Knowledge Management and The Personal Influence Model
An Opportunity for Organizational Enhancement

by

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Published by the Institute for Public Relations
October 2008

Acknowledgements:

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my professor and advisor, Toni Muzi Falconi, who introduced me to the idea for this paper, endured my countless drafts, and encouraged me along the way.

I would also like to thank Frank Ovaitt and James Savage who, along with Toni Muzi Falconi, I considered my advisory board. They laboured with me over the process and methodology behind our qualitative research and opened their own stakeholder networks to me for the purpose of this research.

This paper is a collaboration of thoughts and assumptions, experience and predictions. While journal articles and books helped to inform my writing, the applicability of the ideas on the forthcoming pages would not have been captured without the insight shared from leaders in the communications and public relations field. Specifically:

> To Peter Debreceny, Co-Chair of the Institute for Public Relations, and the Chair of the Institute's Commission on Global Public Relations Research – thank you for your time and promotion of this research.
>
> To Robbin Goodman at Makovsky + Company; Gary Grates at Edelman; Toni Griffin at MetLife; Rob Imig at Kiehl’s; Jim Issokson at MasterCard; Ray Jordan at Johnson & Johnson; Jennifer Sargent at Ernst &Young LLP; and Gary Sheffer at General Electric – my most sincere thank you for your time and your thoughtful, powerful conversations.
>
> To Gianluca Comin at Enel; David Kistle at Padilla Speer Beardsley; David Monfried at Safeco Insurance; James S. O’Rourke at the University of Notre Dame; Helen Ostrowski at Porter Novelli; Doug Pinkham at Public Affairs Council; Ernst Primosch at Henkel;

MaryLee Sachs at Hill & Knowlton; Dave Samson at Chevron; Arthur E.F. Wiese, Jr. at Entergy Corporation; and to all the others who were unable to disclose identifying information – thank you for your participation, feedback and genuine interest in my research and questionnaire.

To Antonio Lorenzon – For sharing your research on CRM, grazie.

To John Doorley and the many fantastic professors teaching in New York University's public relations and corporate communications master's program, thank you for charging me with focus and sharing your love for the industry of professional public relations.

It has been a privilege to dive into this relatively uncharted territory with such distinguished thought leaders. This paper is by no means an exhaustive piece on what is—or what could be—in the world of managing stakeholder relationships. However, the lines between personal relationships and professional relationships are continuously being blurred. In an age where digital communication and technology are advancing the ambiguity of those distinctions, it will become increasingly important for organizations to address how to manage stakeholder relationships—including relationships that may reside one-on-one with employees within the organization.

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"An organization is dynamic. Many industries have suffered because of their inability to manage relationships. Technology has 'upped the ante,' making communication faster and easier. However, it also makes it increasingly difficult to have authentic, meaningful relationships in a world of superficial communication."

Gary Grates, President and Global Managing Director, Edelman Change and Employee Engagement

I. Introduction

The Personal Influence Model

The personal influence model of public relations, developed principally by public relations scholar Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, acknowledges that the success of public relations is greatly influenced by personal networks. With this model, practitioners try to establish personal relationships—friendships, if possible—with key individuals in the media, government, or political and activist groups (Grunig, 1995, 18). This model has created some embarrassment among public relations scholars, educators and practitioners because its most immediate implication is that the 'people whom you know' bear more relevance in one's professional career than other competencies (Falconi, 2008).

Despite a general hesitancy to acknowledge this model, maintaining good personal relationships encompassing trust and authenticity, with strategically placed persons, is a business imperative. In organizations, this model can be applied by nurturing relationships with stakeholder publics—which could be media, employees, shareholders, customers, vendors, and the other myriad publics who have an interest in the organization.

Organizational capital is formed by various indicators, including intellectual property such as good will and trust. If an organization could succeed in transforming individual relationships into organizational relationships, there would be one more indicator that would greatly enhance the value of the organization, and contribute to the overall value public relations has for the organization (Falconi, 2008).

There is an opportunity to institutionalize the personal influence model in public relations through the use of knowledge management tools, creating enormous value for an organization with reciprocal benefits to the employees. Several well managed organizations are already using knowledge management tools to collect information within their respective organizations to make them more efficient, profitable, and desirable as both an employer and product or service provider. Still, it is unclear if organizations are capturing and rationalizing the *personal relationships* of their managers, consultants and employees; how they do this; and how they measure the value. This paper provides background on knowledge management and examines the role that the personal influence model could play in organizations by the adoption of knowledge management practices, which would involve instituting a mechanism to capture and rationalize relationships with stakeholder publics.

Research and Methodology

Through face-to-face and telephone interviews with several senior managers of the communications function at large organizations, the researcher explored issues related to current knowledge management practices, as well as thoughts on whether or not knowledge management tools could be used in public relations to transform personal relationships into organizational relationships.[1] Specific questions fell under the following three headings:

- Information on knowledge management practice, focused on relationships with stakeholder publics
- Information on knowledge management practice, specifically as it relates to public relations and communication objectives
- Organizational structure, culture, and capabilities

[1] An outline of interview questions and content from the online questionnaire are available in the Addendum on pages 35 – 46.

Interviews were extended to 25 professionals working in senior positions within the communications function at their organization. Eight executives agreed to speak with the researcher. Participants included (in alphabetical order by last name):

- Robbin Goodman, Executive Vice President and partner, Makovsky + Company
- Gary Grates, President and Global Managing Director, Edelman Change and Employee Engagement
- Toni Griffin, Director of Public Relations at MetLife
- Rob Imig, Vice President, Public Relations, Kiehl's
- Jim Issokson, Senior Business Leader, Reputation and Issues Management, Worldwide Communications at MasterCard
- Ray Jordan, Corporate Vice President for Public Affairs and Corporate Communication, Johnson & Johnson
- Jennifer Sargent, Global Knowledge Manager, Ernst &Young LLP
- Gary Sheffer, General Manager, Public Affairs and Employee Communications, General Electric

Interviews were conducted first with the strategic intention of informing the ultimate design and material in the online questionnaire. Following the interviews, the online questionnaire was developed and extended to 92 communications professionals at top global and U.S. organizations in multiple sectors. There was a broad pool of industries represented, including consumer goods, energy, financial, health care, industrial, academia, technology, utilities, consulting, and research.

To introduce the questionnaire, an e-mail was sent by Peter Debreceny, Co-Chair of the Institute for Public Relations, and the Chair of the Institute's Commission on Global Public Relations

Research.[2] Within 24 hours, a follow-up e-mail[3] reaffirming the objectives of the research was sent by New York University master's candidate and author Kristin Johnson to the same pool of recipients with a link to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire received 32 individual responses in total, with 29 (31.5 percent of questionnaire pool) of the respondents completing the questionnaire in full. Some participants included (in alphabetical order by last name):[4]

- Gianluca Comin, Executive Vice President, External Relations, Enel
- David Kistle, Senior Vice President, Padilla Speer Beardsley
- David Monfried, Senior Vice President, Corporate Communications, Safeco Insurance
- James S. O'Rourke, Professor of Management, University of Notre Dame
- Helen Ostrowski, Chairman, Porter Novelli
- Doug Pinkham, President, Public Affairs Council
- Ernst Primosch, Senior Corporate Vice President, Henkel
- MaryLee Sachs, U.S. Chairman & Worldwide Director of Marketing Communications, Hill & Knowlton
- Dave Samson, General Manager, Public Affairs, Chevron
- Arthur E.F. Wiese, Jr., Vice President, Corporate Communications, Entergy Corporation

[2] A copy of the email appears in the Addendum on pages 33-34.

[3] A copy of the email appears in the Addendum on pages 34-35.

[4] Self-identification was not mandatory. However, participants were asked if they were comfortable having their names and companies credited for participation.

The results of the questionnaire were never intended to provide statistically significant data but rather, to contribute to an overall body of knowledge that was not formerly in existence on the practices and ideas that exist within the public relations function on the topic of knowledge management as it relates to relationships. The opinions and practices outlined in the research are neither exhaustive nor conclusive, but present powerful insight into trends and challenges that the leaders in the public relations industry are confronting in their organizations and the organizations of their clients.

II. Background on Knowledge Management

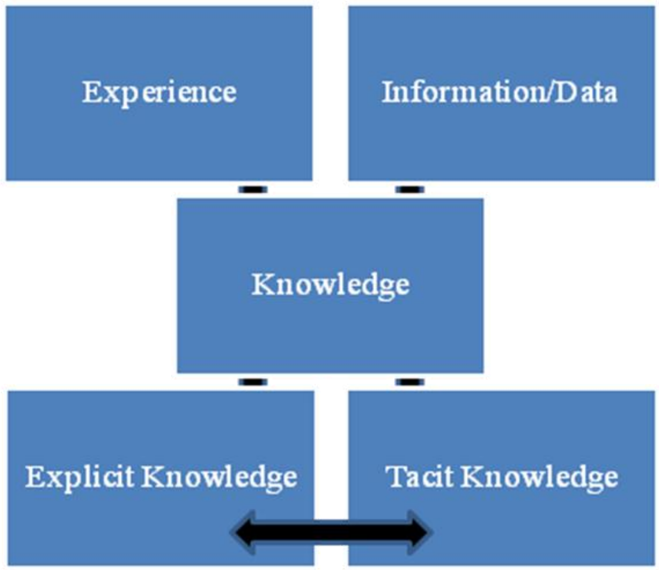
Distinctions in Terminology

According to David DeLong, a research fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, knowledge is "the capacity for effective action or decision making in the context of organized activity" (DeLong, 2004, 21). Unlike information, which is simply data structured so that it is transferable (DeLong, 2004, 22), the magic of knowledge embodies both information and experience, creating a powerful marriage that can serve as an asset to both individuals and to organizations.

For an organization to tap into this asset, it needs to have a system in place. Knowledge management, sometimes referred to as "KM," is the organizational function that manages "human intellect and transforms intellectual output into a service or a group of services embodied in a product" (Soo, 2002, 129).

Academics attempt to dissect knowledge into many different buckets but at a very primary level, all texts agree that knowledge can be divided into two main parts: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is knowledge that is captured by a medium such as a book or video, and is easily shared. Tacit knowledge is knowledge that lives within a person. Knowledge management relies, in great part, on identifying tacit knowledge and formalizing it into explicit knowledge so that it can be shared and leveraged.

Illustration of distinctions among terminology



Knowledge Management – In the Past

The formalization of knowledge management as a business function is credited to business consultants and authors Peter Drucker, Peter Senge, and Paul Strassmann. Each, in his own way, recognized that individual members of organizations, whether managerial or non-managerial, possessed knowledge that other employees in the organization did not possess, but could use. They recognized that tapping into the knowledge held by individual members in an organization was one way to make work easier to accomplish and the organization more efficient, therefore reducing unnecessary costs. According to Senge, "Organizations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it no organizational learning occurs" (Senge, 1990, 139).

Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi are two researchers who also are credited with developing the practical application of knowledge management. In 1995, they created the SECI model to identify different types of knowledge; to outline how to share knowledge; and to outline the different assets that each body of knowledge could offer to an organization (De Geytere, T., 1995).

The SECI model involves four parts (Lorenzon, 2007, 11):

- Socialization (tacit to tacit knowledge)
- Externalization (tacit to explicit knowledge)
- Combination (explicit to explicit knowledge)
- Internalization (explicit to tacit knowledge)

The SECI model addressed an important business issue in Japan: Many employees worked for one organization their entire lives. The wealth of tacit knowledge that lived inside of individual employees provided unquantifiable value to their organizations. In anticipation of losing long-time employees to retirement, it was imperative, for practical business reasons, that a system be devised to share knowledge so that other generations of employees could provide equal or improved service to the organization. This could only be achieved by collecting the tacit knowledge embodied in the veteran employees and knowledge sharing was put into practice.

For several years following the creation of this model, backed by the momentum of early practitioners and theorists, knowledge management took off. Fortune 500 organizations were quick to adopt and model knowledge management as the latest innovation in best practices. It was initiated into the C-suite and chief knowledge officers (CKOs) began appearing in organizations, starting with professional service firms. The CKO's role differed from organization to organization, but across the board one function remained consistent: It was the CKO's job to "evangelize the value of sharing knowledge; operate projects that find, publish, and distribute knowledge around the firm; and manage staff to support the infrastructure to accomplish the above" (Stewart, 2001, 83).

During this same time, the U.S. was enjoying a technology boom never experienced before. Excited by the opportunities technology could provide to organizations, databases and virtual tools were built to facilitate the exchange of knowledge within organizations. Unfortunately, employees weren't using the tools to access the knowledge that was being housed on various systems. Since it is the "outputs—and not the simple fact that know-how is created—that generate better financial and sales performance," (Choo, 2006) the investment in knowledge management did not yield the potential returns.

Thomas A. Stewart, author of *Intellectual Capital* (1997) and *The Wealth of Knowledge* (2001) identified this as a common challenge of knowledge management by writing that, "One flaw in knowledge management is that it often neglects to ask what knowledge to manage and to what end," (Stewart, 2001, 117) noting that, "It's not what you know, it's how fast you can access all the things you don't know" (Stewart, 2001, 118). While the right intentions were in place at the organizations that were early adopters of knowledge management, the knowledge management tools weren't utilized and many organizations, overwhelmed by the charge of updating and uploading knowledge, let the knowledge management function fall to the wayside.

Knowledge Management – In the Present

Knowledge management was not a fad. With a reinvigorated focus on human capital, knowledge management is experiencing a comeback. Human capital "matters because it is the source of innovation and renewal, whether from brainstorms in a lab or new leads in a sales rep's little black book" (Stewart, 1997, 76). Excelling in a dynamic business environment "requires more understanding, knowledge, preparation, and agreement than one person's expertise and experience provides" (Garvin, 1994, 19-28).

To this end, knowledge is reshaping the workforce. Employees at every level are participating in the growth and wealth of the organization by contributing a unique knowledge base that improves the overall efficiency of operations. Taking inventory and tracking sales are job functions that have been automated (Stewart, 1997, 49). According to Gary Grates, President and Global Managing Director, Edelman Change and Employee Engagement, at Edelman, an independent, global public relations firm, "You're hiring individuals for more than technical skills; at certain levels, if you bring certain people in, you are gaining relationships, intellectual property, and the ability to open doors."

Recognizing an opportunity, savvy organizations are readopting the knowledge management function so that the entire organization can benefit from the sum of its individual employee pools of knowledge. Organizations that have already been down the 'knowledge sharing' road are carefully incorporating new tools and utilization methods to ensure that knowledge sharing actually gets to the 'sharing' part.

Knowledge Management – In the Future

Organizations that adopt knowledge management will realize a competitive advantage for strategic innovation. These organizations will benefit by being positioned to establish themselves as market leaders in various practices. In addition, recognizing that the success of an organization is greatly influenced by stakeholder publics, organizations will adopt knowledge management practices to capture and rationalize relationships held by employees within the organization.

Relationships and experience have become paramount to redesigning and diversifying offerings both within and outside of the organization. According to Gary Sheffer, Executive Director of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs for General Electric, companies can no longer operate on an insular level. “Relationships with stakeholders are incredibly important and becoming more so every day. The era when you could control the flow of information from a company, or at least control the expectations of what a company would provide from an information sharing perspective, is over.”

Relationships are one form of intellectual capital, which is a primary source of the value an employee brings to an organization. However, asking employees for this type of knowledge—personal relationships—requires, at the very least, trust. There are also privacy concerns that organizations will need to address. Despite this, personal relationships held by employees could be applied within the organization as an asset and contribute to the organization on countless levels, broadening the organization’s network.

Networks are increasingly valuable to organizations. For an organization to be successful, it needs to identify new partners and establish methods for working with them (Birkinshaw et al., 2007, 70). This process could be aided by knowledge sharing, including the sharing of stakeholder relationships. Organizations slow to adopt change and welcome new partners—through traditional and new avenues—will be closing doors on opportunities as others establish a dominant presence in the marketplace.

III. Knowledge Management: Obstacles and Opportunities

“Just ask yourself how much time you waste searching for information that ought to be at your fingertips”

(Stewart, 2001, 109).

Culture, Processes and Cost

Knowledge management is still a struggling function within some organizations. Poor utility, mentioned earlier, is a common reason the function struggles. Related to utility is another pitfall that often sidetracks the efforts of the knowledge management function: managers who approach it as a process rather than a business philosophy (Soo, 2002, 137). Managers who do not champion knowledge sharing and who provide little incentive for employees to participate in knowledge sharing practices will not develop a knowledge sharing culture within the organization.

Structural obstacles within the organization—both physical and social—also challenge the knowledge management function. Organizations house many different cultures, one of which may be a deep rooted sense of secrecy and the need to guard organizational information. For some employees, guarding propriety information is part of the job. While being discreet with the organization's intellectual property is important, it should not be guarded internally at the expense of the organization's innovation and strategy.

Knowledge, which was defined earlier as information plus experience, is a cornerstone of innovation and strategy at an organization. However, knowledge lost or untapped has the ability to undermine organizational objectives. In his book, *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce*, David DeLong identifies five ways that lost knowledge can hurt an organization, including (DeLong, 2004, 31):

- Reduce capacity to innovate
- Threaten ability to pursue growth strategies
- Reduce efficiency
- Expose organization to competitor advantage
- Increase vulnerability

To resist those outcomes, an investment in systems to manage the organization's knowledge capital, especially tacit, is essential. Without channels to transfer knowledge, it remains embodied in its keeper and does not help to sustain or grow the organization. To illustrate this phenomenon, one could compare the corporate knowledge of a university and a fast-food chain. Universities are typically full of people with above average IQs, while fast-food chain employees generally have average IQs. However, universities are not always smart organizations, because knowledge isn't intelligent as a whole. The arts department and the science department may operate as two completely unique organizations, instead of two departments under the same university umbrella. A fast-food chain, however, makes a very smart organization because the standardization of the company's procedures can provide consistent services nationally and even abroad (Stewart, 1997, 76). According to Stewart, "sharing and transporting knowledge requires structural intellectual assets, such as information systems, laboratories, competitive and market intelligence, knowledge of market channels, and management focus, which turn individual know-how into the property of a group" (Stewart, 1997, 76).

Having the systems in place to unlock knowledge is an essential element of extracting capital from knowledge. This is how true gains can be realized. According to Thomas Stewart, who is credited with reinvigorating the knowledge management function in the late-1990s, "A factory cannot be in two places at once, but an idea can" (Stewart, 2001, 90).

The fact that ideas contribute to an organization across borders and through walls, living simultaneously within many organizations at the same time is the unique value of knowledge. Knowledge and relationships conquer inventory every time. According to a study from a researcher at Columbia University, a dollar spent on research and development returned eight times more than a dollar spent on new machinery (Stewart, 1997, 24). This return potential underscores the fact that an organization's competitive advantage is its ability and willingness to innovate. Successful innovation happens with experience and is supported by relationships, which is why it's so important for organizations to identify methods to capture and rationalize the personal relationships that exist with organizational stakeholders.

The costs to establish knowledge management are "front-loaded" (Stewart, 2001, 88), meaning that the investment costs associated with knowledge management occur at the onset. If an organization doubles production, it doubles the widgets. However, by doubling research and development, there's no telling what the output will be. There is no economy of scale; returns are limitless as long as they're leveraged. "The value of knowledge assets can be multiplied many times, because they can be shared" (Stewart, 2001, 90).

To understand the value of knowledge, one could examine the case of a consultancy such as PricewaterhouseCoopers. The company has 160,000 partners and employees in 150 countries (Stewart, 2001, 115) but its success bears on collective brainpower. Its ability to gain, create and share knowledge is its main offering. Without knowledge sharing and successful knowledge management, the firm would have no competitive advantage to offer to its clients. In this case, an entire organization is built on the collection of knowledge.

Other organizations don't have to operate as consultants to see the value. Several case studies point to potential dollar saving opportunities that could have been realized had knowledge management and knowledge sharing methodologies been in place. NASA suffered the loss of the space shuttle Challenger due to poor knowledge management. The scientists couldn't effectively communicate their suspicions of a launch risk to upper management because they couldn't quantify the potential risk in explicit terms. The scientists' experience told them that there were red flags. Because the knowledge they possessed was tacit, it wasn't well interpreted by the managers who were worried about making their estimates. In the end, the space shuttle was launched, the potential risk was realized, and seven astronauts lost their lives (Choo, 2006, 255-262).

Participating in knowledge sharing has far reaching benefits. If implemented correctly, it will improve efficiency and reduce cost. It can also influence employee morale. According to a study published in 2007 in the journal *Human Relations*, participation in knowledge sharing actually has a statistically significant impact on the quality of work life. According to the research, “knowledge transfer is consistent with individuals operating with an awareness of their larger social context” (Leiter et al., 2007, 279).

There is a wise reluctance to adopt tools simply for the sake of having them. The value is in the utility. Rob Imig, Vice President of Public Relations at Kiehl’s rationalized that his “fear is that that system would become an ends to the means,” adding that he would “rather know it internally as a function of communication rather than have a knowledge system.”

Implementing the knowledge management function correctly is a challenge. However, that challenge should not discourage organizations from building the function; the stakes are too high to not invest in knowledge management. According to the International Data Corp., “Poorly managed knowledge costs the Fortune 500 about $12 billion a year.” The knowledge that is lost is attributed to “substandard performance, intellectual rework, and a lack of available knowledge management resources” (Stewart, 2001, 109).

IV. Knowledge Management: Tools and Methods for Sharing Experience and Relationships

Tools and Methods

To fully appreciate how knowledge management could be used to benefit the public relations function, it’s important to understand exactly how knowledge is shared. A successful knowledge management program requires action. Action is needed on the part of the organization, which demands an investment in tools, training and cultivation of knowledge. Action is also needed on the part of the employees, who must share knowledge and most importantly, employ the knowledge sharing tools developed to make work more efficient and consistent throughout the organization.

Once an organization has committed to the investment, there are many types of knowledge management tools available. Popular knowledge management tools include databases, intellectual capital metrics, corporate libraries, and training programs. The Internet is widely expanding as a tool of choice to serve as an online warehouse for materials and information that can assist in getting work done faster. In addition, knowledge can be shared person-to-person with mentoring programs, corporate university classes, corporate alumni programs, and corporate exchange programs, which all serve to share information and experience within an organization's network. According Scott E. Bryant and James R. Terborg, professors of management at Montana State University and the University or Oregon (respectively), "While information systems and knowledge systems are one important way to store and share knowledge, the interpersonal nature of peer mentoring provides for the dynamic, continuous creation and sharing of ideas that cannot be replaced by networked computers" (Bryant, S.E. & Terborg, J.R., 2008, 26).

Knowledge management tools mean different things to different people. Like any tool, it's important to recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Certain tools work for certain jobs and employees need to be properly trained to use the tools. There is no fool-proof model for how knowledge management should be implemented. It should be customized for the needs, size, culture and ease of use for employees keeping in mind that the tools and opportunities for knowledge sharing not only create advancement for knowledge receivers, but also for the knowledge sharers.

It's important to note that the value of tools isn't in the tools themselves, but in the utilization of the tools. This is where early knowledge management functions fell short. Ray Jordan, Corporate Vice President for Public Affairs and Corporate Communication at Johnson & Johnson, agrees. According to Jordan, employees don't want information pushed out to them. Rather, they want to be able to pull what they need, when they need it. He says, “When you want to access information, you’re probably willing to do some work but you don’t want to do work to input information.”

In addition to ease of use, employees are more likely to engage in knowledge sharing if there is an incentive or a directive. This charges employees to seek knowledge in whatever central spot it is being housed until it becomes second nature for employees to rely on the organization’s knowledge nexus for initial answers.

Knowledge management is not an impossible feat; many knowledge needs have already evolved to the point of keeping information in a central place. For example, many people reference a calendar for important dates instead of committing them to memory, consult a ‘personal contact list’ for the phone numbers, or rely on spell check (sometimes to embarrassing outcomes, highlighting the fallibility of knowledge management tools as well). These tools for sharing knowledge are for the most part convenient, easily accessible, and routinely the default mechanism.

Knowledge Management: A Collaborative Function

Knowledge sharing is an “inherently social activity, supported by norms of trust and reciprocity” (Choo, 2006, 313) and therefore there needs to be a collaborative culture in place at the onset. The function of knowledge management relies on the participation of its employees at every level of hierarchy within the organizational structure. The gains are a collection of materials, experience and relationships.

Instilling a sense of shared value is a key component to fostering a successful knowledge management function within an organization. The emphasis on co-creation—the sentiment that the momentum of the organization and its contributions are a team collaboration—is vital. Jordan cautions that “keeping up your expertise puts an onus on the person inputting information and that’s always the death of the system.” Organizations with a healthy knowledge management function need to build a culture that supports knowledge sharing. It's important to "create systems and a culture that encourage continuous sharing and reinvention" (Stewart, 2001, 87). The organization is in turn rewarded with better productivity, better issues management, better employee satisfaction and a host of other gains that contribute to the bottom line.

While the "bottom line" does benefit, knowledge is "intuitively obvious but very hard to quantify" (DeLong, 2004, 28). Benefits are extracted subtly. Operating in their day-to-day roles, employees gather skills and experience that they take for granted. Through educating co-workers of what works and what does not work, many employees realize that they possess specialized knowledge they didn't even know they had. By participating in a knowledge sharing activity, employees experience their role from another's perspective and the value they add to the organization is more clearly defined than it was in the past. The value that employees feel they offer their organization—whether by organizational recognition or by self-perception—contributes to their pride and enhances the incentive to contribute to growing the knowledge of the organization.

This dynamic makes employees the organization's greatest asset. According to John Doorley, clinical assistant professor and academic director for the public relations and corporate communications program at New York University, and Helio Fred Garcia, president and founder of the crisis management firm LOGOS Consulting Group, and executive director of the LOGOS INSTITUTE for Crisis Management & Executive Leadership, "The old, implicit employee contract that offered a job for life in return for loyalty has been dead for at least ten years. In the context of flattened, faster organizations where there are simply fewer levels within which to ascend, organizations can only offer employees the ability to grow their capabilities, expand in new challenging roles, and learn on a continuous basis. All of these demand a more sophisticated employee communication infrastructure than ever before, one in which information and knowledge are proactively managed" (Doorley, J. & Garcia, H.F., 2007, 132-133).

Loyalty is no longer an entitlement. In fact, in contrast to just a decade or two ago, today's employees now expect organizations to exhibit some type of loyalty to them. Since employees are part of an organization's capital, it makes sense that organizations would welcome the idea of investing in employees. Exhibiting a commitment to employees cedes the employees' "ownership." Employees who feel that they have a stake in the success of the organization want to contribute to its success, including knowledge sharing. This circle of reciprocal investment between the organization and employees essentially creates a "membership community" where "corporations are not things, they are the people who run them" (Stewart, 1997, 101).

V. Knowledge Management Practices in Public Relations: Questionnaire Feedback

"I think that PR has always been about relationships, but it has changed fundamentally in that relationships have almost become the primary responsibility of a PR practitioner—and it's not just with the Wall Street Journal or New York Times—it's relationships with everyone who has a significant influence on the reputation of your company. I think it's great for the function, for the profession, and it's much more exciting for me to think about managing relationships and issues rather than practicing stereotypical PR, which is, 'Get something from the marketing team that they want to sell, then put a press release together and call a few reporters.' It's a very good development."

Gary Sheffer, General Manager, Public Affairs and Employee Communications, General Electric

The Organization: Differentiated Through Relationships

Capturing and rationalizing relationships within an organization is not a revolutionary idea. It is likely being done intuitively in one way or another at most organizations. What makes this proposal unique is that it calls for a formalization of the process, and doing so within the public relations and corporate communications function.

Organizations need to be mindful of relationships. According to John Doorley and Helio Fred Garcia, “Human capital is increasingly a key competitive differentiator. The ability of companies to copy even the most proprietary products and produce them at lower costs has led some business thinkers to suggest that over time the only differentiator will be the knowledge and skills of an organization’s people” (Doorley, J. & Garcia, H.F., 2007, 133).

In an organization, there is a tendency for employees to think of relationships within the context of their own personal networks. Based on those relationships, they have insights into how those relationships could benefit their organization. However, if an employee were to leave his or her organization, the organization would lose the relationship network of that employee. Knowledge management tools could be used to help capture and rationalize such relationships, so that in the event that the initial relationship holder was no longer available, there would still be a ‘map’ that the organization could rely on to investigate opportunities that may still exist with potential stakeholders.

Aside from investigating potential new relationship opportunities that may exist, collecting and rationalizing current stakeholder relationships would allow for relationship holders to have a broader, deeper understanding of the dynamic network in which they are already members. It is often the case that two people within an organization hold a relationship with an external stakeholder and do not even know it. How could that larger network—which already existed but was never before realized—begin to benefit the organization and reciprocally, the stakeholder? For one, it could certainly help to avoid overlap and misunderstanding, ensuring more efficiency and effectiveness in the organization. It could also aid both relationship holders to better manage the relationship they have with the stakeholder from an organizational perspective. Assuming that the stakeholder is in some way contributing to achieve an organizational objective, there needs to be consistent management of that relationship in order to make it sustainable and mutually beneficial.

Most employees are not consciously brainstorming how their personal relationships could be transformed from personal relationships to organizational relationships, which is why it is important for organizations to raise the initiative. Until that happens and an organization can grow relationships based on existing relationships held by its employees, the organization will have limited access to potential stakeholder relationships that could otherwise be benefiting the organization and its objectives.

Focusing on Relationships with Stakeholder Publics

Through interviews, it became apparent that there is agreement within the public relations industry that there generally has not been significant discussion around the idea of capturing and rationalizing external relationships within the organization. “It is a new conversation,” according to one executive who admitted that, “I never really thought about it that way.” Ray Jordan, Corporate Vice President for Public Affairs and Corporate Communication at Johnson & Johnson said that “for a class of stakeholders beyond media relations, there really isn’t anything.” Another executive noted in an interview that his organization is, “very good at processes but still doesn’t have a process around [capturing and rationalizing personal relationships with stakeholder publics]” adding, “It’s ad-hoc at this point.”

Everyone interviewed agreed that there is significant potential value to be gained from tapping into stakeholder relationships. Still, there was generally no single, organized function to transform personal relationships into organizational relationships. The questionnaire revealed that among knowledge, technology, communication, information, reputation and relationships with stakeholder publics, only 17 of the 32 respondents (57 percent) rated relationships with stakeholder publics “very important” as they relate to their organizations. Contrast that with reputation and knowledge, which were each rated “very important” by 25 of the respondents (83 percent), and it indicates a disconnect between the theory of capturing and rationalizing stakeholder relationships, and the actual practice.

“Ad hoc” would not be an acceptable industry response if the question were related to how an organization manages its finances; yet, even with human capital translating in to real dollars, there are overwhelmingly no formal processes in place to manage the wealth of stakeholder relationships held by employees and consultants.

Relationships and Influence

Relationships have the ability to enhance the reputation and brand of the company. As a result, they are not overlooked when hiring managers in the public relations function. According to Gary Sheffer, General Manager, Public Affairs and Employee Communications, General Electric, “A big part of the hiring process is about the relationships the candidates have,” adding that “I assume that, at the level I hire, they have the technical skills. I’m probing for their ability to be a self-starter but also who they know, how they’ve worked with them and what they’ve been able to get done as a result.”

Getting things “done” is the key desired outcome. Rob Imig, Vice President of Public Relations at Kiehl’s, views relationships as a “core competency.” Twenty-five out of 32 respondents from the online questionnaire reported that relationships with stakeholder publics play a role in the decision to bring someone on a team at least some of the time. All 32 respondents from the online questionnaire reported that relationships with stakeholder publics influence management decisions at their organizations “sometimes” to “always.”

“For me, it’s part of the job. I would almost look at it as, if they had these relationships, I’d be more willing to hire that person,” says Imig. However, he adds he has hired people without specific relationships to bring to the table knowing that people had the capabilities to cultivate and nurture relationships. This is especially true from a media perspective. “With editor turnover, you want someone who can continue to generate new relationships. As the media is regenerating faster than it ever has, we need people in this industry who are willing to grow with it and create content in new ways, growing the relationships as print editors become online editors."

According to Gary Grates, President and Global Managing Director, Edelman Change and Employee Engagement, "The idea of taking personal relationships that employees may have with existing and potential stakeholders, and applying these relationships to the organization, is very powerful."

Gary Sheffer, General Manager, Public Affairs and Employee Communications, General Electric, agrees. According to Sheffer, "The PR office at GE has definitely changed in the last few years. The expectations of me from the people that I work for is not that I just have the technical skills, the writing and the verbal skills to communicate our story; it's to help define the story and define the company. That means building relationships with the people who influence that story."

Even though some professionals would rather not acknowledge it, relationships are a fundamental part of public relations. According to Grates, "The value of what we [as public relations professionals] do is in relationships—that's where the currency is."

Acknowledging the value that relationships play in the public relations function is not intended to undermine the science of the public relations profession. It takes a unique precision to maintain, sustain and nurture relationships. According to Grates, "It's more of a science than it ever has been because we have more tools to understand human behavior. By applying these tools, we are exercising the science and practice."

Using Knowledge Management Tools to Codify Relationships

Knowledge management is a competitive advantage right now, but several executives agree that it will soon be a standard offering and maximizing relationships will soon be a priority for every Fortune 500 company. According to Gary Grates, President and Global Managing Director, Edelman Change and Employee Engagement, "Firms like Edelman, much like management consulting firms, are the strongest when all the entities, all the individuals, add up to something great. This idea of how do you keep the relationships, even when the individual goes, is probably what keeps Richard Edelman up at night."

According to Robbin Goodman, Executive Vice President and partner at Makovsky + Company, "More than fifty percent of it [working in the PR function] is how you manage a client relationship and the intricacies of different client cultures, which is hard to teach except by experience." That experience—the knowledge of relationships, client cultures, and other stakeholder publics—is the payoff to be had if organizations invest in knowledge sharing tools to capture personal relationships.

Contractually Explicit?

In both the online questionnaire and in interviews, respondents were asked if organizations "should ask a new employee or a new consultant to share his or her relationships with stakeholder publics." According to the online questionnaire, 19 out of 32 respondents agreed. Seven additional respondents agreed to the statement with caveats, such as "This should only be voluntary and it should come natural rather than part of an organized scheme" and "This is not something we do as a rule, but might make sense down the road." Another respondent pointed out that "it makes sense with some level of employees, but a lot depends on how you will use the information."

Ray Jordan, Corporate Vice President for Public Affairs and Corporate Communication at Johnson & Johnson said he would not be opposed to divulging the list of people with whom he has working relationships in a particular field. He also sees the value in sharing with an employer the stakeholders with whom he interacts with in a given space, such as health care.

Gary Sheffer, General Manager, Public Affairs and Employee Communications at General Electric, thinks it is an interesting concept but is also quick to identify the challenges. "I think it’s a difficult one in today’s environment. Being contractually committed to maintaining or sharing—that could be difficult,” adding, “I wonder, from a recruiting standpoint, what the fallout would be.”

Codifying relationships raises many privacy issues, but if a database is managed as an interactive tool, it can be a parallel of the company’s intranet. Jennifer Sargent works in knowledge management at Ernst & Young LLP. Despite the challenges, she can see the potential, noting that “It needs to be built into work processes with compliance or technical restrictions.”

Envisioning a Process

According to Toni Griffin, Director of Public Relations at MetLife, while processes are necessary, developing relationships with business partners based on trust and mutual respect are often more important. Her organization has an open culture, and Griffin believes an organization’s culture is what ultimately facilitates successful relationships.

According to Griffin, “We don’t have to jump through hoops to effectively implement our public relations strategies. Our PR team works with senior management, including the presidents of our businesses and the company's CEO, on just about every major issue. That openness trumps the need for an explicit contract. It’s based on our PR team's own reputation within the company. It’s something we’ve worked very hard on and built over time; it’s a reputation built on trust, expediency, and mutual respect, it’s a comfort level on the part of all our senior executives that they can entrust us [in the communications function] with any information and any issue — even the most highly confidential.”

It is true that culture plays a major role in facilitating knowledge sharing—especially when that knowledge is in the form of personal relationships. As mentioned earlier, the decision to share relationships is greatly determined by whether the organization has earned an employee’s trust (DeLong, 2004, 69). However, the suggestion of institutionalizing a process to capture personal relationships held by employees could benefit an organization by drawing out relationships that employees simply had not thought to share.

In each interview, the researcher was asked the same question: "*What would this look like*?" The response is that there is no one single model that will work every organization. Furthermore, there is little that is currently in place and successful models are something that need to be explored.

In an organization where the director of public relations and corporate communications is already sold on the idea, and where there are already successful knowledge management systems in place, a model could start within the public relations function and ultimately expand to other functions within the organization. The 'tool' could take the form of a proprietary database, with access restrictions established for privacy. Employees would share their tacit knowledge of relationships they hold with other organizations or corporate stakeholders such as suppliers or media. Also, an agreement to share the relationships could be built into employee contracts to cultivate a new culture of relationship sharing.

Guidelines would need to be established for database fields, but examples may include:

- Relationship holder (employee)
- Relationship (name of stakeholder)
- Stakeholder group (financial, communications, etc.)
- Context of relationship (former colleague, college roommate, etc.)
- Nature of relationship (friendly, adversarial, etc.)

There are four characteristics that are especially important for defining the quality of relationships, according to public relations scholars Linda Hon, at the University of Florida, and James E. Grunig, at the University of Maryland. These characteristics include (Grunig, 2002, 2):

- Control mutuality, which is “the degree to which the parties in a relationship are satisfied with the amount of control they have over a relationship”
- Trust, which is “the level of confidence that both parties have in each other and their willingness to open themselves to the other party”
- Commitment, which is “the extent to which both parties believe and feel that the relationship is worth spending energy on to maintain and promote”
- Satisfaction, which is “the extent to which both parties feel favorably about each other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced”

Toni Muzi Falconi, Senior Counsel of Methodos spa, an Italian change-knowledge management consultancy, believes that, “In principle it is not the company who selects it stakeholder, it’s the stakeholder who selects the company.” Therefore, it could be even more beneficial to ask employees to rate how the stakeholder might rate the relationship.

The potential flaw of a database is that, as with all collaborative tools, it is dependent on the participation of employees. According to the questionnaire, the knowledge management function is decentralized at the majority of organizations, creating less accountability for maintaining the system. Also, at 62 percent of the organizations participating in the questionnaire, there is no incentive offered to employees to participate in knowledge sharing outside of the intrinsic collaborative benefits. However, if no one uses the database, then no one is interested in keeping it updated. Antonio Lorenzon, an expert in Customer Relationship Management in the Department of Economics, Business and Statistics at the University of Milan, sums it up well: “If companies really want to approach and solve the problems of knowledge sharing inside the organization they have to remember that it’s hard for employees to put new sensible knowledge into the system without the expectation that the system can give back more sensible knowledge on top of what employees already know” (Lorenzon, 2007, 14).

An alternative model of executing the identification of relationships may include a suggestion from Ray Jordan, Corporate Vice President for Public Affairs and Corporate Communication at

Johnson & Johnson, who sees potential in using a system Johnson & Johnson already has in place for another knowledge management purpose. The system, according to Jordan, allows employees to opt-in to have email scanned for key words. This facilitates knowledge sharing for scientists, for example, who may be in different labs working on the same compound. It could be equally useful to help managers in the company identify existing relationships with stakeholders. However, there would likely be limitations to the access of personal, external stakeholder relationships held by employees, given that employees presumably do not carry personal correspondence over company email.

In any case, both models suggested above present ideas of how the concept could be institutionalized in an organization. The identification of a solid model could make a good subject for another paper. One thing is for certain: Like any other knowledge management tool, a system to capture and rationalize personal relationships would need to be tailor-made to suit the needs and culture of the organization and its employees at a local and global level.

VI. Conclusion

"It's one thing to have somebody's Rolodex, but it's another to get people to return your calls" (DeLong, 2004, 107).

It's not realistic to assume that gathering relationships of stakeholders through personal networks is easy, nor is this paper suggesting that it is a guaranteed tactic for enhancing an organization's capital. Evaluation systems need to accompany the implementation of any knowledge management tool. Despite the challenges that accompany knowledge management, there is a colossal opportunity for organizations to identify and manage the wealth of relationships that live within employee networks. To date, little is being done to capture and rationalize these relationships.

As proposed in this paper, knowledge systems are not intended to replace internal communications. In fact, knowledge management tools are intended to enhance the sharing that takes place within an organization. The tacit knowledge that lives within employees and the relationships that they posses cannot be fully codified in a database. What a robust knowledge sharing system can do is help to connect people with information and relationships that can help them within their roles to serve the organization in a broader, deeper and more efficient capacity.

VII. Addendum

A.) Initial email addressed to questionnaire participants, sent by Peter Debreceny:

Dear [NAME],

I am writing to you as the Co-Chair of the Institute for Public Relations, and the Chair of the Institute's Commission on Global Public Relations Research.

I'd like to invite you to participate in a brief questionnaire, which will inform research currently underway to understand the extent to which relationships with stakeholder publics—such as media, employees, shareholders, customers, and others who have interest in the organization—influence, or could influence, organizational capital.

Your responses to the questionnaire will contribute to a paper currently underway by NYU master's candidate Kristin Johnson to examine the role that the personal influence model, which acknowledges that the success of public relations is greatly influenced by personal networks, could play in organizations by the adoption of knowledge management practices. Kristin, along with Institute colleagues Frank Ovaitt, Toni Muzi Falconi, James Savage, and Antonio Lorenzon, will publish these findings with the Institute for Public Relations later this year.

In the next few days, you will receive an email from Kristin.Johnson@nyu.edu with an online link to the questionnaire, which will take no more than 15 minutes of your time. The quality of this research is dependent on participation and I hope you choose to contribute to this work for the benefit of all who practice and study public relations. If you are unable to complete this questionnaire, please consider sharing it with a colleague who works in a communications role.

Regards,
Peter D

B.) Follow-up email addressed to questionnaire participants, sent by Kristin Johnson:

Dear [Name],

My name is Kristin Johnson and I am a master's candidate in the public relations and corporate communications program at New York University. I am working with my professor, Toni Muzi Falconi, and industry professionals and scholars Frank Ovaitt, James Savage, and Antonio Lorenzon, with support from the Institute for Public Relations, to co-author a paper on institutionalizing the personal influence model in our profession.

Hopefully you received and had a chance to read an email sent by Peter Debreceny yesterday introducing this research. As he mentioned, our paper examines the role that the personal influence model could play in organizations by the adoption of knowledge management practices, which would involve instituting a mechanism to record relationships with stakeholder publics.

As a result, we are extending an online questionnaire to communications professionals at top organizations in multiple sectors to understand the potential implications of institutionalizing personal influence in our profession and the value this would add to an organization.

Please access the questionnaire at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=PgVIh9jIKx1SY37Uf_2bKvcg_3d_3d

The questionnaire contains 25 questions and should take no more than 15 minutes of your time. Please complete the questionnaire by Friday, July

25.

Please be assured that all the information provided will be treated with confidentiality and used solely for the purposes of this research. No individual respondents, company names or other identifying information will be disclosed without your consent, which you have the option of extending on the final page of the questionnaire.

We expect to publish our paper with the Institute for Public Relations by the end of the year. If you would like to receive an advance, electronic copy of this paper, please complete the contact information section in the questionnaire or email me at Kristin.Johnson@nyu.edu with your request.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please feel free to contact me by phone or email at the number or address listed below. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
Kristin Johnson

Email: [insert email]
Phone: [insert number]

The Institute for Public Relations is an independent nonprofit that bridges the academy and the profession, supporting PR research and mainstreaming this knowledge into practice through PR education. (www.instituteforpr.org)

C.) Questionnaire outline provided to interview participants:

Knowledge Management in Public Relations:
Transforming Personal Relationships into Organizational Relationships

INTERVIEW CONVERSATION GUIDE

I. Understanding the public relations function at your organization

II. Employee, consultant and agency networks

- Could you please explain your views on the importance of your employees/consultants/agencies maintaining relationships with stakeholder publics?
- Does your organization codify (organize into a code or system) relationships held between your organization's employees/consultants/agencies and stakeholders?
- If it was made contractually explicit, do you believe your organization has a right to ask a new employee for intellectual property, including relationships with stakeholder publics?

III. Personal Influence in organizational decision making

- Do you believe informal contracts (agreements that are understood, but not formalized through documentation) exist between your organization and its clients?
- Does your organization capitalize on relationships with stakeholder publics? If yes, how?

IV. Knowledge Management at the organization

- Does your organization currently have any knowledge management systems in place?
- What type of information does your organization focus on capturing?
- What do you see as the greatest challenge for capturing knowledge?
    - Do you see solutions for overcoming this [these] challenge[s]?
- How do you think your organization could leverage this data (regarding public relationships and stakeholder networks)?

V. Organizational structure, culture, and capabilities

D.) Interview Conversation Guide – Researcher's Copy:

Understanding the public relations function at your organization

(Assuming I'm speaking with a professional whose organization has a public relations function)

- What are the skills and attributes most highly regarded for professionals in the public relations function?
- How is leadership selected for the public relations function at your organization?
- To whom does the public relations professional report?
    - Has it always been organized this way?
    - If not, what changed? (May illustrate a growing/receding recognition of the PR function)
- What importance do relationships with stakeholder publics hold in your organization?

<u>Employee, Consultant and Agency networks</u>

- Does your organization use external consultants or agencies for public relations?
- Could you please explain your views on the importance of your employees/consultants/agencies maintaining relationships with stakeholder publics?
    - *(If not answered above, draw out the distinction between employees, consultants and agency partners)* Are there different expectations for your organization's employees, consultants and/or agency partners for maintaining relationships with stakeholder publics?
- Does your organization codify (organize into a code or system) relationships held between your organization's employees/consultants/agencies and stakeholders?
    - If yes, ask
        - How?
        - Does your organization probe your organization's employees/consultants/agencies for additional relationships with stakeholder publics that could benefit your organization?
            - If no, ask why not
    - If no, ask why
- If it was made contractually explicit, do you believe your organization has a right to ask a new employee for intellectual property, including relationships with stakeholder publics?
    - If yes, ask what benefits can you envision for instituting this policy?
    - If no, ask what concerns exist for avoiding this policy.
    - What about consultants or agencies?

<u>Personal Influence in Organizational Decision Making</u>

- Do relationships with stakeholder publics play a role in the decision to bring someone on to a team?
- Do you feel relationships with stakeholder publics influence decisions at your organization (overall)?
- Do you believe informal contracts (agreements that are understood, but not formalized through documentation) exist between your organization and its clients?
- Does your organization capitalize on relationships with stakeholder publics? If yes, how?

- I'm going to list off a few assets of a company. I'd like you to explain how your organization values these—using one or all: communication, information, knowledge, public relationships reputation, technology, and trust.

Knowledge Management at the organization

- Does your organization currently have any knowledge management (KM) systems in place?
- What type of information does your organization focus on capturing? *(Probe for details on explicit versus tacit information)*
- How is the knowledge management process implemented? / What does your organization do to capture this knowledge?
- Is the knowledge management function centralized or decentralized?
  - If centralized, who is responsible for managing it? Is this working?
  - If decentralized, is this working?
- Does your organization provide incentive for employees to share knowledge?
  - If yes, please explain.
- Do you have any surveys or benchmarking tools to assess the amount of knowledge shared?
  - If yes, how does your organization go about it?
  - If no, has this ever been discussed?
- Do you have any surveys or benchmarking tools to assess knowledge sharing consistency?
  - If yes, how does your organization go about it?
  - If no, has this ever been discussed?
- Where do you think the knowledge management function should "live" at an organization?
- What do you see as the greatest challenge for capturing knowledge?
  - Do you see solutions for overcoming this [these] challenge[s]?
- What value do you see in capturing relationships with stakeholder publics?
- How do you think your organization could leverage this data (regarding public relationships and stakeholder networks)?
  - If already in place, do employees utilize this information?
- Does your organization offer incentives for early retirement?
- Are there specific policies in place to transfer knowledge from retired workers to new employees, such as flexible retirement?

<u>Organizational structure, culture, and capabilities</u>

- Would you describe your organization as having one cultural identity or having several tailored identities (a.k.a. "silo")?
- How important is a clearly defined corporate culture to you?
- How many consecutive years have you been working for this organization?
- Did you work for the organization prior to this employment term?

<u>Closing</u>

- Do you have any questions for me?

E.) Online Questionnaire:

1. Welcome

This questionnaire contains 25 questions and should take no more than 15 minutes of your time to complete.

Questions are organized into three sections to capture information on knowledge management practices, focused on relationships with stakeholder publics as they relate to public relations and communication objectives.

In this questionnaire, "information" is defined as "transferable data" and "knowledge" is defined as "information combined with experience."

Please be assured that all information provided will be treated with confidentiality and used solely for the purpose of this research. No individual respondents, organization names or other identifying information will be disclosed unless you provide your consent. There is an opportunity to do this at the end of the questionnaire, but you have no obligation to respond.

Thank you for your participation in this brief questionnaire.

2. Section I: 8 Questions

This section collects information on knowledge management practice, focused on relationships with stakeholder publics.

1. Does your organization have a public relations function?

- Yes; it is part of top management
- Yes; it is integrated into another function
- No

Additional comments (optional):

2. How important are relationships with stakeholder publics to the public relations function at your organization?

- Very important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Of Little Importance
- Unimportant

Additional comments (optional):

3. How important do you feel it is that your employees/consultants maintain relationships with stakeholder publics?

- Very important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Of Little Importance
- Unimportant

Additional comments (optional):

4. Does your organization codify (organize into a code or system) relationships held between your organization's employees/consultants and stakeholders? (Choose all that apply)

- Yes
- No; we are unsure of the ROI
- No; we don't think our employees/consultants would participate
- No; we haven't thought of it
- No; there are privacy concerns
- No; there are intellectual property concerns
- Other (please specify)

5. Does your organization survey your organization's employees/consultants for additional relationships with stakeholder publics that could benefit your organization? (Choose all that apply)

- Yes
- No; we are unsure of the ROI
- No; we don't think our employees/consultants would participate
- No; we haven't thought of it
- No; there are privacy concerns
- No; there are intellectual property concerns
- Other (please specify)

6. Please rate the following: How often...

	Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Do relationships with stakeholder publics play a role in the decision to bring someone on to a team?					
Do relationships with stakeholder publics influence management decisions at your organization?					
Do informal contracts (which are based on trust and mutual agreement rather than a formalized document) exist between your organization and clients?					

Additional comments (optional):

7. How does your organization collect and capitalize on relationships with stakeholder publics?

- We have a centralized database of our relationships with stakeholder publics
- We encourage that each management function create a database of its relationships with stakeholder publics
- We expect our public relations/communications function to have a database of its relationships with stakeholder publics
- We expect our public relations/communications function to have a database of its relationships with stakeholder publics AS WELL AS relationships held by other management functions
- We provide incentive to each management function to develop relationships with stakeholder publics
- We do not capitalize on relationships with stakeholder publics
- Other (please specify)

8. Do you feel that your organization should ask a new employee or a new consultant to share his or her relationships with stakeholder publics?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (please explain)

3. Section II - 6 Questions

This section collects information on knowledge management practice, specifically as it relates to public relations and communication objectives.

1. Please rate the importance of each as it relates to your organization.

	Very important	Important	Moderately Important	Of Little Importance	Unimportant
Knowledge					
Technology					
Communication					
Information					
Reputation					
Relationships with stakeholder publics					

Additional comments (optional):

2. Knowledge management systems at your organization: What type of information does your organization focus on capturing?

- Explicit (recorded or formal)
- Tacit (personal knowledge, rooted in individual experience)
- Both explicit and tacit
- My organization does not have knowledge management systems in place

Additional comments (optional):

3. Which department is responsible for overseeing the knowledge management function at your organization?

- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Knowledge Management
- Marketing
- It is a decentralized function
- Other (please specify)

4. What incentive(s) does your organization offer to employees for sharing knowledge? (Choose all that apply)

- [ ] Financial bonus
- [ ] Advancement opportunity
- [ ] Vacation reward
- [ ] Organization recognition/kudos
- [ ] No incentives are offered
- [ ] Other (please specify)

5. Does your organization have any surveys or benchmarking tools to assess knowledge sharing?

- ( ) Yes, we do assess this
- ( ) No, we do not assess this
- ( ) I don't know if we assess this
- ( ) No, we do not participate in knowledge management practices

Additional comments (optional):

6. What knowledge management strategies does your organization implement? (Choose all that apply)

- [ ] Creating a central location for case studies
- [ ] "Corporate university" / in-house training
- [ ] Database
- [ ] Discussion forums
- [ ] Mentoring
- [ ] Storytelling
- [ ] Videotaping
- [ ] Web portal
- [ ] Other (please specify)

4. Section III - 11 Questions

This section collects information on your organization's structure, culture, and capabilities.

1. Does your organization reference 'building, creating and/or developing relationships' or an equivalent concept in its mission and/or values statement?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

2. Would you describe your organization as having one cultural identity or having several tailored identities (a.k.a. "silo")?

- One identity
- Several tailored identities (a.k.a. "silo")
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

3. As a communication professional, how important do you believe it is for an organization to have a clearly defined corporate culture?

	Very important	Important	Moderately Important	Of Little Importance	Unimportant
Choose One:					

Additional comments (optional):

4. Where do you think the knowledge management function should "live" at an organization?

- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Knowledge Management
- Marketing
- Public Relations
- It should be a decentralized function
- Other (please specify)

5. What do you see as the greatest challenge for capturing knowledge?

- Collecting explicit knowledge (recorded or formal)
- Collecting tacit knowledge (personal knowledge rooted in individual experience)
- Developing resources to collect knowledge
- Employee compliance / putting sharing into practice
- Other (please specify)

6. In which sector does your organization specialize?

- Consumer goods
- Energy
- Financial
- Health care
- Industrial goods
- Services
- Technology
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Other (please specify)

7. How many employees are in your organization worldwide?

- Less than 100
- 100 - 500
- 500 - 1,000
- 1,000 - 5,000
- 5,000 - 10,000
- 10,000 - 20,000
- More than 20,000

8. Is your organization global?

- Yes
- No

9. How many years have you worked for your organization?

- Less than one year
- 1 - 3 years
- 3 - 5 years
- 5 - 7 years
- 7 - 10 years
- 10 - 15 years
- 15 - 20 years
- More than 20 years

10. What is your current title?

11. OPTIONAL: If you would like to receive the results of this questionnaire and an electronic version of the paper upon completion, please include your contact details below.

Again, thank you for your participation.

Name:
Company:
Address:
Address 2:
City/Town:
State:
ZIP/Postal Code:
Country:
Email Address:
Phone Number:

5. Thank you!

Thank you for your time and participation. You have completed the questionnaire.

*** 1. I am comfortable having my name and company credited for participation in this research.**

- Yes
- No

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