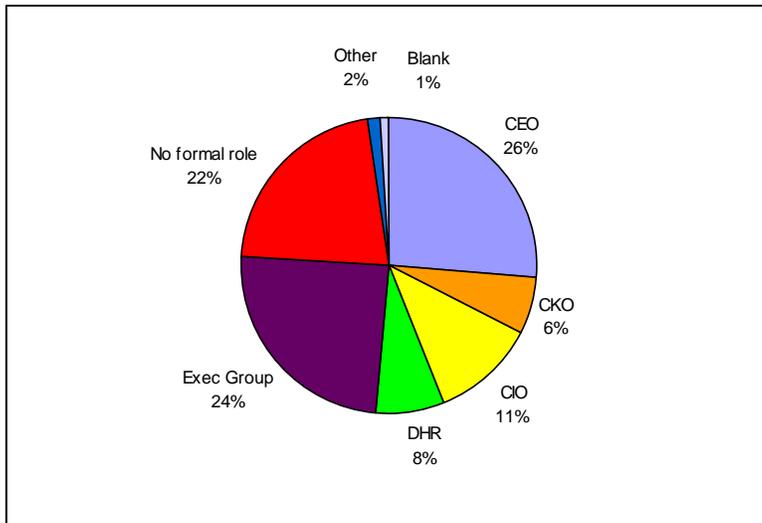
Figure 2 Responsibility for authority over KM

A question is raised as to how these organisations manage their intellectual capital and how a knowledge sharing culture is created. This is an area for future research. The position of the respondent, the length of time the respondent has been employed in the organisation, his/her current position and the organisational constitution has a positive affect on the responses received for this **question.**

Question 2 - What is the scope of KM authority?

The second research question aimed to identify the scope of responsibilities covered by the authority for the KM strategy. These are multiple attributes, there was some variation between respondents as to the regularity of reporting of the scope of responsibilities. Of the tasks suggested, the distribution showed that in 23% of organizations the authority was for all four attributes. In 16% of organizations the authority was for three of four attributes, in 17% of organizations the authority was for two of four attributes while in 38% of organizations the authority was for only one attribute.

As can be seen in Figure 3 below, the greatest number of respondents (65%) indicated that policy development is the most important distributed importance to all four aspects, therefore suggesting that all four aspects are important in KM and should be covered by this authority. Given the few responses for the category "other" it can be suggested that the results demonstrate that 'policy development' and 'review and revision of policy' (51%) are the main tasks in the authority for KM. 'Risk management'(42%) and 'financial management' (35%) are also key to the range of activity of KM authority. Response to this question was varied in that not all KM authority entities were delivered the full range of suggested responsibilities.
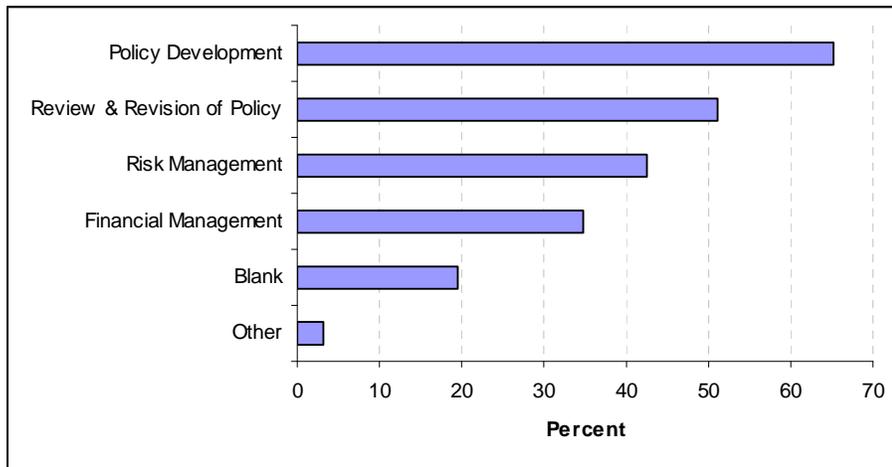
Figure 3 Scope of authority

The structure of the questionnaire allowed the respondent chose to complete the questionnaire as an individual, on behalf of their organisation or both. This elicited additional information as it gave respondents the opportunity to indicate alternative areas that they believed were also important to authority over KM. These were suggested which were believed to be important to KM strategy included 'initiatives management', 'technologies', 'management system', 'document management', 'knowledge development', 'implementation' and 'endorsement of initiatives'. This analysis is beyond the scope of this current paper and suggests an area for future research.

Question 3 - Who is responsible for the development of the KM strategy within Australian organisations?

The third research question aimed to identify who has responsibility for KM strategy development within Australian private and public organisations. The results demonstrate that approximately one-third of the organisations indicated that there is no formal role existing for the responsibility of KM strategy development.
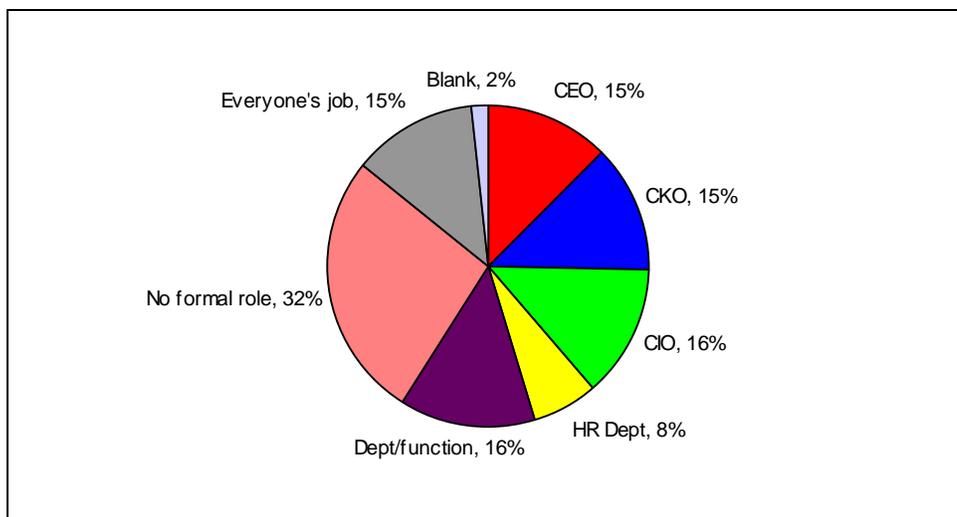
Figure 4 Responsibility for KM strategy development

However when we use simple descriptive statistics, to compare this data to that disclosed in a similar 2001 survey in Australia [1] we find that another pattern emerges. In Figure 5 below we see a

substantial increase in the organizations allocating responsibility for KM to a department or a function within a department.
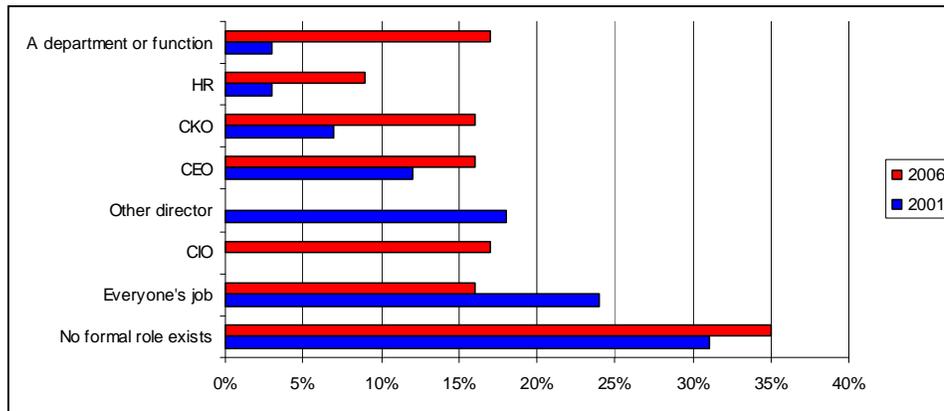

Figure 5 Comparison between 2001 and 2006 in the responsibility for KM strategy development.

This figure has moved from only 3% organizations reporting this function in 2001 to 17% of organizations reporting this function in 2006. Again, there is an increase in percentage of organizations with a CKO – and increase from 7% to 16% in the same period. These are firm indicators that those organizations who take KM seriously are moving to embed that activity into their organizational practice and structure.

Fewer organizations now have a formal role for KM strategy development. Between 2001 and 2006 there has been a 5% decrease [1]. By contrast, there was also an 11% decrease in the current study in the number of respondents indicating that it is everyone's job. Furthermore, the results indicate that substantially it is the Chief Information Officer's who has responsibility for the development of a KM strategy, a role which was not identified in the 2000 study. Interestingly, there was a 10% increase in the current study in the number of respondents indicating that a department/function is responsible for KM strategy development. Future research could focus on examining how organisations co-ordinate the development of the KM strategy across the organisation.

Question 4 - What tasks are involved in the KM strategy development?

The fourth research question aimed to identify the tasks involved in KM strategy development. As can be seen in Figure 6 below, the results indicate that 'developing ways to leverage explicit knowledge' is a key task in KM strategy development. 'Define a route map for knowledge use', 'follow-up and ensure it is being used', 'map/audit knowledge resources', 'develop ways to leverage tacit knowledge' and 'develop metrics for evaluating the strategy' followed closely as being equally important in KM strategy development.
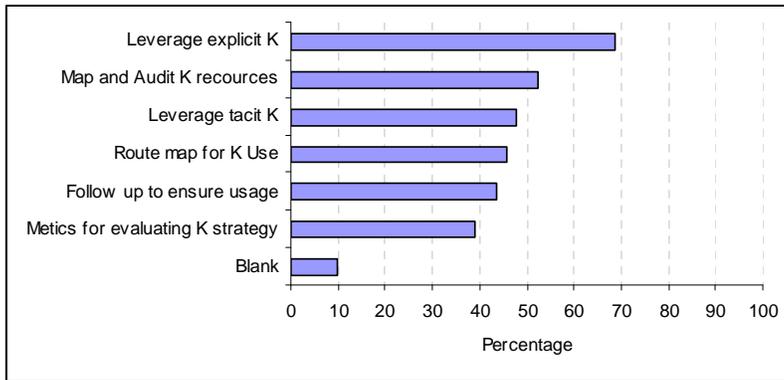
Figure 6 Tasks in KM strategy development

      Leveraging explicit organizational knowledge is seen by 68% of respondents as the highest priority task in KM strategy development Respondents indicate little variation in priority to the importance of the other five suggested tasks. There was opportunity for respondents to suggest other tasks which they believed were also important to KM strategy. Other tasks suggested by respondents included 'focus groups', 'aligning the KM strategy with the company strategy' and 'stage implementation plans'. Few other tasks were suggested by respondents in free category "other – please specify. This suggests that all six tasks are important in KM strategy development.

      An area for future research could be to follow up those organizations that suggested other tasks and determine how important they are to Australian management and KM strategy development.

Question 5 - Who is responsible for the implementation of the KM strategy within Australian organisations?

The fifth research question aimed to identify who within Australian organisations (both private and public) has responsibility for KM strategy implementation. The results indicate that it is everyone's responsibility for KM strategy implementation. It was interesting to note that approximately one in five organisations consider a specific department or function responsible for the implementation of a KM strategy. A question raised here is how organisations motivate and involve organisational staff in KM strategy implementation. Another question raised is what department or function would be responsible. These are areas for future research. The respondent's position, organisational size and the industry sector in which the organisation operate have a positive affect on the answers to this question.

Question 6 - What tasks are involved in the KM strategy implementation?

The sixth and final research question aimed to identify the tasks involved in KM strategy implementation. The results indicated that all respondents identified with all five tasks; 'collect/gather knowledge', 'organise knowledge, 'use the knowledge', 'implement learning' and 'disseminate knowledge'. This suggests that organisations evenly distribute importance amongst these tasks for KM strategy implementation. Respondents also had the opportunity to mention other tasks which their organisation undertook or believed were important in KM strategy implementation. Other tasks suggested included 'creating policies' and 'implementing technology'. This is an area for future research. The basis of response and length of time in current position have a positive affect on the responses received.

5. Conclusion and future research

This study has analysed and presents an overview of the current understandings and awareness of KM leadership in Australia. It provided a clear evidence of a lack of focus on formal responsibilities for the development of KM strategy. At the same time it illustrated that more attention is paid to the implementation of the strategy once it has been developed. There is a potential for disconnect between the process of KM strategy development and its implementation, when KM implementation is "outsourced" to a middle-management level. The KM strategy implementation requires certain

authority to influence dynamic adjustment of organisational processes based on continuous review of the implementation outcomes. This disconnect and discontinuity can create a potential risk and lead to unpredictable results of the KM initiative implementation due to the lack of clear measures of success and accountability assigned to a particular role at the stage of strategy development.

Our previous research strongly demonstrated the importance of the leadership role and alignment of knowledge management strategy to the organic modes of organisational knowledge transfer [15]. The results of this study provide further evidence of the roles and responsibilities used in Australian organisations for effective KM and would be useful in developing guidelines for designing KM roles, responsibilities and specifications. These preliminary results could be a source for future research on the trends on KM leadership in Australia and more widely. Some cross-cultural studies in this area are been planned.

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