all business endeavors, timing is critical, especially relative to planned mergers and acquisitions. Developing a KM system, unlike developing a comprehensive information system, can't simply be outsourced to an external vendor. It involves integration of processes, cultural change, and technology within the corporation. What's more, a KM implementation can take years and involve significant investments in training and in information technology.

Corporate Culture. In exploring the financial feasibility of a KM implementation, due diligence on the part of management includes exploring options from outsourcing to using internal development staff. Decisions on how to handle development will determine the short- and long-term capital requirements as well as the scope of the planned implementation and how disruptive it will be to the corporate culture. For example, if the company prides itself on its close relationship with employees, then a significant downsizing associated with a KM initiative may be unacceptably disruptive to the corporate culture —especially if resources that could have been used to pay employees in the company instead go to outside vendors.

Other issues that affect corporate culture include the interest, at all levels in the organization, of formalizing ad hoc KM behavior into a KM system. Because a move to Knowledge Management and the associated technology infrastructure represents a major shift in employee skill set requirements, some employees may resist the move for fear of being downsized. Corporate stability also may be adversely affected if employees opt to find employment elsewhere instead of submitting to the overhead of documenting their activities and decisions.

Tactics. Hundreds of unknowns need to be addressed. For example, are there sufficient in-house resources to create a KM system? Is the time line for implementation reasonable and compatible with other corpo-