

Transforming Knowledge into Business Value: The Bilingual Glossary of Knowledge Management Terms and Definitions

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The paper presents the reasons for compiling a corpus of concepts related to information generation and sharing in the 21st century organization, which resulted in the bilingual glossary of Knowledge Management. The latter contains terms defined throughout the sources consulted, as well as the most common terms a reader will encounter in the Knowledge Management literature. The glossary offers its users an easy to access body of definitions and explanations of key terms and phrases related to Knowledge Management concepts and practices, along with their translation into Romanian. By focusing attention on the importance of transforming knowledge into business value, the research made prior to the identification of the glossary entries was based on an approach designed to facilitate a better understanding of the links between Knowledge Management practices and organizational goals.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, KM, knowledge-based warfare, knowledge-based organization, knowledge culture

Motto:

“Information provides a new point of view for interpreting events or objects, which makes visible previously invisible meanings or sheds light on unexpected connections. Thus, information is a necessary medium or material for eliciting and constructing knowledge.”¹

Throughout the last decades, a wide variety of organizational practices have been proposed to support the acquisition, storage, retrieval, application, generation, and review of the knowledge assets of an organization in a controlled way; despite this, it is often unclear how these practices relate to one another in their contribution to organizational performance.

In the information age, rather than physical assets or resources, knowledge is the key to competitiveness. What is new about attitudes to knowledge today is the recognition of the need to master, manage and use it like any other asset. This raises issues not only of appropriate processes and systems, but also of how to account for knowledge in the balance

sheet. [1]

The knowledge that a modern manager needs to use is that which is critical to his or her company — that which adds value to the specific products or services.

For clarification, let us consider the following examples: [2]

- Knowledge of a particular job, such as how to fix a fault in a piece of critical manufacturing equipment;
- Knowledge of ‘who knows what in a company’, that is who solved a similar problem last time;
- Knowledge of who is best to perform a particular job or task, or who has the latest training or best qualifications in a particular subject;
- Knowledge of corporate history — whether this process has been tried before, and, if so, what was the outcome;
- Knowledge of a particular customer account and knowledge of similar customers;
- Knowledge of how to put together a team that can work on a project, otherwise said who has worked successfully together in the past, what skills were needed on similar projects.

The management literature of these last few years suggests a variety of practices meant to support the creation, storage and transfer of information and knowledge. Knowledge

¹ Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation*, Oxford University Press.

Management (KM) is a relatively new subject matter, being integrated in the curricula of some North-American universities and debated in a few dedicated journals starting with 1995.

As a new scientific area, there are at present quite many schools of thought referring to Knowledge Management, which therefore accounts for the difficulty or even impossibility to set the conceptual framework of this domain, starting from a unanimously accepted definition for it. As a consequence, the approach to the matter differs with each school or even author.

KM can be regarded from the following perspectives [3]:

- **The technocentric perspective**, stressing technologies, especially those contributing to knowledge enlargement and sharing;
- **The organizational perspective**, seeking to answer questions such as: How should the enterprise be designed to facilitate the knowledge processes inside it? or, Which organizations work best and based on what processes?
- **The ecological perspective**, regarding the human interactions, the identity, knowledge and environment factors as a complex adjustment system.

In addition to the above, as the subject matter becomes more consistent and gains ground, more and more academic debates are taking place in the epistemological area, emerging both at the theoretical and practical level of Knowledge Management. Outstanding standardization institutions in the United Kingdom and Australia produced reference documents in a common attempt to outline the conceptual framework and scope of the subject, but so far all of them have been only slightly accepted or insufficiently grasped and adopted.

KM experts and all the people interested in this domain need an explanatory tool which

gathers and defines the different 'Knowledge Management' components, practices and techniques, along with their appropriate translation into the target language. For instance, terms in English such as *intellectual capital*, *knowledge worker*, *tacit vs. explicit knowledge*, etc. are a core element of the professional vocabulary any person interested in this topic should be familiar with and use naturally.

The present bilingual glossary has emerged from the need expressed during the Knowledge Management Conference held in November 2007, in order to make the first reference document of this kind in Romania even more accessible and user friendly to the Romanian public. It provides students and scholars an easy to access corpus of definitions and explanations of key terms and phrases related to Knowledge Management concepts and practices, along with their translation into Romanian. By focusing attention on the importance of the problem-solving strategy designed to transform knowledge into business value, the research work done prior to producing the bilingual glossary and dedicated to the identification and selection of the core KM terms and concepts was based on the best understanding of the connections existing between KM practices and the objectives of the organization. The glossary thus comprises terms with high frequency occurrence in the domain, defined in the specialized literature listed in the Bibliography section, as well as the most widely used concepts which those interested in KM related issues may come across while consulting the dedicated bibliographical sources.

Here is an excerpt given as an example of a glossary entry, in which two definitions of Knowledge Management are considered. Needless to mention that each definition was provided by a different management school.

<p>Knowledge management (KM) (1) A variety of general and specific technologies for knowledge collection (e.g. data mining, text summarizing, the use of intelligent agents, and a variety of information retrieval methodologies), knowledge storage and retrieval (e.g., knowledge bases and infor-</p>	<p>Managementul cunoașterii (KM) (1) O paletă largă de tehnologii generale și specifice de culegere a cunoștințelor (de ex. extragerea datelor, rezumarea textelor, folosirea agenților inteligenți și o varietate de metode de regăsire a informațiilor), de stocare și regăsire a cunoștințelor (de ex. baze de</p>
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<p>mation repositories), and knowledge dissemination and application (e.g., intranets and internets, groupware, decision support tools, and collaborative systems).</p> <p>KM is fundamentally about a systematic approach to managing intellectual assets and other information in a way that provides the organization with a competitive advantage.</p> <p>(2) A deliberate, systematic business optimization strategy that identifies selects, distills stores, organizes, packages, and communicates information essential to the business of a company or organization in a manner that improves employee performance and corporate competitiveness.</p> <p>KM involves the acquisition, storage, retrieval, application, generation, and review of the knowledge assets of an organization in a controlled way.</p>	<p>cunoștințe și depozitare de informații) și de diseminare și aplicare a cunoștințelor (de ex. Intranet și Internet, groupware, instrumente de fundamentare a deciziei și sisteme de conlucrare).</p> <p>Managementul cunoașterii se referă primordial la o abordare sistematică de gestionare a valorilor intelectuale și a altor informații într-o modalitate care să creeze organizației avantaj competitiv.</p> <p>(2) Strategie deliberată și sistematică de optimizare a afacerilor, ce identifică, selectează, distilează, stochează, organizează, stratifică și transmite informațiile esențiale afacerilor unei companii sau organizații într-o modalitate care îmbunătățește performanțele angajaților și competitivitatea de corporație.</p> <p>Managementul cunoașterii cuprinde acumularea, stocarea, regăsirea, aplicarea, crearea și revizuirea în mod controlat a valorilor cunoașterii într-o organizație.</p>
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Special attention was given in the bilingual glossary to the topic-related syntagm known as **Knowledge-Based Warfare (KBW)**; due to its novelty and relevance, as well as to the understanding controversies caused by its perception - the more so ambiguous because

of the way in which KBW was translated into Romanian - (i.e. „război bazat pe cunoaștere”), it was imperative to clarify and disambiguate it by quoting and translating the definitions provided in the specialized North-American bibliography, as follows:

<p>Knowledge-based warfare (KBW)</p> <p>(1) Strategic vision and common warfighting philosophy and doctrine shared by industry and government, and particularly among the services.</p> <p>KBW's primary goal is to guide the process and organizational changes needed to create more capable and efficient forces. It is also required as a unifying concept to guide service investment in research, development, and acquisition.</p> <p>KBW would provide a coherent basis for building a plan that rationalizes defense spending, reducing stovepipe development and duplicative acquisition among the services.</p> <p>KBW would ultimately enable forces to leverage battlespace knowledge to achieve effects through precision employment of combat power.</p> <p>(2) Process that provides superior situation awareness of the battlespace, allowing us to decide at a faster pace than an enemy.</p> <p>What differentiates KBW from other warfare is the synergism of combining advanced sensors, information technology, and analytic tools to process the information. This allows commanders to view shared information in the context of their battlespace, apply experience and judgment, and transform the information into battlespace knowledge.</p> <p>A capacity to collect data, process it into useful information, and place it in a battlespace context allows forces to achieve information superiority.</p> <p>(3) The ability of one side to obtain essential and key elements of truth while denying these same elements of truth to the other side. It is based on Sir Winston</p>	<p>Război bazat pe cunoaștere (KBW)</p> <p>(1) Viziune strategică, filosofie și doctrină comună de ducere a războiului, împărtășită de industrie și guvern și, în mod special, de către categoriile de forțe ale armatei.</p> <p>Principalul scop al KBW este de a orienta procesul și schimbările organizaționale necesare creării de forțe mai capabile și mai eficiente. El este totodată necesar ca un concept unificator de orientare a investițiilor categoriilor de forțe în cercetare, dezvoltare și înzestrare.</p> <p>KBW poate oferi un fundament coerent de întocmire a unui plan de raționalizare a cheltuielilor de apărare, de reducere a dezvoltării prin alocarea rigidă a fondurilor și duplicării achizițiilor între categorii.</p> <p>KBW poate conduce la exploatarea la maximum a cunoștințelor despre câmpul de luptă de către forțele armate, pentru a se realiza efecte prin folosirea cu precizie a forței combative.</p> <p>(2) Proces prin care se asigură o mai bună cunoaștere a câmpului de luptă, permițând luarea deciziei înaintea inamicului.</p> <p>Ceea ce deosebește KBW de un alt sistem de ducere a războiului este sinergia combinării senzorilor avansați, a tehnologiei informației și a instrumentelor analitice pentru procesarea informațiilor. Aceasta le permite comandanților să analizeze informațiile comune în contextul câmpului propriu de luptă, să aplice experiența și rațiunea și să transforme informația în cunoaștere a câmpului de luptă.</p> <p>Capacitatea de a culege date, de a le procesa în informații coerente și de a le folosi în contextul</p>
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<p>Churchill's premise that 'truth (knowledge) is the most precious commodity in warfare.'</p> <p>The key attributes of KBW are timely, high fidelity, comprehensive, synthesized, and visual data. The end game is a complete 'pictorial' representation of reality that the decision maker can tune to his/her unique needs at any given time. This picture must include both 'blue' and 'red' data, although this ACTD (Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration) concentrates on the provision of 'blue' data only.</p>	<p>operațiilor le permite forțelor să realizeze superioritatea informațională.</p> <p>(3) Capacitatea uneia dintre părți de a obține elemente esențiale de adevăr, paralel cu interdicția de acces al părții adverse la aceleași elemente. Se bazează pe premisa lansată de Sir Winston Churchill că 'adevărul (cunoașterea) este cea mai valoroasă marfă într-un război'.</p> <p>Principalele atribute ale KBW sunt precizia înaltă și oportună și datele cuprinzătoare, sintetice și vizuale. Produsul final este o reprezentare completă 'în imagini' a realității pe care decidentul o poate adapta nevoilor sale la un moment dat. Acest tablou trebuie să cuprindă atât date despre trupele proprii cât și despre inamic, deși această demonstrație bazată pe tehnologie conceptuală avansată (ACTD) se concentrează doar pe furnizarea de date referitoare la trupele proprii.</p>
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Some of the entries included in the glossary comprise, alongside with the definition of the concept, some additional explanations adja-

cent to the way in which the concept applies, as in the examples below.

Example No. 1:

<p>Army Knowledge Management (AKM) Goals</p> <p>Goals to be worked in parallel, not sequentially, to ensure maximum and optimal transformation of the force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 1: Adopt governance and cultural changes to become a knowledge-based organization. • Goal 2: Integrate KM concepts and best business practices into Army processes to improve performance. • Goal 3: Manage the infostructure as an Enterprise to enhance capabilities and efficiencies. • Goal 4: Institutionalize Army's Knowledge Portal (AKO) as the Enterprise Portal to provide universal, secure access for the entire Army. • Goal 5: Harness Human Capital for the Knowledge-Based Organization. 	<p>Obiectivele managementului cunoașterii în armată (AKM)</p> <p>Obiective ce trebuie urmărite în paralel și nu secvențial, pentru a asigura transformarea maximă și optimă a forței armate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obiectivul 1: Adoptarea de schimbări administrative și culturale pentru ca armata să devină o organizație bazată pe cunoaștere. • Obiectivul 2: Integrarea în armată a managementului cunoașterii și a celor mai bune practici pentru îmbunătățirea performanțelor. • Obiectivul 3: Administrarea infostructurii (infrastructura informațională) pentru a spori capacitățile și eficiența. • Obiectivul 4: Instituirea unui punct de accesare online (portal) a informațiilor (AKO) în vederea asigurării unui acces securizat și universal pentru întreaga armată. • Obiectivul 5: Valorificarea capitalului uman în cadrul organizației bazate pe cunoaștere.
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Example No. 2:

<p>Army Knowledge Management (AKM) Strategy</p> <p>Strategy which enables transformation to the Objective Force based on a framework which includes: robust infostructure, effective applied intellectual capital, and change catalysts required to enable transformation, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infostructure: the IT, (computers, software, architecture, security, communications, programs, and facilities) required to support the network-centric Army. • Intellectual Capital: individual, team, and enterprise knowledge, systems and services, and workforce 	<p>Strategia de management al cunoașterii în armată (AKM)</p> <p>Strategie care favorizează transformările în vederea îndeplinirii Obiectivului de Forță și care se bazează pe următoarea schemă: o infostructură (infrastructură informațională) solidă, capital intelectual aplicat efectiv și catalizatori ai schimbării care să faciliteze transformarea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infostructura: IT (computere, software, organizare, securitate, comunicații, programe și facilități) necesare funcționării armatei de tip rețea. • Capitalul intelectual: cunoștințele individuale, ale
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strategies necessary to improve operations and decision making.

- Change Catalysts: the policies, resources, management, culture, processes, and education that are required to optimize the adaptive organization and enterprise net-centric environment.

echipei și ale organizației, sistemele și serviciile, precum și strategiile referitoare la forța de muncă necesare îmbunătățirii operațiilor și a procesului decizional.

- Catalizatorii schimbării: politicile, resursele, managementul, cultura și educația necesare pentru optimizarea activității organizației aflate în permanentă adaptare și realizarea mediului tip rețea.

The sources researched in order to select the terms and their explanations were the following:

1. *** *Army Knowledge Warfare*. Ch. 16: Army Knowledge Management. www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/dclm/linkedtextchapters/CHAPTER16.pdf
2. Admire, John H. *Transforming Coalition Warfare with Network Centric Capabilities*. Ninth International Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium Coalition Transformation: *An Evolution of People, Processes & Technology to Enhance Interoperability*. 14-16 September 2004, Copenhagen, Denmark.
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9. Lambe, Patrick. *Knowledge-Based Warfare*. www.straitsknowledge.com

10. Mains, Steven J., Maj. US Army. *Adapting Doctrine to Knowledge-Based Warfare*. <http://www-cgsc.army.mil/milrev/milrvweb/maeng97.web/html/net/mbob.html>

11. Watson, Ian. *Applying Knowledge Management. Techniques for Building Corporate Memories*. 2003 by Elsevier Science (USA).

What makes the bilingual glossary of Knowledge Management so important? First and foremost because, in order to be competitive on the international markets, organizations should regard *knowledge* – nowadays a widely recognized key factor enhancing the basic management skills – as any other strategic and irreplaceable asset which the organization can no longer do without.

Within this new perspective, our bilingual glossary facilitates the Romanian speaker's approach to the domain in which the bibliography and reference materials are written in English. Its declared purpose is to gather the diverse approaches of Knowledge Management in a unified perspective. By using the entries, explanations and translations into Romanian, the reader will come to a better understanding of the way in which his or her organization can improve performance through the application of Knowledge Management techniques and strategies.

Moreover, readers will become familiar with

the basic vocabulary and terms used by knowledge workers and experts in this field. By due reference and internalization of the correct definitions and explanations comprised in the bilingual glossary, all those interested in the topic under discussion will be able to:

- master Knowledge Management from the historical, economic, technical and organization culture-related perspectives;
- acquire and use a working vocabulary in both English and Romanian in the topic-related area and to communicate efficiently with people from different cultures, sharing similar interests;
- understand the link between Knowledge Management and other strategies meant to improve the business and organization environments;
- grasp the approach to the KM matters by KM experts;
- internalize and use a ready-made set of recommendations which can be further implemented in order to better coordinate the KM efforts inside the organization;
- assess the best practices, that is to determine what works and why it works in a knowledge-based organization;
- better contribute to transforming knowledge into business value;
- identify and praise a successful KM effort.

Each segment of the bilingual glossary users will certainly have different levels of interest insofar as the theoretical concepts, practical experiences and data, sometimes empirical, reunited in this glossary are concerned. Let us remember, in conclusion, that this instrument refers to a subject matter still emerging and seeking for an identity of its own.

References:

- [1] Moran, N. Becoming a Knowledge Based Organization, Financial Times Survey. *Knowledge Management*, 28 April 1999, London, UK.
- [2] Watson, Ian. *Applying Knowledge Management. Techniques for Building Corporate Memories*. 2003 by Elsevier Science (USA), p. 11.

[3] Stakonsky, M. (ed.). *Creating the Discipline of Knowledge Management: the Latest in University Research*. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004, ISBN 0-7506-7878-X.