Knowledge Management Leadership

Like the definition of Knowledge Management, the types and roles of knowledge leadership in a corporation are usually defined on a case-by-case basis. Although there are dozens of terms ascribed to knowledge leaders by consulting firms, the five main categories of knowledge leadership and their roles in the corporation are:

1. *Chief knowledge officer (CKO).* A strategic, senior management position focused on promoting, communicating, and facilitating KM practices in the corporation. The highly visible CKO typically reports directly to the CEO but may report to the CIO.

2. *Knowledge analyst.* A tactical, lower- to midlevel position that involves learning and personally disseminating the best practices of the organization. Knowledge analysts may use technologies to accumulate and manage knowledge, but the technologies are for their personal use only. The risk of relying on knowledge analysts is that they can walk away with the best practices of the corporation, with no record for those left behind to follow.

3. *Knowledge engineer.* A tactical, lower-level position that is focused on collecting information from experts and representing it in an organized form, typically in computer-based systems, that can be shared and stored in the corporation. Knowledge engineers frequently form the interface between employees and computer technologies, such as expert systems—programs that imitate the decision-making abilities of experts.

4. *Knowledge manager.* A tactical, midlevel position that involves coordinating the work of knowledge engineers and analysts, especially in larger corporations. Knowledge managers may report to the CKO, CIO, or CEO.