Knowledge Management Best Practice Award

AfricaKMAward.org

CONCEPT DOCUMENT (Draft)

Using and sharing collective knowledge to improve service delivery

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Management (KM) is increasingly being identified as a key success factor throughout a variety of organisations the world over, especially now since we live in the 'global village' whose engine is the knowledge economy.

The purpose of KM in organisations varies significantly but the major drivers can be identified as being strategy, people, globalisation, competitive advantage and innovation amongst many. In Africa, the main challenges facing those that are at the forefront of their organisations' KM efforts is the lack of recognition and general misunderstanding of KM concepts and workings. In South Africa the government has stated clearly the importance of KM and Indigenous knowledge systems in the drive towards a knowledge economy. Many KM practitioners meet considerable challenges as they go about their work. And even though there is buy-in and acceptance of KM to some degree, the work on the ground is neither telling nor significant. It is for this reason that it is important to recognise the efforts of those who have done well so that their stories can be told, shared and exemplified so that we can all learn from the successes of others. It is in this spirit of celebrating success, sharing and learning just like our African ancestors, that the Africa KM Best Practice Awards are conceived.

BACKGROUND

Establishing a KM Best Practice Award was a result of collaborations between passionate individuals who felt that the African success stories in KM should be told and shared for the benefit of everyone. The Awards serve as a vehicle to motivate KM practitioners and organisations by recognizing their efforts, the Awards will also help to de-mystify KM as well as set standards on which individuals and organisations can be benchmarked. A website (.org) will be set up allowing entrants to electronically submit their reports detailing their projects or current projects, their methodology, challenges and successes as well as failures.

MISSION

To surface good examples of KM practice and recognise best practice throughout Africa in areas such as;

- Innovation
- Service Delivery
- Communication
- Community upliftment and empowerment
- Poverty reduction (job creation)

A good example of KM means any attempt that results in useful learning in how to effectively implement KM, and that delivers some kind of concrete value to its implementing organisation. Such examples can come from organisation-wide KM or from smaller KM projects within part of an organisation

PURPOSE

The KM Awards should be able to find and highlight useful examples of positive KM impact within the continent as we as;

- To create a network and event that brings together KM practitioners from Africa and African Governments
- To provide a focal point of examples of best practice in KM from Africa
- To popularise KM in Africa and highlight successful project
- To enable members from varied contexts to share knowledge, spark creativity, encourage innovation to help solve problems
- To find a way and platform to reward those using KM for the betterment of their people, departments, countries and continent.
- To create interest and excitement around the field of KM
- To stimulate further research in the field of KM
- Ensure constant improvement in the KM field

SELECTION

Entries will be in narrative form and submissions will be made on-line via the Africa *KM Awards* website, participants will be able to log in and upload their project documents as well as evidence. The selection will be made on the following criteria

- The objective of the KM project (why the project it was needed)
- Methodology
- Problem Definition, efficacy and innovation displayed in the solution
- Community engagement
- Challenges faced and how they were overcome
- Timeframes
- Technologies used
- Project evidence e.g. Templates, presentations, posters etc.
- Impact & results
- Creativity
- Teamwork
- Narrative description

Adjudicators will use the above to choose the most outstanding projects in a way that does not undermine the effort and work done by other participants. The adjudicators will also perform a wide ranging comparative study with the current standards set by well accomplished KM practitioners. The Awards are not for benchmarking purposes, they are not meant to compare progress of organisations in an industry or field. They are simply intended to bring to the fore-front good KM practice and make them visible to the continent at large to support the collective learning of the continental KM community

SECTORS

The best performing KM projects will be chosen from the following sectors;

- Water
- Energy
- Agriculture and food security

- Biotechnology

Each sector has an award for Public Service and one for Private Corporations

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

- The scrutiny and evaluation of the adjudicators will provide some external validation and feedback of organisations' KM process efforts
- An award will provide excellent opportunity for public recognition of an organisation's achievements in KM
- Winning an award may also raise the level of management's awareness and engagement in KM efforts
- An award will also boost the confidence of an organisation's KM staff and provide recognition for their efforts and achievements
- An award may stimulate new collaboration and learning opportunities with other organisations engaged in the KM field.

BUSINESS MODEL

- **Advertising**: It is anticipated this event will attract more than 1000 participants to the *KM Awards* website providing an advertising opportunity for consultancies and KM products. This service will be limited guaranteeing maximum exposure for the advertisers' services and products. The Website, fliers and posters will make certain that Sponsors receive maximum exposure of their brands, services and products this ensures a win-win situation for the *KM Awards* and the sponsors.
- **Sponsors**: Making headline sponsorship available to select organisations

EXPENSES

Major project expenses include website development, graphic design, administration, remuneration for the adjudication panel

TIMEFRAME

Activity	Date of Commencement	Closing Date
Launch Award	1st May 2010	30th May 2010
Call for entries	5th May 2010	15th October 2010
Adjudication	16th October 2010	30th October 2010
Awards Ceremony	30th November 2010	N/A

ELIGIBILITY

Any Government department or organization with an operation in Africa is eligible to apply. The submission should cover the KM activity and outcomes taking place in Africa.

CONCLUSION

The *KM Awards* will highlight the importance of KM in transforming Africa into a knowledge intensive continent by stimulating constant improvement and innovation in providing services and products to Africans. KM has been around in Africa for millennia and has played a pivotal role in improving the lives of our ancestors and maintaining cultures through storytelling and transferring knowledge from generation to generation. The awards will build on this tradition and unite a continent behind a singular goal of making Africa a better, smarter place.

ANNEXURE 1

Award Types

There are two main types of award:

The **CULTURE** award us for KM initiative that have had some kind of positive impact on the organisation's effectiveness and performance, by improvements to behaviours, culture and processes. For instance, linking KM to strategy, planning and decision making: instituting learning and collaboration practices: improved knowledge/information organisation; process improvement; change management.

The **TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE** award is for KM initiatives that have had some kind of positive impact on the organisation's effectiveness and performance, by making improvements to the technology infrastructure and its usage. For instance, deploying decision support analytics, a portal, taxonomy or information architecture work, knowledge repositories, expert locators, use of collaboration tools and other infrastructural support for KM

Each award comes in three types, Silver, Gold and Platinum, depending on the extent of their influence on the organisation. A platinum award recognises a KM effort that has blended both Culture and Technology change to bring about organisation-wide impact on performance as well as learning value to the organisations.

	Silver	Gold	Platinum
CULTURE	*Clear impact in a part of the organization*	*Cross organization impact*	*Cross organization impact combining both technology and culture*
TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE	*Clear impact in a part of the organization*	*Cross organization impact*	

Table 1 Awards Matrix

SUBMISSION TEMPLATE

Submission Details: *(name, position, organization name, whether the submission is for Technology, Culture or both)*

Overview
A one sentence summary of your case submission.

About the Organization
A brief one paragraph description of your organization or department's (size, locations, industry, main business activities and objectives).

The Background and Purpose of the KM Effort
*(use **only** whichever guiding questions are appropriate to give a brief narrative account of the background and intent behind your KM effort)*

- *What was the main objective, issue or problem you were using KM to address?*
- *Prior to the KM approach, how did the issue impact the business?*
- *Prior to the KM approach, what technologies/applications did you primarily use?*
- *What size group/division was impacted by the KM effort?*
- *Why did you decide to use KM to address this issue/objective?*

What You Did
*(use **only** whichever guiding questions are appropriate to give a brief narrative account of the work involved in your KM effort)*

- *In brief, what did you do?*
- *What technologies) did you use?*
- *How did you staff the KM effort?*
- *What was the involvement of management and staff?*
- *How was it planned, communicated and rolled out?*
- *What processes did you put in place?*
- *How did you monitor progress?*

Lessons Learned
*(use **only** whichever guiding questions are appropriate to give a brief narrative account of the new learning involved in your KM effort)*

- *What hurdles or barriers did you face?*
- *How did you overcome them?*
- *Do any remain?*
- *What were your lessons learned?*
- *What might you do differently next time?*
- *What advice would you give to another organization attempting a similar project?*

Impact and Benefits
(use the guiding questions as appropriate to give a brief narrative account of the business impact resulting from your KM effort)

- *What were the business benefits of your KM effort in any of the following areas?*
    - Efficiency improvements e.g. cost savings
    - Quality improvement
    - Service improvement
    - Increased revenue
    - Greater innovation capacity
    - Customer satisfaction
    - Employee satisfaction
    - Improved employee turnover
    - Improved learning curves for new employees
    - Improved responsiveness to change
    - Partner and stakeholder satisfaction
    - Business goals achieved
    - Business risk avoided

- *Were there any other benefits arising from your KM effort, not listed here that had a positive impact on organizational or employee performance? What were they?*
- *How did you evaluate or monitor the benefits?*
- *Could these benefits have come from other causes? How do you know that KM made a contribution?*
- *What do you think would have happened if you had not had KM?*
- *Can you give 2-3 specific examples or scenarios that illustrate the benefits?*
- *What do you think were the main reasons for your success?*

Next Steps
Briefly describe what you intend to do next in KM. Do you intend to build on or extend the work you have done in this project?

Senior Management Support for this Submission
I support this submission for an Africa KM Awards

Name, position and date
_____

Credits: the model for the Africa KM Awards is based on the iKMS KM Excellence Awards developed and run to recognise excellence in knowledge management in Singapore.