

Knowledge Audit

What is it?

The knowledge audit is an assessment of an organization's knowledge capabilities. It identifies the gap between available knowledge and what's needed based on the organization's strategic objectives. A knowledge audit should start with strategic planning to identify current and future priorities, as well as a SWOT analysis to examine the organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

How do I start?

Step 1

Develop a strategic plan

Simply put, strategic planning is clarifying the overall purpose and desired results of an organization, and how those results will be achieved.¹ The first step is to determine the future priorities, by meeting with stakeholders to determine the organization's strategic direction. Create a strategic plan by answering the following three questions.²

1. Where we are now?
2. Where are we going?
3. How will we get there?

Step 2

Conduct a SWOT analysis³

A SWOT analysis is a structured [planning](#) method used with groups of people to evaluate the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** involved in a [project](#), business venture, or organization. The analysis typically captures the critical factors facing a project or organization both internally and externally and the outputs from the analysis are most useful in the early stages of strategic planning and change activities. Create a SWOT analysis by answering the following questions:

1. What do we do well? (strengths)
2. What could we do better? (weaknesses)
3. What could we take advantage of? (opportunities)
4. What significant risks must we monitor? (threats)

Step 3

Complete a Knowledge Audit⁴

1. Knowledge need analysis – Based on the strategic plan and SWOT analysis, what knowledge resources and capabilities are needed most?
2. Knowledge inventory analysis – Identify the explicit or physical knowledge assets such as documents, data, websites, etc. Identify the subject matter experts or individuals with the required tacit knowledge.
3. Knowledge flow analysis – Assess how knowledge resources should move throughout the organization, by identifying where the knowledge is needed in contrast to where it is currently located. In other words, determine how people in an organization find the knowledge they need, and how do they share or use the knowledge they have.
4. Knowledge mapping – Create a visual representation of the knowledge flow analysis to assist with clarifying how knowledge currently flows through the organization to capitalize on strengths or make improvements.

Step 4

Make Recommendations

Based on the accumulated insights gained from the strategic plan, SWOT analysis, and knowledge audit formalize recommendations for obtaining the knowledge capabilities necessary to meet the current and future needs of the organization.

¹ McNamara, Carter. What is Strategic Planning? <http://managementhelp.org/blogs/strategic-planning/2010/09/30/what-is-strategic-planning/#sthash.TOFt1tA4.dpuf>

² Olsen, Erica. How to Write a Strategic Plan. <http://onstrategyhq.com/resources/how-to-write-a-strategic-plan/>

³ Hoffman, Ed. About the SWOT Analysis. Building Effective Knowledge Services for Organizations. Information and Knowledge Strategy. Columbia University.

⁴ Chowdhury, Naguib and Sharma, Ravi. On The Use of a Diagnostic Tool for Knowledge Audits. Journal of Knowledge Management Practice, Vol. 8, No. 4, December 2007. <http://www.tlinc.com/articl145.htm>

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Important Tip

The knowledge audit is often conducted in conjunction with the knowledge strategy. The knowledge strategy reviews the findings and recommendations made during the audit and determines which recommendations to implement along with a plan for implementation.



Image source <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/-qdOvfkmN1K4/VBcICQ509FI/AAAAAAAAAg4g/1FXqtMVtpHU/w640-h400-p-k/Always%2BSeek%2BKnowledge.jpg>

How can I learn more?

- **Toward Knowledge Resilience:** <http://km.nasa.gov/from-the-academy-director-toward-knowledge-resilience/>
- **Knowledge Audit** <http://www.tlainc.com/articl145.htm>
- **Know-All 10: A Quick KM Assessment** <http://www.skyrme.com/kmtools/know10.htm>
- **Overview of the Strategic Planning Process** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sU3FLxnDv_A
- **SWOT Analysis** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNXYI10Po6A>
- **REAL Knowledge at NASA:** <http://km.nasa.gov/resources/>

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knowledgeaudit

Know what your organization knows*