

Issues

The work at CGF illustrates several issues regarding the use of technology to enable a KM program:

- Information technology can be critical in enabling KM processes. Numerous technologies are available to enable organizations to leverage their intellectual capital.
- Every technology initiative must involve the CIO or other representative of the information services (IS) group. Collaborative tools that involve sharing information between departments and especially between the company and external customers require complete cooperation with the IS department.
- Integrating technology into an organization takes time. Even though the collaborative technology paralleled a community of practice already in place at CGF, time was required for the IS department to install and test the hardware and software; participants needed training time; and finally, when the system was up and running, time was required to establish procedures for the group activity.
- It's how technology is used, not the technology's inherent capabilities, that define whether it's capable of enabling a KM program.

Enabling the Knowledge Management Process

The technologies available to enable the Knowledge Management process span the continuum from low-tech tools, such as pen and paper, to high-tech expert systems and virtual reality displays. For example, the telephone, tape recorders, whiteboards, and other technologies that most of us take for granted are enabling technologies in that they facilitate some aspects of the KM life cycle. However, when most people speak of enabling technologies, they're referring to more high-tech