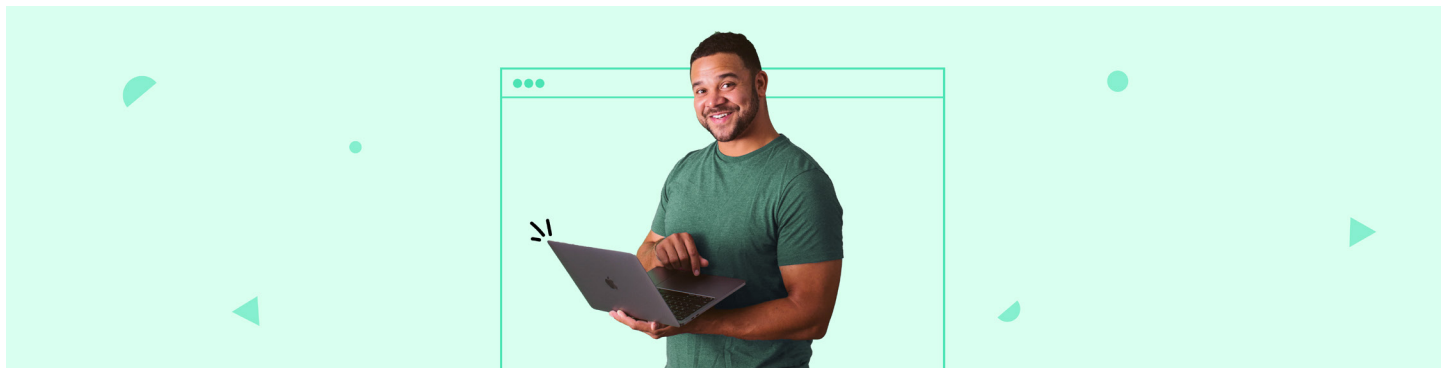


How IT & Ops Can Positively Impact the Bottom Line With Better Knowledge Management



Introduction

One of the functions at any company that can almost single-handedly facilitate better communications is the IT/Ops department. At its heart, IT is truly an information management and enablement role. You're there to ensure that the overall tech stack is sound, that spending on new tech is prudent, that organizational learning stays apace with business changes, and that organizational knowledge is secure. That's a heavy lift! And one that often competes with the day-to-day interruptions of administrative chores, like password resets, software troubleshooting, and asset checks for new hires and terminations.

In order for companies to function efficiently, their employees need to be able to communicate with each other. But what happens when there's too much information and not enough clarity? Employees can struggle to find the right information at the right time, leading to confusion and even chaos. Knowledge management can help by making information easier to find and share. With better knowledge management in place, employees will have an easier time getting their work done, which will in turn improve internal communications.

When IT owns knowledge management initiatives and leads on organizational knowledge creation, they can enable better overall communications, better decision-making—and better business outcomes.

What happens when companies share outdated or unverified information

When teams share outdated information, company-wide communications can quickly become a mess. Miscommunications happen more often, people are cc'd on emails they don't need to be, important details get lost in the shuffle — or just plain wrong information gets shared at critical times.

These are just a few of the inefficiencies that can impact your bottom line:

- 1 Inefficiencies in workflows.** Searching for accurate information can take up valuable time that could be spent on more productive tasks.
- 2 Reduced quality of customer service.** Inaccurate information can lead to frustrated customers who are not able to get the help they need. Outdated information can give the impression that a company is not keeping up with the latest trends or technologies.
- 3 Wasted time and resources.** Incorrect information can lead to the waste of time, money, or material.
- 4 Missed opportunities.** Decisions based on outdated information can often be inaccurate, which can lead to costly mistakes.
- 5 Damaged reputations.** Outdated information can give the impression that a company is not keeping up with the latest trends or technologies.

How outdated information adds to headaches and information overload

You've definitely experienced decision fatigue. You have access to so much raw data that it's hard to tell what's actually important, eventually making it impossible to make any decisions at all. This can have disastrous consequences for your business, and it stems from information overload.

One of the biggest contributors to information overload is outdated information—and it can be a major source of headaches for employees. Outdated documents, knowledge, and processes add to the already overwhelming amount of information that employees have to process daily. When outdated information is mixed in with accurate information, it creates confusion and causes employees to miss important details, or just stop trying to find the right answer altogether.

Removing or archiving outdated documents and articles and making it easy to find the best, most up-to-date answer reinforces trust in your knowledge base as a place to look for information, creating a virtuous cycle of adoption. This leads to better, more informed conversations with fewer repeat questions and wrong answers, generally reducing information overload and decision fatigue, and lowering your overall business risk.



Business objectives for knowledge management

Robust knowledge management systems can reduce information search time by as much as 35 percent and raise organization-wide productivity by 20 to 25 percent¹ while poor knowledge sharing can cost a large company \$47 million a year².

As your enterprise grows, so too will the need to access a reliable knowledge database in order to effectively run your business, serve your clients, and increase revenue. Without a knowledge management system in place, your employees will be forced to learn and relearn processes and information. That's an inefficient and costly practice. Plus, you may also run the risk of losing those processes or information if a knowledge leader or legacy employee leaves your company.

There are many benefits to effective knowledge sharing, both for individual employees and for your entire organization.

With better knowledge sharing, you can:



Engage employees. Especially in larger organizations, employees may find it challenging to make their voices heard or play an important role in company decisions and initiatives. An effective knowledge-sharing culture works in two ways. It encourages employees to share their expertise and connect with other team members who can learn from or build upon that expertise. It also communicates how that knowledge contribution plays a role in big decisions or advancements.

Good knowledge management removes the risk of information silos and encourages a culture of transparency and communication. An information silo is when information is only known to one person or team, potentially preventing other departments from knowing the information they need to collaborate effectively. Managing knowledge effectively ensures everyone has access to the knowledge they need to work in alignment with company goals and stay productive.

¹ McKinsey. 2012. "The social economy: Unlocking value and productivity through social technologies." McKinsey. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-social-economy>. ² Panopto. 2018. "Valuing Workplace Knowledge." Panopto. <https://www.panopto.com/resource/valuing-workplace-knowledge/>.



Reduce rework and redundancy. Whether it's a proven solution to a common customer problem, an especially effective training program, or a faster way to complete complex financial calculations, making knowledge easily searchable or sharable promotes productivity by reducing the need for rework.

Think about all the hours wasted searching through multiple systems trying to find the information you need. Was it in chat, a document, or email? When you do find that information, how do you know it's correct when company knowledge is scattered across all these systems? And when do people who are constantly interrupted actually get key work done?

A knowledge management system aims to create a single, reliable source of truth where everyone can go to find the information they need without conducting multiple searches in several sources or constantly interrupting essential personnel with repeated questions. A great knowledge management tool makes a night and day difference in operational efficiency, saving service and IT teams time and driving more revenue for the organization.



Reduce outdated or duplicate information. After you've spent time searching for information and finally found it, how can you tell that it's the most reliable and recent information? When company information lives across multiple systems, you run the risk of making decisions or referencing information that isn't accurate. A single source of truth like Guru creates a space for reliable information to live so you can adapt faster and keep resilient without the risk of using outdated information.



Make informed decisions. Decisions should never be made in information silos. A company that has knowledge transparency across the entire organization ensures that everyone is working with the same information and toward the same goals. It unites all employees, making sure they have all the information they need to make the best decisions possible.

With the right knowledge at their fingertips, whether searched or sent, employees can make faster decisions based on relevant, verified, updated (and often tried-and-true) knowledge. Based on their unique experiences, they can also add to that knowledge, further enhancing their problem-solving and decision-making capacity.



Avoid knowledge loss. Institutional knowledge has value. When someone leaves your business, their valuable expertise and experience can be lost to your enterprise. A strong knowledge-sharing culture enables you to preserve that experience and expertise for your team's future access.



Spark innovation. By regularly engaging employees and reducing redundancies, you encourage employees (and free up their time) to contribute to company knowledge. This allows them to share areas of expertise they might not have otherwise uncovered and collaborate more innovatively and creatively with their colleagues.



Identify growth opportunities. With a strong knowledge-sharing culture, you can identify frequent or especially impactful contributors who may offer unique expertise or have the capacity to inspire and teach their colleagues. Opportunities for recognition and promotion of these employees as subject matter experts or managers may follow.

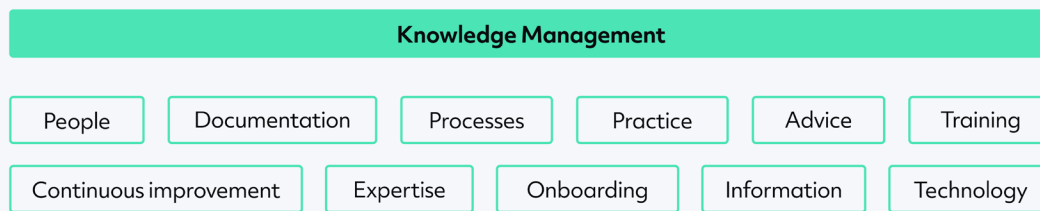


Improve client relationships. A well-informed employee, confident in their ability to find the right answers and deliver them to their customers, will provide better customer experiences. An employee who feels engaged and valued will also work harder to improve and expand customer relationships.

When an organization is able to easily access, share, and update business knowledge, it can become more productive and cost-efficient. The ability to access the right knowledge at the right time, via a robust knowledge management system, informs accurate decision-making and stimulates collaboration and innovation.

Done well, knowledge management streamlines company knowledge, making it accessible and actionable for everyone in the organization. With a good knowledge management system, your entire company can say goodbye to lost or siloed information. A company that fosters a knowledge-sharing culture creates an adaptable, aligned, engaged, resilient, and high-functioning team.

Common use cases for knowledge management



While there's a knowledge solution for every problem, there are a few extremely common use cases across companies.

Internal communications and updates

Good knowledge management can enhance collaboration by reducing chat noise. By using KM to create a dedicated place to ask and answer questions and provide updates, you're making conversations that do happen more efficient and less overwhelming.

Employee onboarding

New employees need a lot of information very quickly to become effective members of the organization. A knowledge management system can provide instant answers, ensuring everyone is on the same page from day one, limiting frustration, and reducing training time.

Streamlined customer service

Since one of the main customer service metrics is ticket completion time, making sure reps have access to the information they need exactly when and where they need it makes good knowledge management a must. Stop putting customers on hold or leaving tickets open for days (or weeks) while reps track down the person with the right answer by having that person provide it for everyone, once.

Product enablement

Keeping everyone up to date on the latest and greatest changes and updates to your product requires a streamlined solution accessible to everyone. Your knowledge management system should be available company-wide to ensure everyone knows what's available and when.








Knowledge management recommended features

When choosing a knowledge management system, you want software that captures the information you need from a wide variety of sources and ensures fast, accurate, relevant search results for your users. Your ideal knowledge management system should also allow you to easily migrate existing knowledge and content, and add and update content as needed.

Even when your team members are working remotely, spread throughout the country or the globe, your knowledge management system should be able to deliver the knowledge each employee needs — wherever they are working, without the need for a time-consuming and complicated search process. The most effective knowledge management systems can also be customized based on your users' needs and include features that encourage interaction and collaboration.







Here is a helpful key features checklist that may make choosing the right system for your company a little easier:

-  **Visibility of key information.** Your knowledge base should include the ability for all employees to easily see, acknowledge, and respond to critical updates and information that require action, and for administrators to track those actions.
-  **Ease of use.** Minimize disruption by choosing a knowledge management system that shows users its value from the start. Your ideal system should allow team members to easily import and format content or data, or write information from scratch.
-  **Content verification/insights.** Expert verification, the ability to automatically schedule a review of or flag out-of-date or inaccurate content, duplicate content alerts, suggested tags, and deep insights to track and improve knowledge consumption are all powerful knowledge management features.
-  **Accessibility.** Employees should have easy access to the knowledge they need to do their jobs, no matter where—or on what device or browser—they are working.
-  **Collaborative features.** Connecting teams and people to one another so they can share their expertise is essential to effective collaboration, as is delivering knowledge to those people at the right moment in the right place. By making knowledge management a collaborative process, you can utilize your subject matter experts to get everyone in your org on the same page.
-  **Intelligent integration.** Look for a system that can capture your team's knowledge and expertise, as well as the knowledge they seek, from every important interaction and web search. Additionally, the ability to integrate with the tools your teams already use and to sync content means your internal- and external-facing content will be easily stored, verified, and accessed in one place.
-  **Organization.** Folders, permissions, tags, and other organizational features can help you determine who sees what and sort content for simpler, more intuitive searches.
Customization. Look for a system that allows you to push specific suggestions that will appear based on what page an employee is looking at.

How Guru powers better knowledge management

Guru's powerful knowledge solution is designed to help your teams communicate better, find what they need, trust what they find, and mitigate the business risk of using incorrect or outdated information. Guru gives your team a single source of truth, verified and updated by your company experts.

-  Our innovative verification engine automatically reminds experts to periodically reverify or update information at pre-set intervals. Not only does this free your experts from repeat questions, but it makes it easy to trust that information is up-to-date and accurate.
-  Use the announcements feature to ensure that critical information is quickly visible and actually read. Get insights into who has and hasn't acknowledged that info with announcement analytics.
-  Guru's browser extension and integrations into Slack, Teams, Salesforce, and other standard work tools and apps mean that employees never have to leave their workflow to get answers exactly when they need them. Instead of the extra digital fatigue that comes with constantly having to switch contexts, you'll see deeper employee focus, engagement, and efficiency.
-  Allow our AI to proactively suggest content based on what's on your screen — or proactively set specific information to be pushed out when a particular page is loaded.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Find out how Guru can solve your internal communications challenges; set up a team for free or request a demo at getguru.com.