Responding to the challenge of change

An agenda for Knowledge and Organisational Learning Professionals
Acknowledgements
Thank you to the following organisations for taking part in this research:

Berwin Leighton Paisner
British Dental Association
Cabinet Office
Department of Energy & Climate Change
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EDF Energy
Financial Conduct Authority
Financial Ombudsman Service
Lloyds Banking Group
Mundipharma Research
MWH
National Audit Office
Osborne Clarke
SABMiller
Surrey County Council
United Utilities.

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# Responding to the challenge of change

## Contents

**Executive summary** ................................................................. 1  
1. **Why did we investigate this topic?** ........................................ 2  
   i. Change is high on your agenda .............................................. 2  
   ii. Our working world is more VUCA .......................................... 2  
   iii. We wanted to understand more about the challenge of change ........................................ 2  
2. **What did we do?** ................................................................. 2  
3. **What did we learn?** ............................................................. 3  
   - Issues facing knowledge organisations .................................. 3  
     * Dealing with change in a challenging environment .................... 3  
     * Responding to change on multiple fronts ................................. 4  
     * Working to survive and thrive in the midst of change ............... 5  
   - Issues facing knowledge and learning professionals .................. 6  
     * Making a difference .......................................................... 6  
     * Managing uncertainty, dilemmas, and the fear of failing ........... 6  
   - Connections between knowledge, learning and change ................ 8  
     * Using knowledge and learning to drive change ....................... 8  
     * Responding to change in knowledge and learning work ............. 12  
     * Implementing change ....................................................... 13  
     * Developing successful internal partnerships in change .............. 14  
4. **How are we using what we learned?** ..................................... 15  
   - Key implications .............................................................. 15  
   - Informing the Henley Forum agenda ....................................... 16  
**Appendices** ............................................................................ 17  
   - Appendix I: Interview questions ............................................ 17  
   - Appendix II: Themes arising from Forum workshop (November 2014) ........................................ 18
Executive summary

In a working world that is evermore volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA), knowledge organisations are responding to changing demands on multiple fronts simultaneously. And they need to become more change-able. Learning 'live' and co-creating knowledge across boundaries are now crucial competencies in a VUCA world.

This report reminds us that not all knowledge organisations are knowledgeable organisations. Some have got the message and are integrating organisational learning and knowledge strategies into their business to help them drive, support and inform their responses to changing conditions. In others, only pockets of people are making that connection and there is a real need to connect the dots.

Fortunately, many knowledge and learning professionals are making the vital connections between knowledge, learning and change. Many are already playing an important role as agents of change by connecting, collaborating, communicating and championing. They are carefully selecting strategies to help them change mindsets and behaviours in their organisations. Sometimes that means working ‘loud and proud’ and at other times choosing to be more ‘quietly influential’ in order to make a difference.

But, if knowledge organisations are to become more change-able, then knowledge and learning professionals also need to become more change-able by:

- Simultaneously responding, creating, preparing for and anticipating change
- Balancing some challenging dilemmas
- Shifting mindsets and behaviours
- Finding and forming successful partnerships across internal boundaries
- Managing the change process to implement knowledge and learning initiatives more effectively.

The Henley Forum programme for 2015/16 will help knowledge and learning professionals to address key challenges highlighted by this report and to develop their own change-ability.

The findings in this report are drawn from a research study which explored how 16 knowledge organisations (members of the Henley Forum and beyond) and 19 of their knowledge and learning professionals are responding to the challenges of change in a VUCA world.
1. Why did we investigate this topic?

There were 3 reasons:

i. Change is high on your agenda

We learned from our Forum 2014 trends survey and from talking to Henley Forum members that change is high on the agenda for knowledge and learning professionals.

ii. Our working world is more VUCA

Many people and organisations are finding that their working world is becoming increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA).

We were interested in exploring what particular challenges this VUCA world presents for knowledge organisations; how they are adapting to changing expectations; and how organisational learning and knowledge strategies can help.

iii. We wanted to understand more about the challenge of change

With change high on your agenda, we wanted to know more about how that manifested in practice:

- What are the challenges facing knowledge organisations as they look towards 2020?
- Where are knowledge and learning professionals encountering difficulties and frustrations that they could not solve themselves? We will address those issues through our Henley Forum programme of events and activities in 2015-16.
- In a fast-changing world, what strategic and operational connections are knowledge organisations and knowledge professionals making between the knowledge, learning and change agendas?

[See Appendix I for interview questions].

2. What did we do?

Workshop: We ran a short workshop with Henley Forum members in November 2014 to find out what challenges they were facing as they looked towards 2020. The message was one of unremitting upheaval.

Interviews: We then interviewed 19 knowledge and learning professionals from 16 organisations (Dec 2014 - March 2015) to unpick the challenges of change and understand their role within the change process.
3. What did we learn?

Issues facing knowledge organisations

• Dealing with change in a challenging environment

We asked what were the big issues and concerns taking up people’s time and attention across knowledge organisations. You said that *dealing with the uncertainty of change* is top of mind for many.

It’s a wicked world: the story from the workshop

The November 2014 workshop told a tale of continuous upheaval and environmental instability. Your work to improve the business contribution of knowledge and learning is embedded within that dynamic context so you are being challenged to respond to ‘wicked issues’.

You told us that leaders and organisations need to become more *change-able*. In particular, they need to get better at *making sense* of a VUCA environment and in *managing the risks and tensions* that arise.

For more about the story from the workshop, please see Appendix II.

**Implications:** The continuous nature of change really does pose some wicked challenges. Increasing volatility means that there are no stable points, so there are fewer naturally-occurring opportunities to pause, think and learn. Yet the discontinuity of change makes learning more vital than ever. When yesterday is unlike today, and tomorrow will be different again, knowledge is quickly outdated. Organisations need to get better at learning ‘live’ to make informed responses in a VUCA world.
Responding to change on multiple fronts

You told us that the real challenge for knowledge organisations is to respond to changing conditions and changing expectations on multiple fronts simultaneously. The forces for change emerge with little warning from both inside and outside organisations. You highlighted external changes impacting knowledge organisations, such as the economic downturn, the 2015 General Election, increasing globalisation, and changing client and stakeholder expectations. You also highlighted internal changes such as transformation programmes, staff changes, and efforts to evolve culture and behaviours.

A multiplicity of interdependent forces for change:

Many organisations are working hard to respond to changing client and stakeholder expectations:

“It’s [about] understanding the changes the client is going through and therefore how we respond in the light of that”.

“We thought we were doing all the right things, but we weren’t giving them [the regulator] the confidence that we were doing what we should be”.

Concerns about political and regulatory change are affecting both private and public sector organisations. Some are affected directly, such as government departments in the run up to the general election. Others, such as professional services organisations, are affected indirectly, because their clients are affected.

Some industry sectors are seeing strategic shifts. For some sectors “there’s been a change in what clients will pay for”. In others, technology has brought new channels to help them reach and influence end users. Changing attitudes to risk seem likely to revolutionise sectors such as banking and pharmaceuticals in terms of both what they do and how they do it.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, service development and delivery are key priorities for many:
managing major projects; developing new services; online delivery of services; and making efficiencies by coming up with better ways of doing things.
**Implications:** The need to change on multiple fronts at the same time dramatically compounds the complexity of the challenge. Satisfying growing numbers of stakeholders, each with differing agendas, and all of whom can influence the outcome, further increases complexity. The imperative to co-create and share knowledge across multiple communities within and beyond organisational boundaries has never been greater.

Interdependencies between the various forces for change also amplify the challenge. For example, a heightened sense of uncertainty and information overload can be unintended consequences of a mass of internal and external changes, whilst also being forces for change which demand a separate response. So complexity compounds. Knowledge professionals can find themselves squeezed in the middle of these multiple, interdependent and sometimes conflicting priorities.

- **Working to survive and thrive in the midst of change**

  The emerging picture is of knowledge organisations working to survive and thrive in the midst of change by simultaneously:
  - responding to change that has happened
  - creating change that they want
  - preparing for change that will happen
  - and anticipating change that might happen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past change</th>
<th>Change now</th>
<th>Future change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responding to change that has happened</td>
<td>Creating change that is wanted</td>
<td>Preparing for change that will happen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Responding to effects of economic downturn.
- Responding to increased regulation in banking sector.
- Responding to effects on clients of increase in professional fees.
- Creating a global sense of community (internally).
- Driving efficiency and making the whole thing more effective.
- Service development e.g. digitising our business.
- Getting the house in order for 'go live' on major projects.
- Being ready to deal with crises and emergencies.
- Trying to get the country up to date with ‘digital’.
- Likelihood of strategic change e.g. mergers.
- Concern about another restructure.
- Waiting with 'baited breath' for regulatory change.

**Table 1: A change continuum**

We were reminded that there are many dimensions to managing change – from responding to anticipating – and each of them need different processes and methods. This highlighted the difficulties of managing the many dimensions of change at the same time.

**Implications:** While in the past, organisations may have had the luxury of separating these activities into different functions or timeframes, now they are all interconnected. The implication of that simultaneity is that these different activities can exacerbate the stress, confusion and ambiguity surrounding knowledge work.
Issues facing knowledge and learning professionals

We asked knowledge and learning professionals what was taking up their time and attention nowadays; in particular what were the most exciting and the most worrisome things.

- Making a difference

Knowledge and learning professionals are excited by how their professional practice can really make a difference and are driven to make that difference.

Interviewees readily shared their success stories and told us that they “love hearing stories of when it does work and the benefits... of these things we’re trying to establish”. They love delivering change and performance improvement in various ways. These ways include developing communities; embedding new learning techniques; and coming up with new events and initiatives. We heard that “driving forward to where no one’s gone before is the exciting bit”.

Most exciting

- Success stories
- Performance improvement
- Delivering business change
- Developing communities
- New events and initiatives

These 6 themes surfaced in response to the question: what are the most exciting things going on for you at work?

The low number of themes suggests that there is a lot of agreement

Implications: Making a difference means enabling change. Knowledge and learning professionals themselves need to become highly change-able.

- Managing uncertainty, dilemmas, and the fear of failing

The things keeping knowledge and learning professionals awake at night are more complex and varied; the inherent uncertainty in change; grappling with some troublesome dilemmas; and the natural fear of failing. In general, however, we found that knowledge and learning professionals were ready to engage with these challenges of change.

Uncertainty

All the exciting things keep me awake at night because they’re scary too. And I think that’s the thing, going back to the VUCA environment, is most of that is unknown and uncertain, so you’re not doing things you’ve done before.

Uncertainty was always a given in change. The VUCA environment is innately and permanently uncertain; how strategies will land is uncertain; and how people and organisations will respond is uncertain. That uncertainty can be seen as both an opportunity and a threat.
As these quotes illustrate, however, generally knowledge and learning practitioners see the unknown as an opportunity to try new things out, to learn and grow, to take intelligent risks in order to make a difference.

“It’s working out what the next big thing is. We’re leading it, so have nobody there to tell us. Is there something that might make a big difference?”

“It’s like being in a dark room, stumbling around looking for the door, and when you find it, light floods in. But it’s the stumbling in the dark that took you to the door, without it you wouldn’t have made the progress. It’s about taking intelligent risks.”

Dilemmas
Secondly, knowledge and learning professionals are working with some troublesome dilemmas.

Achieving collaboration can be particularly problematic when everyone is focused on different targets and pulled in different directions, or when people want to protect their knowledge to assure their future. While collaboration can support organisation-wide change, there is a double bind here because fostering a collaborative working environment may itself demand a change in culture, mindsets and behaviours.

“Collaboration is one of our values, but people are delivery and time focused. We don’t really reward collaboration.”

“People don’t want to share their expertise. They see themselves as experts and it’s that expertise that makes them indispensible.”

That dilemma around collaboration vs. time was just one of a whole raft of dilemmas that are keeping knowledge and learning professionals awake at night:

![Figure 1: Dilemmas that cause tension for knowledge and learning professionals](image)

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But people recognised that engaging with these dilemmas creatively was unavoidable and the role of knowledge and learning professionals was to hold the tension constructively:

“*It’s understanding that you can have two opposites – and we don’t feel comfortable with that, we don’t like it, and we want to move one way or the other. And actually, as knowledge professionals, we need to be able to hold opposites in tension very well and actually survive and thrive in that.*

**Fears**

And finally, there are the common fears about failing. There are fears about missed opportunities for organisational learning; concerns about how we might know and show that organisational learning and knowledge strategies are making a difference; worries about what-ifs: “*what if something goes wrong?*, “*what if we haven’t trained enough on something?*” and concerns about the consequences. Rather than putting people off, typically we found knowledge and learning professionals using those fears as drivers “*because the consequences of not doing so are dire*”.

**Implications:** For knowledge and learning professionals there are two sides to the change coin. On one side, making a difference and trying new things is exciting. But it is also daunting, and it seems that many knowledge and learning professionals are feeling squeezed in the middle. They are left to interpret the implications of change; help others make sense of it; translate expectations with some degree of confidence and conviction; and to overcome a variety of obstacles along the way.

**Connections between knowledge, learning and change**

“There are costs to creating knowledge, but there’s no return on investment if you don’t do the change piece."

- **Using knowledge and learning to drive change**

We asked interviewees how their organisations used knowledge and learning to drive, support, or inform organisational change. They told us that it was a tough question, but an important one!

(i) So first all, *is there a connection?* It is widely acknowledged by many successful organisations, and in the theory, that change requires organisational learning. Acquiring new knowledge and embedding new ways of working is essential for adapting to altered circumstances whether the pace of change is gradual, or whether it is sudden and revolutionary. Organisations are simply groups of people. So, for organisations to change, people have to separately and together change behaviour. They do that by gaining new knowledge about what to do differently and by learning to behave differently in practice.

Some people felt there was no formal connection between knowledge, learning and change at an organisational level. Others felt there was an implicit link, but that the connection was informal,
or in pockets, rather than more formal or widespread. For others, however, there was already a strong connection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak connection</th>
<th>Informal connection</th>
<th>Strong connection</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;At an organisational level, I don’t see much evidence of it&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;You see it in pockets in directorates, but there’s no evidence at the highest levels&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;We’re the instruments of change… the change conscience of the firm&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organisational | Departmental | Individual

Table 2: How knowledge and learning connects to change

**Implications:** So, for many knowledge and learning professionals, the connection is clear. Yet this is not necessarily the case in all knowledge organisations or even across all levels of each organisation. While some get it, for many, there is still some way to go in understanding that knowledge and learning can help to drive, support or inform change. An oft-quoted statistic is that 70% of organisational change initiatives fail. The failure to understand and make a good use of knowledge and organisational learning may be a contributory factor in that poor performance.

That finding is disappointing. And many knowledge and learning professionals that we spoke to are rightly concerned about the gap. Yet, in those organisations that do not yet get it, it also signals an opportunity for knowledge and learning professionals to play a key role in making a connection and bringing that mindset shift about; in turning knowledge organisations into knowledgeable organisations.

But there are some bright spots. Some have integrated their work into business as usual, to help their organisation to operate knowledgeably in the new networked environment.

"We are the business. We’re not separate in that way any more."
(ii) So, what is the connection? In general, interviewees suggest that knowledge and learning underpin and enable change. But, in specific instances, the reverse is true. Some prefer to start with the difference that needs to be made and work backwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and learning drive and enable change</th>
<th>“The knowledge sharing side has a lot to contribute to organisational change”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K &amp; L → C</td>
<td>“All change is underpinned by the learning that goes with the change”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“For me there’s a logical order, you start with knowledge and ask what change can I bring about? Other people work the other way. There are different ways of looking at it”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Focusing on knowledge and learning as being ‘a silent enabler’ – everything should be doing something”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We engaged ourselves with a proof of concept [on collaboration] in our own areas… We were treading water a bit to see whether the group would capture this theme… and that is what they’re doing now… They appointed a collaboration director”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change drives knowledge and learning to enable change</th>
<th>“It’s a change that we want… that I work back from. So it starts externally and I work back from that to say, OK, here is a way that we can enable that change to happen”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K &amp; L ← C</td>
<td>“The change aspect is hugely important because that’s how you get buy-in. You get buy-in up front on the change, and then the knowledge and L&amp;D aspect just has to fall in”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Which comes first, knowledge and learning or change?

In some instances, we heard “change is often driven from the top” while in others “it’s not a forced agenda… [it’s] incremental, evolutionary”. Perhaps when the change is mandated from the top down with predetermined boundaries, the start point has to be the change i.e. K & L ← C. Whereas where change is encouraged as a more emergent and co-created adaptation, it might be that knowledge and learning are the better starting point i.e. K & L → C. From these ideas and the above quotations, we can start to draw out two archetypes - ‘loud and proud KM’ and ‘quietly influential KM’.

![Figure 2: What’s the right style for your organisation?](image)

**Implications:** It is not an either/or choice. In some instances knowledge and learning professionals can be loud and proud, while in others they may need to be quietly influential and to work under the radar. Making the right choice means taking into account the learning culture in that part of the organisation.
(iii) So, how does your work in knowledge and learning drive, support or inform change?

Interviewees told us that “the way forward” was behaviour change. Many knowledge and learning professionals “see themselves as helping to create behavioural change”. We heard about connecting, collaborating, communicating, and championing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecting</th>
<th>“I call myself the lynchpin”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’re trying to connect people across silos [to develop solutions]”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Engineers love developing the stock of knowledge. But they don’t tell anyone. My role is getting it flowing around the business”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Connect[ing] the heads”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“It’s where some of the savings are going to come from. Connect[ing] people better so learning is transferred across the organisation”.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborating</th>
<th>“We’ve got to get people to ‘think out loud’”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Increasingly people are picking up on collaborative ways of working... we’re saying it’s a tool to help you deliver your business outcomes”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’ve got to get people to ‘think out loud’ and they don’t like doing that. The whole culture of collaboration is what we’re trying to prove out”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Communities are powerful things and we’re putting them forward as potential answers in the change programme – because they help people collaborate in different ways and on different topics”.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicating</th>
<th>“A lot of air time, comms time, face-to-face time”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So a lot of how I spend my time is preparing people for change, talking to people about change. So that’s quite a lot of air time, comms time, face-to-face time”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’ve set up a global comms team... and created a new site... an e-newspaper for the business”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Storytelling is another focus area”.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Championing</th>
<th>“Getting the converts to become facilitators”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“There are champions at every level”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“[We’re] choosing people to be the knowledge director and the knowledge champion... [and] looking for behaviour change”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The four ‘Knowledge and Learning C’s’ supporting change

**Implications:** Knowledge and learning professionals play an important role in making the connections between knowledge, learning and change.
• **Responding to change in knowledge and learning work**

> My observation is that people don’t often see that link between knowledge, learning and change. For me, it’s quite obvious.

Interviewees told us that change can be both a good thing and a bad thing. On the positive side, organisational change can legitimise or accentuate the need for knowledge and learning work:

> “[Business] change has made people realise that knowledge and learning are required”.

> “The market crash changed our gearing – we’d have had less knowledge professionals [without it]. There has been, in line with those changes, an investment. During the crash my gearing would have been around 1:200, now it’s 1:40”.

> “If you don’t have the right information at the right time it is going to impact your bottom line and your delivery”.

But being ‘on the receiving end’ of change is not always easy, especially anticipating change:

> “The business makes the change and people find a way to cope with that change. They might develop new systems or ways of working, or [not]”.

> “When you’re on the receiving end of organisational change, it’s not always well understood or thought through, so we don’t always have the tools and systems to support the new ways of working… there is no guiding mind from the top”.

> “You have to be careful to know what thinking is going on, or you could be caught out. There are time lags in communications up and down the hierarchy”.
In some organisations, knowledge and learning professionals play a central role in change:

“We’re the instruments of change”.

“We are the agents of change rather than being the recipients of change”.

**Implications:** Being flexible and agile are key characteristics for operating effectively in a changing context:

“Operate[ing] more holistically... [is] causing us to rethink how we communicate”.

“Change means that the knowledge framework has to be quite agile. We need to have the confidence to stop doing things, and start doing things, and generate fresh ideas”.

“When new issues arise, we have to adapt what we know”.

“We’re looking at forward facing things in the communities. Topics need to be relevant now and in the long-term”.

“My team are open to change and flexible”.

**Implementing change**

Interviewees told us about the barriers they are facing in creating change in their organisations as well as the enablers. The perception of value is key, an enabler when knowledge and learning professionals are able to demonstrate value for the business or the individual, but a barrier if it is not something that is recognised or rewarded, or people are not convinced what is in it for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Barriers]</th>
<th>[Enablers]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Demonstrating value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitudes and beliefs</td>
<td>Communication and engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of value</td>
<td>Champions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change process</td>
<td>User friendly approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>New skillset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection to business outcomes</td>
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*Table 5: Forces affecting knowledge and learning professionals’ capacity to effect change*

**Implications:** A key question arising for knowledge and learning professionals is how they can effectively manage the change process to implement knowledge and learning initiatives more effectively. To identify what strengths they can build on and what processes might help.
• **Developing successful internal partnerships in change**

Being a lone voice can be a challenge. There was no doubt that developing successful internal partnerships, laterally and vertically, can help knowledge and learning to land well.

From islands... ...to networks of partners in change

"There's no one doing my job at an organisational level, so I'm a bit of an island."

"There's a network of advocates... who help me promote knowledge sharing. I see them as partners. "

"I say I'd like to have a chat with you. The reply is yes, I can meet you tomorrow. It's a great sign."

Many of these partnerships are informal; “the KIM team gets involved in a number of area. We invite ourselves”. Other alliances are more planned. We found knowledge and learning professionals partnering with colleagues in HR and Finance to find ways of recognising and rewarding knowledge sharing and treading very carefully to avoid unforeseen consequences. But it is not always easy to find appropriate partners:

“I have mixed feelings about involving HR. I've love HR people to be more involved in this. The counter is that, if they don't get it and see the value, then I'm between a rock and a hard place. Until I find the right person who'll get it, I won't introduce them to it”.

**Implications:** You cannot do it alone, you have to understand how to influence stakeholders to get on board with knowledge and learning activities through chains of influence, and developing formal and informal partnerships across internal interfaces.
4. How are we using what we learned?

Key implications

Our research emphasised the intricacy of the business need to respond to change in knowledge organisations. It also highlighted an appetite among knowledge and learning professionals to make a difference through organisational learning and knowledge strategies. Yet, successfully creating and responding to change remain challenging endeavours.

The table below summarises the key implications highlighted in this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implications for knowledge organisations</th>
<th>Implications for knowledge and learning professionals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Organisations need to get better at learning 'live' to make informed responses in a VUCA world</td>
<td>- You may be caught in the middle of multiple, interdependent and conflicting priorities for change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The multiplicity of change drivers increases the imperative to co-create and share knowledge across communities, within and beyond organisational boundaries.</td>
<td>- Simultaneously responding, creating, preparing for and anticipating change can exacerbate the stress, confusion and ambiguity surrounding knowledge work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understand the role that knowledge and learning play in driving, supporting and informing change will help knowledge organisations to become knowledgeable organisations.</td>
<td>- You have a key role to play in shifting mindsets and behaviours so knowledge organisations become knowledgeable.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Making a difference requires you to become highly change-able.</td>
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<td>- You may be left to interpret the implications of change, help others make sense of it, translate expectations with some degree of confidence, and overcome a variety of obstacles along the way.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Knowledge and learning work can be loud and proud or quietly influential, working under the radar, depending on the learning culture in that part of the organisation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Being flexible and agile are key to operating in a changing context.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A key question is how you can effectively manage the change process to implement knowledge and learning initiatives more effectively; identifying what strengths you have and what processes might help.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- You simply cannot do it alone! You have to work across internal boundaries.</td>
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Table 6: Summarising the major implications
Informing the Henley Forum agenda

Change seems to be high on everyone’s agenda. Organisational learning and knowledge are simply a means to an end. We use them to make a difference.

Therefore, in 2015/16 the Henley Forum will focus on the practical issue of **Making a difference** with knowledge and learning. Each of our events, research projects and activities will tie into that overarching change theme.

We will capture and share that knowledge by developing the story of the Forum over the course of the year. We will create event pages and scrapbook pages illustrated with words, pictures, photos, quotes, links and tweets #HenleyForum

Together we will build a substantial and meaningful body of collective knowledge about making a difference with knowledge and learning.
Appendices

Appendix I: Interview questions

I. Your issues

**AIM:** To identify key issues facing knowledge organisations and KM/OL professionals

**Current issues**
1. What are the big issues and concerns that people across your organisation are being asked to focus attention on?
2. What's taking up your time and attention nowadays?
   - And how do those things support the main agenda?

**Current energies**
3. What are the most exciting things going on for you at work? And why?
4. What's keeping you awake at night? And why?

**Future concerns**
5. What challenges and opportunities does your organisation have on its horizon?
6. And what about for you? What challenges and opportunities are coming up?

II. Connections between KM, OL & change

**AIM:** To understand how interviewees and their organisations perceive connections between KM, OL & change

**Organisation view**
7. How does your organisation use OL (& KM) to drive, support, or inform organisation change?
   - Is OL perceived as contributing to the change agenda? How?
   - Is OL used to support change activities? How?
8. How does change influence OL and knowledge strategies in your organisation?

**Your view**
9. How does your work in OL (KM) drive, support or inform organisation change?
10. How does organisation change influence your work on OL (KM)?

**Managing change**
11. What change issues are you facing in implementing KM/OL initiatives?

III. Forum help with key issues

**AIM:** To identify what help people need/would value from the Forum

12. How could the Forum help you in dealing with the issues you've raised?
Appendix II: Themes arising from Forum workshop (November 2014)

Is 2020 vision enough? The challenges facing knowledge organisations

Themes arising

- Responding to changing environment
- Organisational change – culture, working practices
- Organisational change – engagement
- Leadership
- More with less – efficiency, financial pressures
- Short-termism
- Technology and tools
- Meeting stakeholder needs
- Working across networks/partnerships
- Managing information and risk
- Barriers to knowledge sharing and organisational learning
- Changing workforce
- Developing capability
- Participation and rewards
- Other issues

What’s the story?

The story is one of a changing (and challenging) environment and considering your organisational responses. Your work is embedded in a changing context and you are being challenged to respond.

Key challenges include:

- **Change challenges**: responding to a changing environment, instituting organisational change, engaging people
- **Contextual challenges**: doing more with less, short-termism, changing expectations of technology
- **Information challenges**: managing information and risk, overcoming barriers to knowledge sharing and organisational learning
- **Network challenges**: meeting stakeholder needs and working across networks
- **People challenges**: a changing workforce, developing capabilities, participation and reward
What leadership and organisational behaviours are needed to address ‘wicked issues’?

Themes arising:
- Becoming more change-able
- Making sense
- Managing risk
- Managing tensions
- Communication and engagement

What’s the story?
- Leaders and organisations need to become more *change-able* to address ‘wicked issues’ in a changing organisational context
- In particular, they need to get better at *making sense*, and in *managing risk and tensions*
- Good *communication and engagement skills* are seen as essential for success