

chief information officer (CIO) is named as acting CKO or a CKO is hired to work under the CIO. The technical approach to Knowledge Management is especially prevalent in the high-technology arena, where all managers have a working knowledge of, and experience with, technology and what it can do for the company.

A third view is to consider Knowledge Management as a means of strengthening the social fabric of the company. A characteristic of group behavior is that it reflects not so much the needs and desires of the individual members as it does the charisma and beliefs of the leadership as well as the common goals and the structure that defines how individuals within the organization can relate to each another.

One side effect of corporate organization is that it allows the formation of communities of practice, which are groups whose members regularly engage in sharing and learning. These communities contribute to social capital—connections, relationships, and common content—and thereby contribute to the bottom line by increasing innovation, decreasing the learning curve among members, and increasing the dissemination of ideas among members.

Communities of practice, having no agenda, deadline, or accountability, can't be managed. They form because employees are naturally drawn together by similar activities and interests. Although communities of practice can form through informal water cooler interactions, in a large organization with a KM program, they are formally encouraged and supported. That is, in at least one interpretation of a successful knowledge organization, Knowledge Management is much more than simply managing information; it becomes part of the corporate social infrastructure that rewards and supports trust and cooperation among members, including the formation of communities of practice.