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Seeding Knowledge Solutions Before, During, and After

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Seeding Knowledge Solutions Before, During, and After

Abstract
{Excerpt} In the age of competence, one must learn before, during, and after the event. Knowledge solutions lie in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage.

Competence is the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified to deliver a specific task, action, or function successfully. It is also a specific range of knowledge, skills, or behaviors utilized to improve performance.

Today, sustainable competitive advantage derives from strenuous efforts to identify, cultivate, and exploitan organization's core competencies, the tangible fruits of which are composite packages of products and services that anticipate and meet demand. (Yesteryear, instead of strengthening the roots of competitiveness, the accent was placed on business units. Innately, given their defining characteristics, business units under-invest in core competencies, incarcerate resources, and bind innovation—when they do not stifle it.)

Core competencies are integrated and harmonized abilities that provide potential access to markets; create and deliver value to audiences, clients, and partners there; and are difficult for competitors to imitate. They depend on relentless design of strategic architecture, deployment of competence carriers, and commitment to collaborate across silos. They are the product of collective learning.

Keywords
Asian Development Bank, ADB, poverty, economic growth, sustainability, development

Comments
Suggested Citation

Serrat, o. (2010). *Seeding knowledge solutions before, during and after.* Washington, DC: Asian Development Bank.

Required Publisher's Statement

This article was first published by the Asian Development Bank (www.adb.org)

This article is available at DigitalCommons@ILR: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/intl/210

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Seeding Knowledge Solutions Before, During, and After

By Olivier Serrat

In the age of competence, one must learn before, during, and after the event. Knowledge solutions lie in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage.

The Age of Competence

Competence is the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified to deliver a specific task, action, or function successfully. It is also a specific range of knowledge, skills, or behaviors utilized to improve performance.

Today, sustainable competitive advantage derives from strenuous efforts to identify, cultivate, and exploit an organization's core competencies,[1] the tangible fruits of which are composite packages of products and services that anticipate and meet demand. (Yesteryear, instead of strengthening the roots of competitiveness, the accent was placed on business units. Innately, given their defining characteristics, business units under-invest in core competencies, incarcerate resources, and bind innovation—when they do not stifle it.)

Core competencies are integrated and harmonized abilities that provide potential access to markets; create and deliver value to audiences, clients, and partners there; and are difficult for competitors to imitate. They depend on relentless design of strategic architecture, deployment of competence carriers, and commitment to collaborate across silos. They are the product of collective learning.

Learning Before, During, and After …

Knowledge is what you learn from experience before, during, and after the event.[2] Since it is both a thing and a flow, the best way to manage knowledge is to cater at all times to the environment in which it can be identified, created, stored, shared, and used. Leadership, organization, technology, and learning that engender knowledge-enriched solutions are central to that.

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1 Gary Hamel is the originator (with C. K. Prahalad) of the concept of core competencies. See Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad. 1994. *Competing for the Future*. Harvard Business School Press.

2 These three phases are concerned with feedforward, concurrent, and feedback control. In each phase, the focus is on inputs, ongoing processes, and outcomes, respectively.

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… with Knowledge Solutions

But what of tools, methods, and approaches for learning? To drive development forward and enhance its effects, the Asian Development Bank has since 2008 published the *Knowledge Solutions* series. It aims to build competencies in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage, all of them essential to knowledge management and learning. Because documentation can be cumbersome, these *Knowledge Solutions* offer "cheat sheets" that simplify access and reference to the series.

> *Companies should decide what processes and competencies they must excel at and specify measures for each.*
>
> —Robert Kaplan and David Norton

Knowledge Solutions

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Tools, methods, approaches to drive development forward and enhance its effects | www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions

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Organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning

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Table: Seeding Knowledge Solutions Before, During, and After

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Strategy Development	*A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.*	
	Behavior and Change • How can a strategy focus on group relationships with appreciation of their distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge? • How can it utilize stories of significant change to monitor and evaluate performance? • How might it shift the focus from changes in state to changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities? • How could you anchor it in understanding of livelihoods and appreciation of the factors that constrain or enhance these as well as their relationships?	• Culture Theory • The Most Significant Change Technique • Outcome Mapping • The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
	Emergence and Scenario Thinking • Is your strategy the outcome of a human-centered, prototype-driven process for the exploration of new ideas? • Does it maintain a balance between strategizing and learning modes of thinking? • How emergent is it? Does it consider other scenarios?	• Design Thinking • From Strategy to Practice • Reading the Future
	Institutional Capacity and Participation • How does a strategy promote participation at requisite levels?	• Building Institutional Capacity for Development
	Knowledge Assets • Is your strategy for knowledge management enriched by regular knowledge audits? • Does its practice integrate the need to systematically review, evaluate, prioritize, sequence, manage, redirect, and if necessary even cancel strategic initiatives? • Is your approach to dissemination underpinned by policy, strategy, planning, and tactics? How can your knowledge products be made available in a flexible range of formats in recognition of the varied needs of consumers?	• Auditing Knowledge • Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies • Linking Research to Practice
	Marketing • How does a strategy apply a custom blend of the four Ps and other marketing techniques to transform communications with stakeholders and improve performance? • How might it draw on marketing principles to effect changes in the behavior of individuals or groups?	• The Future of Social Marketing • Marketing in the Public Sector
	Organizational Learning • How can a strategy support and energize organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning? • How might it integrate evaluation results to support policy, strategy, and operational changes? • How could it distinguish roadblocks to make them part of the solution instead of part of the problem?	• Building a Learning Organization • Learning Lessons with Knowledge Audits • Overcoming Roadblocks to Learning
	Partnerships and Networks of Practice • Does your strategy leverage partnerships and recognize their drivers of success and failure? • How might it make out social networks and analyze the actors and the relationships between them?	• Creating and Running Partnerships • Social Network Analysis

Knowledge Solutions

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Management Techniques	*Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.*	
	Branding and Value • How might we embrace branding to drive organizational behavior and behavioral change? • Do value cycles maximize the potential of knowledge services and knowledge solutions through delivery platforms?	• New-Age Branding and the Public Sector • Value Cycles for Development Outcomes
	Complexity and Lateral Thinking • How might we investigate deeply the cause-and-effect relationships underlying problems? • Do you enable different perspectives to be generated and applied in management processes? • How might one brainstorm to resolve a problem, meet an opportunity, or turn a tired idea into something new and different? • Why should management practices encompass sense and decision making in multiple contexts?	• The Five Whys Technique • The Reframing Matrix • The SCAMPER Technique • Understanding Complexity
	Linear Thinking • How can we manage for results with a coherent framework for strategic planning, management, and communications? • How does one focus on time, cost, human resources, scope, quality, and actions as common parameters of project performance? • Do you make use of logic models for objectives-oriented planning that structures the main elements in a project, highlighting linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results?	• Crafting a Knowledge Management Results Framework • Focusing on Project Metrics • Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework
	Organizational Change • How do organizations overcome resistance to change and secure as much discretionary effort as possible? • How do we get the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and help them (with incentives) to apply it in ways that strive to improve organizational performance? • How might you prioritize investments in knowledge management? • What are the components of organizational culture and what is the role of organizational learning for change? • How do organizations learn? • How do new knowledge management paradigms compare with the old, and what new structures and managerial attitudes do they require? • Why should we drive management innovation?	• Fast and Effective Change Management • Notions of Knowledge Management • Picking Investments in Knowledge Management • A Primer on Organizational Culture • A Primer on Organizational Learning • The Roots of an Emerging Discipline • Sparking Innovations in Management
	Talent Management • Do you manage meetings before, during, and after, with appreciation of their different kinds, to make them productive and fun? • Should one spend more time, integrity, and brainpower on selecting managers than on anything else? • Why should you empower knowledge workers to make the most of their deepest skills and perform best? • How does one manage by walking around to emphasize the importance of interpersonal contact, open appreciation, and recognition and build civility and performance in the workplace? • How can one give talent strategic and holistic attention to make it happen? • Do you have the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of yourself, of others, and of groups?	• Conducting Effective Meetings • Growing Managers, Not Bosses • Managing Knowledge Workers • Managing by Walking Around • A Primer on Talent Management • Understanding and Developing Emotional Intelligence

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Collaboration Mechanisms	*When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.*	
	Collaborative Tools • How do you harness the power of collaborative minds to innovate faster, cocreate, and cut costs? • How does one represent, link, and arrange concepts, themes, or tasks under a central topic? • How can we actualize the thinking potential of teams?	• Collaborating with Wikis • Drawing Mind Maps • Wearing Six Thinking Hats
	Communities of Practice and Learning Alliances • How do you build a community of like-minded, interacting people to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in a domain? • How can communities of practice report better? • Why should strategic alliances manage the partnership, not just the agreement, for collaborative advantage?	• Building Communities of Practice • Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting • Learning in Strategic Alliances
	Leadership • How should we earn, develop, and retain trust for superior results? • How can one distribute leadership if it is an outcome, not an input to business processes and performance? • Why would you support people who choose to serve first, and then lead, as a way of expanding service to individuals and organizations? • What is the new context for leadership in the public sector?	• Building Trust in the Workplace • Distributing Leadership • Exercising Servant Leadership • Leading in the Workplace
	Social Innovations • By what process can one unearth what works to facilitate positive change in organizations? • How can you generate good ideas that meet pressing unmet needs and improve people's lives to foster smart, sustainable globalization?	• Appreciative Inquiry • Sparking Social Innovations
	Teamwork • How do you enable small groups to work regularly and collectively on complicated problems, take action, and learn as individuals and as a team while doing so? • How can we organize and coordinate with effect a group whose members are not in the same location or time zone, and may not even work for the same organization? • How does one develop a successful team?	• Action Learning • Managing Virtual Teams • Working in Teams

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Knowledge Sharing and Learning	*Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.*	
	Creativity, Innovation, and Learning • What are the forms and functions of networks of practice and how do you monitor and evaluate performance? • How do you harness, individually or in association, useful models of learning and change to reflect on the dimensions of a learning organization? • How can an organization demonstrate commitment to learning, against which provision and practice can be tested and serve as a waymark with which to guide, monitor, and evaluate progress? • What are the stimulants and obstacles to creativity and innovation that drive or impede enterprise in organizations?	• Building Networks of Practice • Dimensions of the Learning Organization • Drawing Learning Charters • Harnessing Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace
	Learning and Development • How can we coach and mentor to inspire and empower employees, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent, and promote success? • What are the five functions of managers toward which learning and development can be extended to improve their insights, attitudes, and skills?	• Coaching and Mentoring • Learning and Development for Management
	Learning Lessons • How do you know what question to ask when? • When a critical milestone has been reached, why should we discuss successes and failures in an open and honest fashion? • How does one step back from day-to-day activities to think about the future? • How can individuals come together to share their experiences, insights, and knowledge on an identified challenge or problem? • Is failure a way to an opportunity? • How can one suggest that a process or methodology that has been shown to be effective in one part of an organization and might be effective in another too? • How might evaluation serve as a foundation block in learning organizations? • What is the potential of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals?	• Asking Effective Questions • Conducting After-Action Reviews and Retrospects • Conducting Successful Retreats • Conducting Peer Assists • Embracing Failure • Identifying and Sharing Good Practices • Learning from Evaluation • Storytelling
	Dissemination • How can an ordinary presentation become a lively and engaging event? • By what interactive process does one communicate knowledge to target audiences to lead to change? • How do you employ the internet to disseminate research findings? • How do we save time in writing, make writing far easier, and improve understanding?	• Conducting Effective Presentations • Disseminating Knowledge Products • Posting Research Online • Using Plain English

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Knowledge Capture and Storage	*Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.*	
	Knowledge Harvesting • How do you garner feedback on why employees leave, what they liked about their job, and where the organization needs improvement? • What, in simple terms, are the most common concepts in knowledge management? • How do you draw out and package tacit knowledge to help others adapt, personalize, and apply it; build organizational capacity; and preserve institutional memory? • Why should one cut information overload and showcase knowledge? • How do we build dynamic, adaptive electronic directories that store information about the knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of people?	• Conducting Exit Interviews • Glossary of Knowledge Management • Harvesting Knowledge • Showcasing Knowledge • Staff Profile Pages
	Reporting • How can one garner feedback from executing agencies on the effectiveness of assistance in capacity development? • By what simple feedback mechanisms might you promote learning before, during, and after to document accomplishments as well as bottlenecks?	• Assessing the Effectiveness of Assistance in Capacity Development • Monthly Progress Notes
	Technology Platforms • How can groups discuss electronically areas of interest and review different opinions and information surrounding a topic?	• Writing Weblogs

Further Reading

ADB. 2008–. *Knowledge Solutions*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions/

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For further information

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Knowledge Solutions

Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

Knowledge Solutions are handy, quick reference guides to tools, methods, and approaches that propel development forward and enhance its effects. They are offered as resources to ADB staff. They may also appeal to the development community and people having interest in knowledge and learning.

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