

The basic principles of KCS

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About our training

About this eBook

The purpose of this eBook is to provide a basic understanding of KCS, or Knowledge-Centered Service. If your eyes glaze over when you hear about tacit and explicit knowledge or if the double loop makes you loopy, this eBook is for you. If it whets your appetite to know more – and we hope it does – we suggest you visit the Consortium for Service Innovation and review the KCS Practices Guide for more detailed information

What is KCS?

KCS provides a methodology and set of practices for consistently capturing information in a way that is both structured enough to be useful, and dynamic enough to suit the rapidly changing environment of technical support.



Why do you need a methodology?

When you're undertaking any process that involves multiple steps and multiple people, it's helpful to adopt a systematic way of working. It steers you in the right direction and helps you achieve your goals.

When you follow a methodology, you know which tasks are required, when to perform them and how to complete them. A methodology ensures that things are done correctly and consistently. Through a structured and repeatable process, you can apply the same approach each time.

Whether you're an expert or a novice, a methodology helps you complete tasks faster than before.

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Why KCS?

The greater the complexity of knowledge, the greater the benefit of KCS

KCS not only improves customer satisfaction, but it also improves employee satisfaction and increases efficiencies and productivity throughout the enterprise.



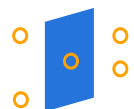
Improve productivity and efficiency



Reduce average call time



Increase first-call resolution rates



Increase customer and employee satisfaction

Goals of KCS

KCS advocates collaboration and sharing to achieve these goals.



Create content, or knowledge, that is useful for customer service and support



Evolve the knowledge to keep it current



Develop a knowledge base of the organizations collective knowledge

Most of all, KCS is about people

KCS focuses on beliefs, behaviors, and buy-in.

It maintains that:

- People are the source of knowledge
- People use and maintain the knowledge

For KCS to work, companies need to shift their value proposition. Instead of valuing people who possess the knowledge, it should value people who share, are willing to learn, and help others learn. These are the new heroes in the organization. This encourages the values of collaboration, sharing and improving and using knowledge.

Agents become the Knowledge Engineers

The best people to create the knowledge are the ones who use it every day: the support agents. When agents – rather than Knowledge Engineers – create the knowledge, it's done faster and cheaper, and more usable knowledge is created.

KCS becomes the way we solve problems.

KCS isn't something you do in addition to solving problems. KCS is the method you use to populate your knowledge base and keep it healthy.

SUPPORT AGENTS

The agents will capture 70-80% of what's known.

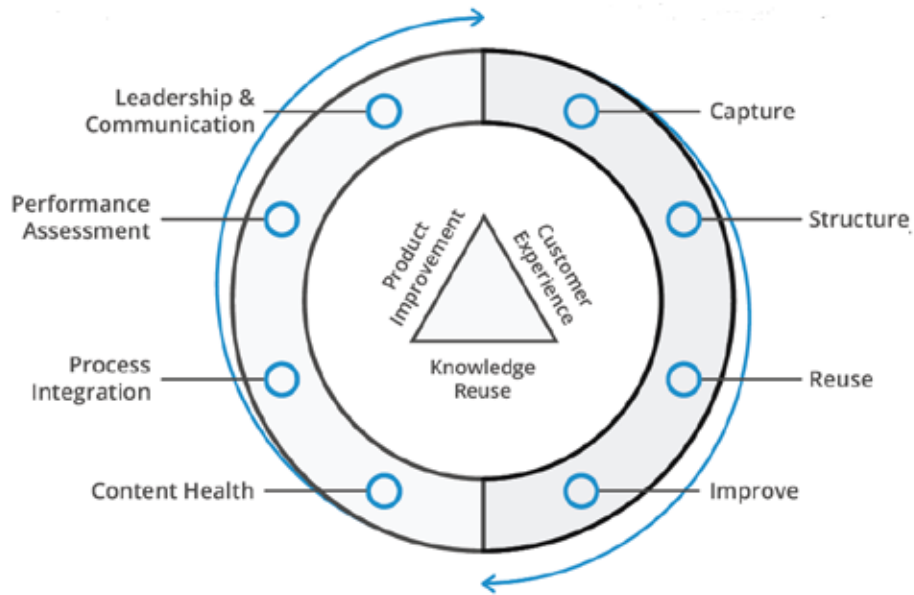
KNOWLEDGE ENGINEERS

Only 20% of the knowledge gets captured, and the process is costly and slow.



Double-loop process

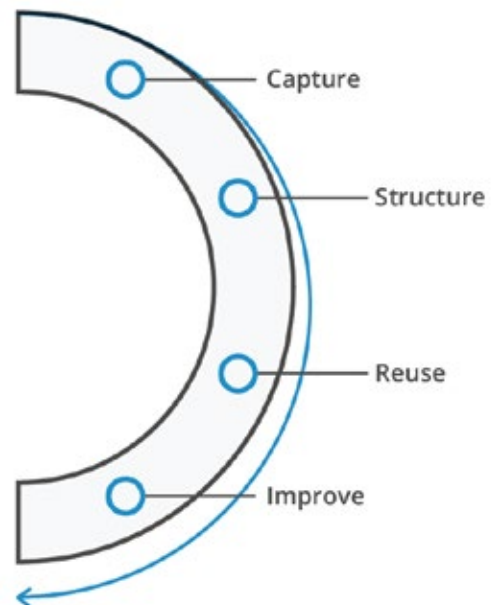
If you've ever looked into KCS, then you've probably seen this image. But what do these loops mean?



The Solve loop in a nutshell

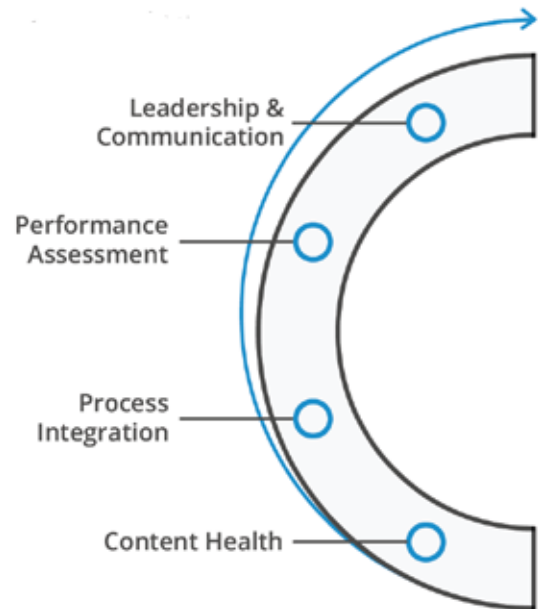
In an ideal KCS world, agents develop articles just-in-time while resolving incidents if a solution doesn't already exist in the knowledge base. "Search early, search often" is a mantra of KCS, meaning to always search the knowledge base before creating an article. This avoids duplication, increases reuse of existing articles and eliminates unnecessary work. If a new knowledge article is required, the agent captures the ticket data and the answer, if it is known, and structures it in a way that makes it easily findable and reusable by other agents or by the end user/customer in the case of self-service, by adding search terms. If the answer is not known, it is still useful for the agent to create the article for completion later

Every time agents interact with a customer they should apply the UFFA principle (Use it, Flag it, Fix it, Add it) to improve the solutions. This means they should use existing solutions, flag anything that needs addressing, fix whatever they can and add the updated solution to the collective knowledge. UFFA is extremely empowering: it encourages agents and other employees to be personally accountable for and take ownership of the collective knowledge.



The Evolve loop in brief

The Evolve loop provides a systematic process for continuous improvement of the knowledge and the organization. Through the analysis of patterns (for example, identifying useful knowledge, recurring issues, etc.) the Evolve loop not only helps determine which content has high value, but also indicates areas in the organization's products or services that can use improvement. In this way, KCS helps inform Development, Sales and Marketing, promoting tighter cooperation between departments.



Critical success factors for adoption

For KCS to work, the organization needs to change its thinking.

Management buy-in is a prerequisite for any successful KCS initiative. If management doesn't embrace KCS, the results you're achieving will drop off in 6-8 months. Trusting people to do the work is a very empowering approach to creating and maintaining knowledge.

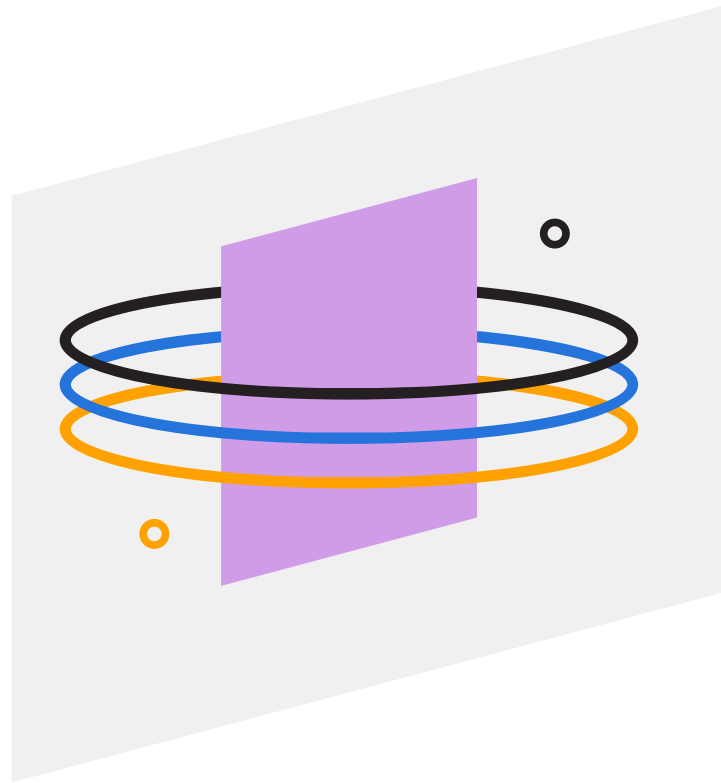
Give knowledge workers the responsibility and accountability for knowledge creation, and they'll take ownership of the knowledge. Since we're changing the way people work, KCS coaches play an important role in KCS adoption. Make sure people understand the big picture and benefits of why you're asking them to change their behavior and they will feel like a part of the process.

Assemble a small group of agents to determine the workflows. KCS works best when you involve the people who will be doing the work. Change the way you measure people's contribution. To succeed with KCS, metrics need to be value-based. For example, don't reward people for publishing more articles; reward them for publishing useful articles.

Technology as a critical enabler

While processes and people are the most important part of KCS, having the right tools and functionality can go a long way in achieving KCS success. Knowledge management software compliant with KCS can automate processes and workflows to keep you on track.

1. **Integration:** RightAnswers knowledge management software integrates with your CRM or ITSM to automatically capture information from cases or tickets and pull it into a new knowledge article
2. **Templates:** Predefined templates ensure that knowledge is structured in the most useful way.
3. **Approval Cycle:** You can define an approval Cycle for knowledge, and it progresses from WIP, Draft, Approved to Published and can be searched in any mode.
4. **Reporting:** Extensive reporting and analytics provides information on performance, processes and knowledge base health.



Keep KCS going strong

KCS is a journey, not a destination.

Our world keeps changing, new projects compete for attention and key staff moves on. Before you know it, what was a very successful KCS implementation starts to stumble and standards drop.

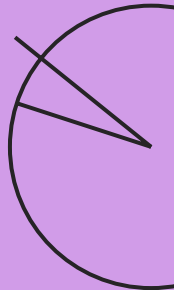
So how can you maintain the momentum of your KCS initiative?

First of all – and this is critical – don't think of KCS as a "project" with a beginning, middle and end. It is an ongoing effort that needs to be tended and cultivated.

Important steps you should take to sustain KCS for the long-term



A knowledge quality tool checks each knowledge article for a variety of criteria, including KCS compliance.



Webinar: Creating a High Quality Knowledge Base

[Watch now](#)

1. Make sure agents can see the impact of their contribution to the knowledge base through reuse reports, self-service success, and improvements to other offerings.
2. Coaches are key. Managers need to work closely with the KCS coaches and value their work, particularly their feedback and concerns regarding the staff they coach, and they should be given enough time to carry out their coaching tasks.
3. Tie KCS metrics into knowledge workers' annual review.
4. Use a tool that supports the Solve and Evolve loops.
5. Integrate case management and knowledge management.
6. Require KCS accreditation for your knowledge workers.
7. Periodically review whether the team is creating knowledge for the right types of issues.
8. Re-energize the knowledge program with events such as retraining, and share analytics around knowledge quality.
9. Never stop marketing. For example, publicize internally which articles got the most views and who created them.



RightAnswers & KCS

RightAnswers is the only system-agnostic knowledge management provider that is KCS Verified V6.

- 40% of our customers choose RightAnswers because we support KCS
- 70 KCS processes are supported by RightAnswers
- 75% of our customers have implemented some part of KCS

RightAnswers workflows & practices

A few ways RightAnswers conform to KCS processes



Capture

- Role-based permissions conform to KCS guidelines
- Through our inline integration with the case or ticketing system, information is automatically pulled from the open ticket or case into the relevant fields of new knowledge articles
- The patented Intelligent Knowledge Builder™ starts creating new articles on topics for which a solution isn't found

Structure

- Configurable templates structure the knowledge so the most important information is included in the knowledge article

Reuse

- Search results include draft, federated and unstructured sources of knowledge, to provide the most relevant results and increase knowledge reuse
- Guided navigation assists in the search to bring results that were most helpful to others regarding similar issues

Improve

- Knowledge is improved by easily adding comments or edits to solutions
- Feedback is flagged and highlighted for review
- We incorporate knowledge from other sources, such as forums and federated knowledge
- Formats such as video and decision trees add value to solutions

90-day phased onboarding

RightAnswers has perfected its onboarding program to get new and existing clients KCS-compliant in 90 days.

Continual follow-ups and by the Client Success team keep clients on-track.

But it doesn't end there

Gamification inside RightAnswers increases engagement with your knowledge, helping to keep your knowledge fresh.

75% of KCS benefits are achieved in Phase One of the 90-day plan

Typical results

Our clients who use KCS find that they solve cases and incidents faster and achieve other improvements:

- *50-60% reduced time to resolution*
- *50% case deflation to self-service*
- *70% reduced time to proficiency*
- *30-50% increased first contact resolution*
- *Increased customer success and use of self service*

About our training

RightAnswers is accredited by the KCS Academy to offer KCS workshops and certification.

KCS Practices V6

Earn the highest level of KCS certification in this 3-day workshop.

[Learn More »](#)

KCS Practices Overview

One-day workshop that explains what's involved in KCS and what type of commitment it requires.

[Learn More »](#)

KCS Leadership

1-day workshop that delves into KCS concepts and develops the skills needed to successfully lead a knowledge-centered organization.

[Learn More »](#)

"If you took RightAnswers training and aren't excited about KM/KCS, then I don't understand you! I got so much out of this."

Josh, Client Services Specialist



Upland RightAnswers is the #1 provider of cloud-based knowledge management, web and mobile self-service and social knowledge solutions for improving customer service, IT support and enterprise-wide collaboration.

Our flagship product, the Enterprise Knowledge Hub, promotes knowledge-sharing across your organization, increasing employee engagement and your overall productivity and efficiency. Our 450+ clients around the globe use RightAnswers seamlessly integrated with their CRM, ITSM or other enterprise software to provide outstanding customer experiences while saving millions of dollars a year.

Want to learn more?

Contact us.

Find out more about the leading knowledge management provider for customer service and support, and the tools we provide to make your life easier – and your knowledge better!



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