

## Issues

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Custom Gene Factory's acquisition of Medical Multimedia and the associated activities illustrate several key issues associated with a KM initiative:

- Knowledge workers involved directly in the KM process may be the company's most valuable assets.
- If it is to be successful, Knowledge Management is a business process that has to be managed like every other major business initiative.
- It is virtually impossible to prevent the repurposing of tacit knowledge by workers who leave the company. For example, in the story, management can't stop Mary from leaving the company and using her tacit knowledge in the service of the competition.
- Knowledge audits are commonly used to quantify the value of a company's intellectual assets. A series of knowledge audits can demonstrate the effectiveness of a KM initiative.

## Life-Cycle Overview

The duration of the Knowledge Management life cycle is a function of the availability of the technologies that enable each phase and of the nature of the information, the difficulty of archiving the information, and other external factors. For example, some business information, such as tax information, must be retained or archived indefinitely to comply with federal, state, or local law. Other information may be critical to maintaining the value of the corporation, such as knowledge of core processes in the company.

As illustrated in Exhibit 4.1, each phase of the KM life cycle is associated with issues, input data, support mechanisms, and output data. The difference between the input and output data depends on the processes