



The Rise of Knowledge Engagement (and Why It Matters)

What Is the Value of Knowledge?

There's no denying that knowledge has significant value to businesses. Knowledge and intelligence are the foundation of workplace productivity and business efficiencies. Every decision, interaction, and idea that drives a business forward stems from institutional knowledge and the intellect of its employees—in other words, the organization's collective intelligence. And when teams have the means to tap into that collective intelligence, they're able to take informed actions that positively impact revenue, retention, and innovation.

Conversely, if teams don't have an easy way to access and act on their organization's collective intelligence, their business won't benefit from the full value of its existing knowledge. Most businesses recognize this need to make knowledge actionable and accessible, but few have a clear plan in place. Deloitte found that while 75 percent of organizations say creating and preserving knowledge across evolving workplaces is very important to their success over the next 12-18 months, only 9 percent say they are fully confident that they're ready to address this trend.¹

Without a strategy to capture, share, and collaborate around the knowledge that exists across an organization, several common and problematic issues arise:

- Knowledge becomes siloed within teams or departments, leading to decreased productivity and misalignment of goals.
- Individuals who possess specialized knowledge dedicate significant time to fielding requests for information and answering repetitive questions.
- Employees or teams duplicate work because they don't know what has already been done across the organization.

- When an employee leaves the organization, their knowledge leaves with them.
- Employees feel less engaged with their peers and work, which can lead to higher employee turnover.
- The customer experience feels disjointed across different channels, negatively impacting customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Business decisions are made without evaluating existing data and insights.

To prevent these issues, it's essential for organizations to centralize knowledge and encourage employees to integrate knowledge engagement into their everyday workflow. The first step is to identify and define the sources of knowledge within your business.

Sources of Knowledge and Insights

Corporate Intellectual Property (IP) is knowledge that is owned and legally protected by a business, such as a design or technology patent, copyright materials, or trade secrets. Essentially, IP is knowledge from human intellect that leads to often-intangible innovations that belong to a company.

Institutional knowledge, also sometimes referred to as organizational knowledge, is knowledge gained and developed within institutions over time, such as company policies, process documents, and research reports. Institutional knowledge is relatively easy to articulate and record, and there is usually a vast amount of it that employees need to access.

Individual intellect, or implicit knowledge, is the “know-how” that each employee brings to their role. It’s the knowledge they’ve gained through lived experience and practice, which can often be difficult to articulate. For instance, a seasoned interviewer might be skilled at mirroring her interview subjects to help set them at ease. This isn’t something she’s learned from a class or a playbook: it’s something she’s learned through years of conducting interviews and observing her subjects and their body language. It’s not something she can easily put in writing, though others may be able to learn from her by shadowing her during interviews or watching her interview recordings.

Individual or Institutional, All Knowledge Is Valuable

Institutional knowledge and individual intellect are both critical to the day-to-day operations and innovation efforts across an organization. Fortunately, it is possible to capture both institutional and individual knowledge—and make it actionable for employees across your organization.



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The key is to adopt the right strategies and technologies to enable employees to easily share, access, collaborate across, and leverage knowledge. Employees must be able to contribute to and act on their company’s collective intelligence at any time, from anywhere. And that’s where knowledge engagement comes in.

What Is Knowledge Engagement and Why Does It Matter?

Knowledge engagement is the practice of proactively harnessing and building upon a core set of knowledge, empowering teams to tap into a collective source of intellect so that the value and utility of knowledge constantly grows.

Behaviors of organizations with cultures of knowledge engagement may include:

- Encouraging employees to share their ideas and expertise (and creating a psychologically safe space in which to share)
- Making all non-sensitive knowledge and insights available to all employees in one central, searchable location
- Encouraging employees to publish questions, answers, and ideas where everyone can see them and benefit from the information
- Providing opportunities for employees to collaborate across roles, teams, and departments
- Making it as easy as possible for employees to document their knowledge in the format that makes the most sense to them

Without knowledge engagement, knowledge is a finite resource for your business. Individual intellect lives in the minds of your employees, and institutional knowledge—while easier to document—may be stored in repositories that aren't accessible to everyone across the organization. Your organization can't reap the full benefits of its collective intelligence, and existing knowledge erodes over time (most notably when employees leave the company and when time-sensitive documented knowledge becomes outdated).

Knowledge engagement is what turns knowledge into a renewable resource to power a business. When an organization builds a knowledge engagement culture, their employees are empowered at every level and in every role to leverage and contribute to existing knowledge. Contributors introduce new ideas and insights over time, allowing knowledge and intellect to continuously inform decisions.

Benefits of a Knowledge Engagement Culture

Grow Your Company's Collective Intelligence

When organizations make it easy for employees to contribute, whether it's by uploading a video or answering questions posted by their peers, people are more willing to share what they know.

By removing points of friction and establishing a company culture where sharing and collaborating around knowledge is the norm, a company's knowledge base will continue to grow over time. The more knowledge that is readily available in a searchable platform, the more likely employees will be to find the information they need, the moment they need it.

Make Knowledge Actionable

While having a large, instantly searchable knowledge base is a great start, a company's collective intelligence isn't valuable unless people are actively using knowledge and insights to make informed decisions. A culture of knowledge engagement encourages people to think critically about how to make their knowledge actionable for others and, conversely, how to act on the knowledge of their peers. For instance, a market research team could share research reports with a list of recommended next steps for their stakeholders, or a sales representative could share a win story and encourage their peers to share their own win stories or relevant pain points. By increasing the application of existing knowledge, people increase the value of that knowledge to their organization.

Preserve Knowledge and Insights

About 10,000 people retire every day², and the average person changes jobs 12 times over the course of their career.³ Whether it's due to retirement, changing jobs, or even a company-wide reorganization, there's a risk of losing institutional and individual knowledge every time someone leaves their current role. A culture of knowledge engagement, which encourages people to document and share what they know in the regular course of their work, helps to capture and preserve knowledge that might otherwise be lost or inaccessible. Capturing and centralizing the knowledge of employees can also simplify and streamline the onboarding process, giving new employees a go-to source to find the information they need more quickly to ramp up and do their best work.

Eliminate Knowledge Silos

94 percent of businesses say that agility and collaboration are essential to their success, but knowledge silos between teams, departments, and lines of business hinder cross-functional collaboration at many organizations.⁴ By centralizing and democratizing knowledge across their organizations, businesses can eliminate knowledge silos, provide greater visibility into what each team is working on, and provide a holistic view of the many moving pieces that contribute to the customer experience.

Drive Innovation

Innovation doesn't spring forth from one person's singular idea: it's the result of people making connections between different pieces of information and collaborating to come up with something new. A culture of knowledge engagement sets employees and teams up to make those connections and new discoveries, no matter where they're working or how their company is structured. By finding and applying the knowledge and insights of their peers, team members can better understand how their work fits into broader company goals and where there are opportunities to collaborate on innovative projects and ideas.

Knowledge Engagement Across Organizations

What does it truly look like for organizations to practice knowledge engagement? Knowledge engagement can be deployed across three key areas: customer experience, insights and innovation, and organization-wide knowledge enablement.

Customer Experience

Contact Centers

Contact center representatives are often considered the faces of their organizations, and they must be able to assist customers confidently, efficiently, and accurately. A single bad interaction with a contact center agent can be costly: 51 percent of surveyed Americans say they wouldn't do business with a company again after one negative experience, and U.S. businesses lose \$62 billion a year due to poor customer service.⁵ Knowledge engagement enables contact center agents to tap into their company's wealth of knowledge and find the answers to customer questions the moment they need them. That means fewer calls placed on hold, faster average times to resolution, and more satisfied customers.

Customer Support

Customer support teams typically focus on improving the customer experience with their company's products, and as a result, they work closely with both customers and product teams. Knowledge engagement helps customer support teams create a bridge between the product and customer experience: they can share common questions, issues, and feedback that they hear from customers while also assisting customers with helpful product documentation, best practice recommendations, and more.

In-the-Field Customer Service

For organizations that offer on-site customer service, it's essential that service representatives are able to access the information they need to assist customers in the field. Rather than expecting employees to memorize hundreds of pages of training materials or call a colleague in the office when they have a question, companies can empower their employees in the field by arming them with the technology to access the organization's knowledge from anywhere. In many cases, this means supplying on-site customer service representatives with mobile devices that allow them to access and search the company's knowledge engagement platform. For example, Dominion Energy supplies their electric field technicians with heavy-duty tablets that they can use to access essential safety information when working in the field.



Insights & Innovation

Market Research

One of the biggest challenges that market research and insights teams face is getting buy-in from decision-makers. Overall, only about half of all core business decisions are made with the influence of customer insights.⁶ Knowledge engagement helps boost the market research function's visibility and make customer insights central to their organization. Market research teams can publish final reports and insights related to research findings to their organization's knowledge engagement platform so that stakeholders from different departments can gain a better understanding of their target buyer's behaviors and motivations. And, because knowledge engagement is a two-way street, stakeholders can comment on and ask questions about the research, deepening their investment and helping to shape future research questions.

Research & Development

Research and development (R&D) teams may be on the frontlines of innovating on new products and services, but they can't exist within a vacuum. While most R&D teams undoubtedly have specific initiatives and goals that they're responsible for, it's important that they align with the goals of the larger organization—and leverage the knowledge of other functional areas. Knowledge engagement can give an entire organization greater insight into what the R&D team is working on and give the R&D team new opportunities to draw on the learnings of other departments. For example, consumer packaged goods company Conagra initially launched a knowledge engagement platform to their market research department but later expanded it to R&D, allowing the R&D department to make informed decisions based on customer research.

Data Science

Both market research and data science teams play a key role in gathering crucial information to power strategic decision-making. But in many organizations, market researchers and data scientists sit on separate teams, and it's all too easy for these teams to become siloed. As a result, the teams risk duplicating one another's efforts or missing valuable opportunities to collaborate.

A culture of knowledge engagement helps break down those silos and encourages market researchers and data scientists to work together, regardless of organizational structure. Combining each team's strengths can help uncover new insights that can be shared across the entire organization, leading to a greater understanding of the customer.

Org-Wide Knowledge Enablement

Sales & Marketing

According to research from SiriusDecisions, businesses achieve 19 percent more growth when their sales and marketing teams align and communicate effectively.⁷ But all too often, sales and marketing teams become siloed—marketing teams may fail to fully understand the goals and needs of their sales teams, while sales teams may not know what marketing content is available to help them move buyers through the sales cycle. In fact, enterprises lose an estimated \$2.3 million each year in opportunity costs associated with unused or underused marketing content.

Knowledge engagement allows marketing teams to centralize content and intelligence where sales teams can easily find and use it. Additionally, sales team members can centralize their own knowledge, from prospect call recordings to write-ups on closed deals, so that their marketing colleagues can better understand their messaging approach, content commonly used in deal cycles, and more.

Training & Learning

Ongoing training and learning opportunities not only help employees grow their skill sets, but they also improve overall job satisfaction. A LinkedIn study of 2,000 professionals found that people who spent time learning at work were 39 percent more likely to feel successful, 23 percent more ready than their peers to take on additional responsibilities, and 47 percent less likely to be stressed than their peers.⁸ When company-wide knowledge and resources are centralized and available on demand, employees are empowered to tap into professional development and training materials at any time and from anywhere. According to Derek Drawhorn, Executive Director of Communications at the University of Texas Health Science Center, “The result of information democratization is that you have happier people. They can see that they can progress because they have access to information that they didn’t have before.”⁹

Information Technology

Information technology (IT) team members can become stretched thin quickly, especially when they’re responsible for enabling remote work and assisting employees across different locations. With knowledge engagement, IT departments

can establish a self-serve, searchable library that includes how-to guides, tech support documentation, and on-demand video training for employees. Organizations can also encourage employees to post technology questions to the company’s centralized knowledge engagement platform so that an IT team member can publish an answer that’s accessible to everyone. This can reduce the number of one-off requests for assistance that IT specialists receive, giving them more time to focus on complex issues and strategies.

Knowledge Engagement Across Multiple Locations

When employees aren’t all working in the same office, it becomes more important than ever to establish a system where people can find, share, and collaborate around one another’s knowledge and insights. All employees should ideally have access to a cloud-based knowledge engagement platform so that no one is disadvantaged by their location. This can also open up more opportunities for businesses: without geographic constraints, they can hire from a wider talent pool and won’t experience a significant drop in productivity if an unplanned disruption requires them to close office locations.

The Role of a Knowledge Engagement Platform

Two of the central tenets of creating a knowledge engagement culture are centralizing all forms of knowledge and making knowledge easily searchable and discoverable. That's where a knowledge engagement platform comes in.

Knowledge Engagement vs. Knowledge Management

Knowledge engagement is the more apt term for knowledge-related activities in a modern workplace or organization, where information moves quickly and employees often need to collaborate across teams, functions, and geographic locations. While the term "knowledge management" implies that an individual or team will be solely responsible for overseeing and updating an organization's knowledge base, "knowledge engagement" implies a community-level effort to contribute to, act on, and grow an organization's collective intelligence.

A **knowledge engagement platform (KEP)** such as Bloomfire serves as a centralized hub for collecting, connecting, and democratizing the knowledge of teams and individuals across an organization. This type of platform allows for a one-to-many instead of one-to-one transfer of information and insights, enabling an organization to maximize the value of each contributor's knowledge. By making information and insights easy to find, a KEP allows everyone across an organization to stay informed and act on the best knowledge available to them.

Key Features of a Knowledge Engagement Platform

A knowledge engagement platform offers several key features that separate it from a traditional knowledge management system, such as a corporate wiki or portal. As organizations look for knowledge engagement solutions, it's useful to keep the following capabilities in mind.

Intelligent Search

It doesn't matter how much knowledge exists within an organization if its staff can't find it. As the volume of knowledge, insights, and data continues to grow, it's no longer enough to rely on a knowledge management system that only performs searches for titles, descriptions, and manually-applied tags.

A robust KEP deep indexes all content uploaded to it, even spoken words in video and audio files, so that everything becomes searchable and employees can jump straight to the information they need. This helps employees save significant time when searching for knowledge and, more importantly, allows them more time to apply knowledge and deliver on the job they were hired to perform.



Flexible Organization

When legacy knowledge management systems such as SharePoint need to be updated, organizations often need to work with developers who are familiar with the platform. If an organization has limited IT resources to support their legacy knowledge management system, they're likely to end up with a platform that's unintuitive to navigate and full of outdated content.

A knowledge engagement platform is designed to be continually updated without any hard coding or structural shortcomings. The best knowledge engagement platforms offer customizable ways to organize knowledge, including creating custom categories, adding multiple levels of sub-categories, and building series of related knowledge. Because information hierarchies can be updated as needed, KEPs can be easily scaled across multiple departments or the entire organization.

Q&A Capabilities

When it comes to capturing and sharing individual intellect in the flow of work, a knowledge engagement platform with question and answer capabilities is a powerful tool. A Q&A feature allows employees to post a question and crowdsource answers from subject matter experts (SMEs) across their organization. The questions and answers become searchable, like all other content, so that others can benefit from this knowledge (and avoid monopolizing SMEs' time with repetitive questions).

Accessibility

With companies increasingly shifting to remote or flexible work models (and 66 percent of employees believing the office will be obsolete by 2030)¹⁰, it's more important than ever to adopt technology that allows employees to work from anywhere, at any time. Modern knowledge engagement platforms like Bloomfire are cloud-based and built with responsive design best practices, meaning that they can be easily accessed and navigated from anywhere on any device with internet browsing capabilities.

Integrations with Existing Tech

At most companies, knowledge is spread across a wide range of platforms: team members may ask questions in Slack, collaborate on documents in a shared drive, record customer information in Salesforce, and so on. A KEP will offer integrations that bring existing knowledge into one searchable place while also allowing users to find and share knowledge within the platforms they use every day. The end result is employees tapping into an organization's collective intelligence in the natural flow of their work.

Knowledge Engagement Platforms Support Flex Work

If an organization supports or is thinking of supporting flex work—a model that gives workers flexibility in when and where they work—it's essential that they choose technology that makes it easy for employees to access and collaborate around company knowledge regardless of location. By democratizing knowledge through the cloud, knowledge engagement platforms help ensure no employee is disadvantaged by virtue of their location. All employees have access to the same information regardless of whether they're working in an office, from their home, or anywhere in between.

The ROI of Knowledge Engagement

Having a knowledge engagement platform and strategy can yield both short- and long-term value for businesses.

Retention

Knowledge engagement helps provide entire organizations with a holistic view of the customer, leading to greater customer satisfaction and loyalty. But knowledge engagement doesn't just improve customer retention: it can also improve employee retention. A culture of knowledge engagement demonstrates to employees that their knowledge is valued, gives them opportunities to collaborate with their peers, and gives them visibility into how their work supports larger organizational goals, all of which contributes to greater job satisfaction.

Outcomes:

- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty through better customer experiences
- Higher employee satisfaction and engagement with decreased information frustration
- Reduced duplication of work or loss of information and intelligence

KPIs:

- Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Scores (NPS)
- Time saved per employee (productivity gain)
- Average decrease in redundant work
- Contribution views in knowledge engagement platform
- Decrease in average employee onboarding time
- Training materials delivered

Innovation

Innovation requires businesses to apply, combine, and build on existing ideas in a way that leads to something that is new and useful to the customer. A culture of knowledge engagement allows businesses to bring together knowledge and insights from across the organization to fuel innovation.

Outcomes:

- Collaboration and cross-functional engagement on new ideas and information
- Delivery of insights to propel and inform business and go-to-market decisions
- Knowledge creation and augmentation to fuel competitive advantage

KPIs:

- Knowledge and insights contributed to knowledge engagement platform
- Consumption and communication of insights by business decision-makers and stakeholders
- Search volume and keyword trends in knowledge engagement platform
- Collaboration and engagement metrics in knowledge engagement platform (e.g. comments, questions, shares)



Revenue

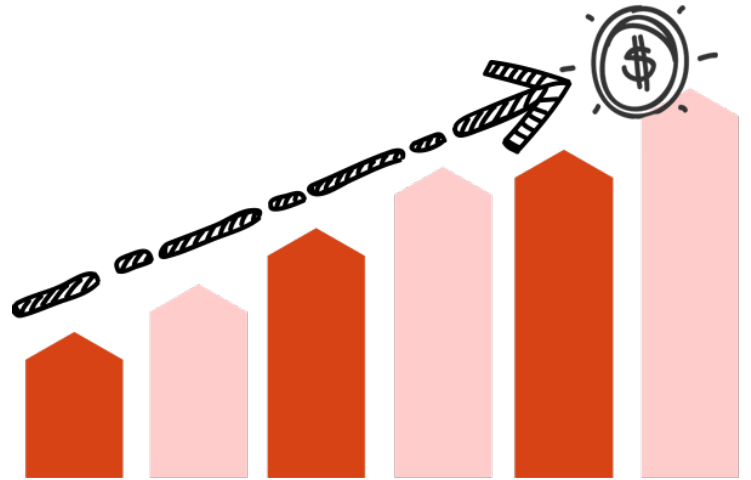
Knowledge engagement can increase revenue in a couple of key ways. First, on-demand access to knowledge allows employees to be more productive, leading to greater output and costs saved on operational improvements. Second, organizations can increase revenue through new products, services, and processes that arise from cross-functional innovation and knowledge sharing.

Outcomes:

- Reduced time spent searching for information and increased time spent on impactful activities
- Elimination of silos between departments and teams
- Reduction of work errors and redundant activities
- Faster speed of decision-making and ability to take action

KPIs:

- Productivity gains (measured in time saved)
- Average decrease in redundant work
- Average decrease in work errors
- Contribution views in knowledge engagement platform
- Increase of contributions, comments, questions, and answers in knowledge engagement platform
- Bottom line revenue increases



On-demand access to knowledge allows employees to be more productive, leading to greater output and costs saved on operational improvements.

Knowledge Engagement in Action: Real-World Examples

What does it actually look like when an organization puts knowledge engagement into action? Below, you'll find several real-world examples of Bloomfire customers who have embraced knowledge engagement and the value they've created for their businesses.

Customer Service



AGIA Affinity manages benefit programs for more than 100 affinity groups and 30 million members. As an insurance administrator, it's critical that they provide clear information on potentially complex topics to the prospects and customers who reach out to their contact center. AGIA uses Bloomfire to keep their customer service agents up-to-date with the latest policies and procedures; they've also started publishing checkpoint quizzes in Bloomfire to help confirm their agents' understanding of the content. Bloomfire has helped give AGIA's customer-facing employees greater confidence in the knowledge they're accessing and sharing, leading to a 15 percent decrease in new hire onboarding time and a 50 percent reduction in calls placed on hold.



Leading home warranty company American Home Shield handles approximately 2.5 million service requests per year. Because they enter into contracts with their customers, it's not just mission-critical that they share accurate, up-to-date information with customers who reach out to their contact center—it's a legal imperative. They use Bloomfire as their single source of truth for all customer service knowledge and have created a "Super Users" program, where a small team

of customer service agents search for and share official answers to questions that their peers post in Bloomfire. This Super User system—combined with the ease of search and the ability to post questions in Bloomfire—gives agents confidence in the knowledge they're sharing with customers, while giving the leadership team assurance that agents are only sharing approved information.

Market Research & Insights



Conagra Brands is a consumer packaged goods company with a portfolio of over 75 iconic brands, including Orville Redenbacher's, Marie Callender's, and Duncan Hines. As a company that prioritizes data-driven decisions, they use Bloomfire as their hub for insights, market research, and thought leadership content. Bloomfire has had a significant impact on the way Conagra's insights-generating teams and stakeholders communicate. Manager of Demand Science Melanie Greben notes that since Conagra adopted Bloomfire, she's seen a decrease in the number of siloed, one-to-one conversations team members have when searching for information. Additionally, employees are saving an estimated 20-30 minutes every time they need to find information, and the company has saved tens of thousands of dollars by avoiding redundant research.



Banking company Capital One has insights-generating teams embedded within nearly a dozen lines of businesses, with offices spread out across the U.S. They use Bloomfire to share market research and insights across lines of business, allowing different teams to learn from one another's research into consumer behavior and work together to elevate the customer experience. Bloomfire has given Capital One's insights teams more opportunities to build on existing research and data and to be more proactive in initiating new research projects, allowing them to become a true source of competitive advantage for their organization.

Org-Wide Knowledge Enablement



Tax preparation services company Jackson Hewitt operates more than 6,000 franchised locations across the U.S. They use Bloomfire to connect their franchisees with up-to-date information and reduce contact center calls by enabling franchisees to search for the answers they need. "We recognized the need and benefits early on connected to centralizing knowledge from across the business, and equipping our employees supporting field operations with content and information in a way team members can use when and where they need," says Jen Savage, Manager of Knowledge & Social Media at Jackson Hewitt. "Standardizing systems and information, and establishing consistent ways to communicate that information, has been critical in making it more effective for employees to access the right knowledge to do their jobs most successfully."



Insperity, an HR management organization that serves more than 100,000 businesses and has 60 locations across the U.S., uses Bloomfire to securely share information across their entire organization. While they originally began using Bloomfire to keep their sales team aligned, they expanded their use of the platform to the entire company to reduce the risk of duplicate work, keep departments aligned, and allow employees to access and leverage the knowledge of their peers, regardless of their role or location. While Insperity used to have an eight-person team to manage internal content, they now have 100 content curators in Bloomfire. Additionally, employees are encouraged to ask and answer questions in Bloomfire (with subject matter experts approving accurate answers), speeding up and improving the flow of information throughout the organization.

Final Takeaways

Knowledge is a business's most valuable asset, and when an organization turns it into a renewable resource through knowledge engagement, they can improve business efficiencies, drive well-informed decisions, and accelerate innovation.

Creating a culture of knowledge engagement isn't a finite activity: it takes the buy-in and ongoing efforts of people across an entire organization to ensure knowledge is continuously captured, shared, collaborated upon, and applied to business decisions. A knowledge engagement platform provides the tools necessary to support this dynamic culture. The right combination of technology and people will allow any organization to maximize the value of its collective intelligence.

Bloomfire is the leader in knowledge engagement, delivering an experience that connects teams and individuals with the information they need to do their jobs. Our cloud-based knowledge engagement platform gives people one centralized, searchable place to engage with shared knowledge and grow their organization's collective intelligence. For more information or to schedule a demo, visit www.bloomfire.com.

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