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# T H E A P P R O A C H

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Site managers and project managers solve complex problems in their day-to-day work; however, the industry does not capture this and may even not realise its significance. If this Knowledge was collected, structured and disseminated then there would be significant benefits to the companies.

The *Approach* is simple and low cost yet robust, fitting in with the ways people and companies work. Each week, the manager dictates a problem-solving event into a Dictaphone in order to **Capture** Knowledge. These recordings contain the personal knowledge and thinking of the manager. To see the significance of these events and to **Transform** the knowledge in order to make it accessible to others, the managers are debriefed each month about the set of recorded events. Once the significant knowledge is made explicit, it can then be **Disseminated** within the company and the industry.

The personal knowledge that is embedded in the recorded events is very complex as it depends heavily on the context and developing circumstances of the event. This knowledge is referred to as TACIT knowledge and is not generally available outside the person. However in practice, sometimes knowledge transformation and dissemination does take place through managers telling stories about their work. However, this knowledge is not validated nor is the process dependable. In addition, site managers and project managers work away from the body of the organisation and have fewer opportunities to communicate this way.

The *Approach* works with these ideas but in a more formal way.

The longer-term objective is that the companies can learn to operate the *Approach* by themselves as part of their general operation.

The logo for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), consisting of the lowercase letters 'dti' in a bold, sans-serif font.

A Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)  
Partners in Innovation Programme  
funded project

## An Approach to Knowledge Management for SMEs

The logo for UCE Birmingham, with 'UCE' in large red letters and 'Birmingham' in smaller black letters below it.

# B E N E F I T S

The *Approach* will benefit the individuals, the companies and the industry:

- ◆ *Managers learn from their experience and develop greater self worth*
- ◆ *Companies develop their knowledge base becoming more competitive and sustainable.*
- ◆ *Companies appreciate their human assets and grow as communities of practitioners*
- ◆ *The Industry provides a better service to clients more economically*

The 18-month project will evaluate the *Approach* and deliver refinements and training to operate it. This will be reported to industry workshops, disseminated in leaflets and broadcast on a dedicated web site:

<http://www.be.uce.ac.uk/kem4construction>

The companies involved are part of the new progressive thinking in the industry and demonstrate their own willingness to be the champions of change.

## WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

People have **Knowledge** when they can make use of information from the past events for a current situation.

**Knowledge-Management** involves appreciating this Knowledge base and actively collecting it, sharing it and creating new knowledge within an organisational setting.

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