

The Practice of Knowledge Management (POKM)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. What is The Practice of Knowledge Management?

The Practice of Knowledge Management (POKM) is about achieving significant and sustainable organizational performance by adopting the 8 key self-driven mindsets and habits:

1. K-identification
2. K-acquisition
3. K-application
4. K-sharing
5. K-development
6. K-creation
7. K-preservation
8. K-measurement.

In today's knowledge-driven economy, an innovative knowledge professional needs to be *self-driven* and *pro-active*. Only when individuals consistently demonstrate such behavior can teams and organizations *collaborate* and *innovate*. POKM is thus an organization development intervention that inculcates these resultant behaviors.

As transformation of mindsets and habits does not happen overnight nor automatically, it must be cultivated and cultured over a period of time using a structured and systematic approach. Attempts that sought to transform an entire organization at one go have failed miserably. Recognizing the need for organizational transformation and yet the practical limitations of traditional approaches, POKM utilizes the concept of *Practicing Communities (PC)*, *Operating Policies* and *Structured Roadmaps*.

A PC is a collection of people in an organization with common objectives or is homogeneous in competency. A project team is a good example of a PC with common objectives although it typically draws people from across disciplines. A workgroup, in Human Resources for instance, would be an example of a homogeneous collection of people with similar competency. The Operating Policies and Structured Roadmaps are then constructed and operationalized by the PC.

Briefly then, POKM is the structured framework that assists organizations operating in the knowledge-based economy to transform their workforce to be self-driven, pro-active, collaborative and innovative.

Q2. KM is not new. What difference does POKM bring?

It is absolutely true that knowledge management (KM) has been around since time immemorial. What POKM offers is a structured framework and approach for understanding and, more importantly, for putting such knowledge into practice.

By explicitly defining the 8 key mindsets and habits as well as the 6 supporting enablers, POKM provides a comprehensive framework for organizations to rapidly put KM into practice. Without a structured framework, the disparate areas of KM can become very daunting. Many a time, after attending conferences and training seminars and having picked-up exciting new concepts, we are left on our own in trying to implement such new knowledge. With a structured framework, we will have an overall architecture within which new and other pieces of knowledge can relate, grow and be operationalized.

Within the structured framework, POKM provides all the necessary knowledge with global live illustrations, ready for implementation. Let's just consider a small sample of how POKM addresses some of today's challenges:

- a. *K-sharing*: While it is a universally acknowledged virtue, how successful have organizations been in fostering this critical mindset and habit? In POKM, the structured framework covers the 3 fundamental principles that make sharing works and operationalizes the habit through a Sharing Community and Policy.
- b. *K-preservation*: Is this merely an act of accumulating information in some form of databases? The structured framework of POKM covers the 4 interactions necessary to ensure that captured knowledge continues to be relevant i.e. "living," and prevents the knowledge store from degenerating into a knowledge graveyard.
- c. *Tacit knowledge management*: The non-explicit knowledge in the minds of its workforce represents the most valuable and yet most vulnerable part of an organization's total knowledge. How can organizations minimize the impact of knowledge walk-out or retirement? POKM addresses this through the informal micro organizational structure.

With the focus on practical application within the respective client organizations, participants of POKM courses will be able to immediately apply the knowledge gained to their workplace guided by the Operating Policy and Structured Roadmap which they will acquire the competency to construct.

So, what difference does POKM really bring?

In short, it is about "practical answers to real challenges in knowledge management by way of transforming mindsets and habits."

Q3. How relevant is POKM to me and my organization?

POKM is relevant to any organization that operates in the knowledge-driven economy where the self-driven, proactive, collaborative and innovative mindset of its workforce is no longer an option. And, this statement is true for any organization that wants to differentiate itself from its competitors by focusing on any of these 3 global pillars of competition:

- a. Operational Excellence
- b. Customer Responsiveness
- c. Innovation Intensity.

Organizations that are opened to the global perspective realize that in order to compete with the best of the world, the traditional management philosophy of "command-and-control" is no longer effective. Such philosophy was relevant during the production based economy as mass production demanded strict adherence to rules to ensure maximum efficiency.

In the knowledge-based economy, changes happen at Internet rate and the workforce has to be empowered. Everyone in the organization has to provide their best and not merely wait for senior management direction at every turn. People have to work with their hearts and minds, no longer just with their hands. While these exhortations look nice on paper, how can they be put into practice?

Over the past decade, we have shown that a systematic approach based on a structured framework is the clearest path forward. Having brought many large organizations along this path, POKM is now a proven model for transformation.

As for the individual knowledge worker, a future-oriented and honest assessment of one's competencies will quickly yield a realization that acquiring such mindsets and habits is the only true form of career security in the years ahead. It has been our experience that those attending our courses see for themselves the need for such change very clearly. With the systematic path provided by POKM, they are also motivated to adopt the mindsets and habits as they can visualize how they are going to achieve it.

Typically, POKM attendees comprise senior and middle management personnel coming from all areas of the organization. Due to the organizational development perspective of POKM, we find that many of our attendees hail from human capital/human resource, change management, quality improvement, strategic planning as well as ICT functions.

Over the years, the 2-day POKM courses have been well attended by senior management and heads of departments. The 5-day Certificate in Knowledge Management (CIKM) certification courses to equip internal consultants are usually attended by representatives of the intended Practicing Communities.

Q4. What track record does POKM have?

POKM was innovated by Dr Frankie Ow, the Founder and Chief Knowledge Architect of JT Frank Academy. Dr Ow has spent the past 26 years specializing in human capital development.

POKM was pioneered in 1996 after extensive worldwide research undertaken from the Global Center in Malaysia. Since then, over 10,000 participants from over 20 countries globally have participated in the POKM learning courses. These countries include Malaysia, China, Korea, Norway, Mauritius, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Taiwan, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Nigeria.

Since 2000, the Academy has conducted more than 50 intakes of the intensive CIKM course which equip participants to be internal POKM consultants in their respective organizations. Through these courses, over 600 participants have been certified to assist their organizations pioneer POKM.

Complementing the POKM learning and CIKM certification courses, the Academy has a faculty of Certified Global Facilitators and Consultants to undertake post-learning consulting engagements. These engagements are optional services provided to organizations that would like further guidance beyond the abovementioned learning and certification courses.

In order to provide a platform for organizations to showcase their effort, compare notes and motivate as well as recognize members of the Practicing Community, an annual POKM conference has been organized since 2005. In line with the concerted global adoption of POKM starting 2008, the POKM conference has also become a truly global platform termed the Global Emerging Knowledge Organization (GEKO) conference.

The entire suite of solutions ranging from the 2-day POKM learning course, the 5-day CIKM certification course, post-learning consulting and the GEKO conference are built on the POKM structured framework of 8 key mindsets and habits as well as the 6 enablers.

With this complete suite of solutions, many organizations have embarked on the journey of transformation based on the POKM structured framework. The JT Frank Academy website (www.jtfrank.com) provides an up-to-date list of organizations that have attended the POKM and CIKM courses.

POKM is thus a proven, live and extensible model that incorporates the latest thinking in management innovations and technology evolution.

Q5. How is the POKM learning course structured?

The 2-day POKM learning course or solution is structured to ensure a full appreciation of the structured framework. Tailored to meet the expectations of senior to middle level management audience, the course incorporates both knowledge acquisition sessions in the mornings and hands-on workshops by the participants in the afternoons.

In the first morning, the session begins with the background of economic transition from the production-based to the knowledge-based economy. The 8 key mindsets and habits of POKM are then discussed in detail. Based on the knowledge acquired in the morning, participants will engage in the Challenges and Solutions workshop in the afternoon. In that workshop, participants will get to immediately apply the knowledge learned in the morning by articulating the potential implementation challenges that may be faced as well as the possible solutions to overcome them. The facilitator will guide and debrief on the exercise to capture the learning lessons together with the participants.

In the second morning, the session begins with the 6 key enablers being the supporting structure to operationalize the mindsets and habits covered the day before. A detailed description of the way forward including the typical phases of POKM implementation as well as the mechanics of the Global Emerging Knowledge Organization (GEKO) conference are then covered. In the afternoon session on the second day, participants will again get to put to immediate use what was learned in that morning by preparing an Operating Policy and Structured Roadmap.

Briefly, an Operating Policy defines the key mindsets and habits to be adopted by a Practicing Community together with the selected key enablers. A Structured Roadmap is a specific POKM plan with carefully in-built initiatives to ensure the highest level of acceptance and success. With the practice afforded by this workshop on the second day, participants will be more confident in building their own Operating Policies and Structured Roadmaps upon returning to their organizations.

All organizations that participate in a POKM course before the GEKO conference of the respective year may submit their Operating Policies and Structured Roadmaps to be reviewed for the purpose of participating in the GEKO conference. A complimentary post-learning review service of actual organization Policies and Roadmaps is offered by the Academy to these organizations regardless of whether they eventually participate in the GEKO conference or otherwise. As such, all attendees are encouraged to avail themselves of this service.

Organizations that are selected to participate in the GEKO conference will do so in the Potential Organizations category and will be provided with suggestions for further enhancements prior to the conference.

Q6. Is this the right time for me to embark on POKM?

The right time for any organization to embark on their POKM journey is when the organization believes in the necessity of inculcating the mindset of being self-driven, proactive, collaborative and innovative among their employees. There is hardly any industry that remains stable during these volatile times. The globally connected enterprises of today will feel the impact of any significant market movement in any part of the world almost instantaneously.

Couple this with the relentless competition being thrown up by other organizations or even countries, an organization's focus has to be razor-sharp in achieving its selected value proposition of operational excellence, customer responsiveness or innovation intensity.

With so much change at hand, the surest way forward is to rely on the best that the human capital of the organization has to offer. The success of many small countries with almost no natural resources but has only their human talents to rely on is a testimony that the future belongs to those who can harness this most precious asset.

Some organizations may be in the midst of transformation programmes while others may be restructuring themselves to deliver better performance. Some may be bracing for increased competition in their marketplace while others may be equipping themselves to forge into new markets. Yet some may even be involved in rebranding exercises which they hope can help them become more responsive organizations. Such exercises will have to go beyond the design of new logos and provision of new staff uniforms.

A fundamental transformation of mindsets and habits has to take place in an organization for it to be truly different and to be sustainable.

We would be hard pressed to think of an organization that can truly continue to operate in a "business-as-usual" manner simply because the world is changing so rapidly and will continue to do so at an increasing pace. Even non-profit organizations have to improve their performance as they seek to better serve their constituents as other causes are competing for the same budget. What more if we work for a commercial organization!

By incorporating the POKM model as part of their management philosophy, organizations will put their human capital onto a journey of continuously capitalizing on knowledge assets through a structured framework and approach.

Transforming mindsets and habits takes time and it's never too early to start.

Q7. Our organization is now implementing another programme (e.g. ISO9000, Balanced Scorecard, Lean Sigma) and we do not have the time, resource nor attention to pursue yet another programme. We just can't be distracted right now!

Just to be clear, all organizations are set up to achieve certain objectives and goals. They do this by forming functions dedicated to specific areas of operations such as sales, R&D, technology support, maintenance, human resources etc. From time to time, they also undertake projects and programmes that typically draw people from across the functional structures to tap into the varied competencies across the board.

However, some of these projects and programmes do not deliver the level of results as anticipated. Almost universally, the challenge lies not so much with the technical specifics of the programmes themselves as these typically follow proven templates pioneered by successful organizations around the world. The challenge almost always has to do with people readiness within the organization itself. In other words, the mindsets and habits of people entrenched in the production-economy model of "command-and-control" will certainly impede the effectiveness of any project or programme.

When such challenging situations happen, we see that management continues to have to chase people to attend meetings, to chase people to submit reports or even to chase people to contribute ideas. Therefore the mindsets and habits of being self-driven, proactive, collaborative and innovative is certainly a critical success factor of any such project or programme. The only thing is that this factor is rarely identified or realized up-front.

Thus if you are in the midst of, or even about to start, a transformation or critical project, it is probably the best time for you to inculcate these knowledge-driven mindsets and habits in your project team.

The POKM structured framework is targeted at improving the effectiveness of your current work practices, not to add another layer of work on top of it. We emphasize, for instance, to not be putting up another KM project plan on top of the existing programme but rather just incorporating relevant KM aspects into the existing plan to make it more effective.

Therefore, if an organization is looking at making their existing programme more effective then it should consider enhancing it with the mindsets and habits of POKM.

After all, POKM is about mindsets and habits, not adding yet another programme or project.

Q8. Broadly, what are the steps to implement POKM after this 2-day class?

The 2-day POKM course provides an in-depth appreciation to participants who usually are made up of senior and middle level management. After acquiring this knowledge, an organization will typically nominate a Practicing Community (PC) to pioneer POKM in their organization.

A PC can either be a project or a workgroup within the organization. Representatives from the PC or even human resources and ICT personnel will then normally attend the 5-day Certificate in Knowledge Management (CIKM) course which aims at equipping the participants to be internal POKM consultants to assist their PC in pioneering POKM.

As part of the CIKM certification, a 1-month work-based assignment is incorporated to provide the impetus to the participants to start POKM in their PC. Integral to this assignment is the development of an Operating Policy and Structured Roadmap based on their actual work environment which will be assessed for practicality. Feedback is also given as to areas of possible improvement thus enhancing the chance of success.

Some organizations may wish to further engage the services of our Certified Global Facilitators and Consultants to assist them in the implementation of POKM but this is optional.

As a platform to support organizations in pioneering POKM, JT Frank Academy has been organizing the emerging knowledge organization conference annually since 2005. On May 5th to May 8th in 2008, the Global Emerging Knowledge Conference (GEKO) is being organized to showcase both Practicing and Potential Organizations.

It is anticipated that many of the participating organizations in POKM courses held before May will participate as Potential Organizations. Full details of the participation in the GEKO conference and the complimentary follow-up consulting service for review of Operating Policies and Structured Roadmaps will be explained in the POKM courses.

The conference serves as an unparalleled avenue for exchange of global experience and learning for participating organizations. Furthermore, it provides added incentive and motivation for members of a PC to achieve their transformation agenda in a practical manner.

With the POKM learning course, CIKM certification course, optional post-learning consulting support and the pull provided by the GEKO conference, we have proven that organizations that are willing to forge forward will have all the necessary tools at their disposal.

Q9. How well recognized is the GEKO Conference?

The Global Emerging Knowledge Organization conference is the only one in the world with the following unique characteristics:

- a. It is *developmental* in nature. As opposed to other KM or even management conferences which typically cover topical presentations by various speakers, the GEKO conference is one where the main focus is on peer presentations of POKM effort undertaken to truly transform their Practicing Communities (PCs). Awards are given for the real effort undertaken by team, not for merely showing up.
- b. Endorsement by a *global community* of practitioners. By presenting its policy and roadmap at the conference, the PC will have the advantage of having its effort endorsed by the entire global community of practitioners. This ensures that the effort taken is heading in the right direction and for some, a public commitment to the transformation journey in front of a global community of practitioners can help them sustain the momentum forward.
- c. Competition based on *conference assessment*. Placing for Practicing Organizations (those that have gone through previous years as Potential Organizations) is determined through assessment done by actual participants of the conference itself. Assessment criteria include both the content presentation of Operating Policies, Structured Roadmaps etc as well as the handling of open questions from the floor. Particular attention is paid to team members' contribution during the Q&A session to demonstrate true teamwork among PC members. There is no Q&A session for Potential Organizations.
- d. Recognizing *emerging* knowledge organizations. Considering the fact that many of the organizations around the world are in various stages of starting their transformation journey, this conference is specially constructed to recognize their efforts in sustaining the journey and to provide added motivation for the members of the PCs. We believe that this "recognition for progress" will better serve emerging organizations that are on the transformation journey.
- e. Content based on a *common structured framework*. In order to ensure consistency of implementation, all participating organizations must demonstrate the use of the POKM structured framework and must have attended either the POKM and/or CIKM courses.

Given the above unique characteristics of the GEKO conference, we encourage you to participate by joining one of the POKM courses before the conference date of each year.

Q10. Who may I direct further questions to?

Our global operating model is through our carefully selected Global Collaboration Partners who represent us in the countries around the world. Please contact our Partner in your country who would be equipped to answer any other questions you may have.