



AN INVITATION TO JOIN

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**THE SYNCHRONI FORUM 2005**  
**BEYOND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

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**AUGUST 2005**

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## BEYOND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT....

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Whilst definitions and the role of formal Knowledge Management in organisations are debated, the importance of leveraging knowledge as a key asset is rarely challenged: few would deny the importance of sharing best practice, of focusing on continuous improvement and having a culture of learning....

The real challenge is in the figuring out ‘the how’ and whilst some organisations have seen KM as little more than information management, a vast population of others are united in the view that it is complex and all-pervasive. Impressive gains have been reported from initiatives that enable knowledge to be used more effectively in making faster decisions; understanding customer requirements; reducing product development time and so on and so forth.... Leading examples include:

- Roche increased the speed of applying for FDA approval on products by 6 months
- Buckman Labs increased its new-product sales by 50%
- The Dow Chemical Company saved \$40million a year in the reuse of patents

KM as a ‘discipline’ or management tool has been on a journey over the last 10 or so years and much has changed in the way management approach the subject. Whilst systems are recognised as important enablers, it is acknowledged that new generation KM is:

- Less about data and more about the social nature of knowledge
- Less about capture and retrieval and more about innovating and sharing
- Less about a KM function or ‘entity’ and more about **principles and processes that are embedded in ‘the way we do business’**

Synchroni has been on this KM journey over the last 7 years with management from a wide range of organisations across the private and public sector. There is a palpable sense of change within the KM community - a drive to take the vast learning on the principles, tools and techniques of KM and enable them to be more fully embedded into organisational functions and processes. By doing so, move into the next generation - **Beyond KM**.

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## THE SYNCHRONI FORUM: BEYOND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

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The Synchroni Forum brings together organisations that are asking similar questions and want to accelerate their learning through linking with peers with aligned interests. Examples of common topics that will be designed into the current Forum programme of activity are:

**Leading Organisational Change:** Focusing on the challenge of leading change in public and private sector organisations and the issues around building, retaining and exploiting knowledge in this context.

**Knowledge from the Customer Interface:** How to build relationships within the supply chain that can deliver knowledge and value.

**Performance Measurement:** Exposing members to practical ways to measure value created in the organisation. The aim will be to explore how this can be done, the level of benefit and pointers towards tried and tested approaches, tools and techniques.

**Retaining Competency and Rightsizing the Organisation:** Within cycles of rationalisation and reorganisation, how do you design for optimal capacity and capability- what are the challenges and responses around knowledge access and retention?

**Reuse of Learning in Project Based Organisations:** While many public and private sector organisations have adopted multi-disciplinary project based models - how is learning captured and leveraged in such environments?

**Corporate Memory / Organisational IQ:** How can we cost-efficiently identify and manage the key knowledge assets that will support the organisation in the future and in its legacy obligations. Do technological tools deliver and how best are processes and behaviour changes embedded?

The Forum is in its eight year and acts also as a vehicle for players from public and private sectors to cross fertilise their thinking and benchmark their activity. The following shows examples of the players involved and some of their views on the Forum:

Anglian Water	DERA	The Cabinet Office
Linklaters	Boots the Chemist	Yorkshire Water
Zeneca	GlaxoSmithKline	Allied Domecq
IBM	Mobil North Sea	BNFL
BBC	Department of Trade & Indust	The Environment Agency
BG Technology	Buckman Labs	Leeds University
Polaroid	Scottish Power	Scottish Homes
Miller Group	Standard Life	Scottish Enterprise
Registers of Scotland	Health & Safety Exec	BRE
AEGON plc	Jones Lang Lassalle	Royal Bank of Scotland
Rolls-Royce	Marconi	KPMG
Wates Group	Commonwealth Secretariat	London Underground
NHS	HM Land Registry	Mitsui Babcock
Balfour Beatty	Abbey National	Sainsbury's
Welsh Development Agency	Berwin Leighton Paisner	DVLA

*"The Forum has been of more practical use to us at the BBC than all the many conferences we have been to on knowledge management" Hilary Rowland, BBC*

*"The Forum has built a network of like-minded people and provided a richness of learning which I know you don't get from any course or seminar" Graeme Mackay, ICL*

*"Inspiring ideas, terrific conversations - great company, brilliant contacts" Chris Woods, Director of Innovation, Wates Group*

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## THE FORUM EVENTS

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The Forum programme of activity generally spans three types of events, held monthly over twelve months (recessed during holiday periods), these being:

- International Experts Workshops
- Hot Topics working groups
- ‘Pit stops on the learning journey’ visits

### **International Experts Workshops**

How often does management attend conferences to hear keynotes from international thought-leaders and wished they could engage in more direct dialogue with them discussing the insights in relation to their own organisation?

These meetings provide the opportunity to spend a major part of a day with a such ‘leading lights’, exploring practical management challenges and building personal linkages. Many members e-mail and link with Richard McDermott and Steve Denning whom they have met through the Forum programme.

### **Hot Topics Working Groups**

Each year we commit meetings to specific ‘hot topics’ that are agreed within the membership. These meetings will take different forms. For example, different perspectives might be shared and contrasted from 2 or more external organisations and/or we may ask members who have achieved success and those who still face challenges share their stories with the rest of the Forum Membership. The aim of these meetings is to provide a fresh shared consideration of a topic that is identified as highly pertinent for many of the members. It also provides a lens into a number of different organisations and how they are addressing the specific challenge, implementing solutions and achieving success

### **Pit Stops on the Learning Journey**

Synchroni is well recognised for organising visits to leading organisations around UK, Europe and North America for the Forum members. We have visited around 60 such organisations in the seven-year lifetime of the Forum, and these visits often provide access to these organisations that is not available to single organisations.

Synchroni has always seen these visits as a chance for members to hear a wide range of detailed organisational improvement stories, to acquire in-depth insights and to build linkages to a wide range of valuable contacts for the future.

To give a sense of the nature of the activity, here are brief summaries of some typical events:

#### **DATA INTO KNOWLEDGE INTO DECISIONS AT SCHLUMBERGER**

Knowledge is at the centre of Schlumberger, the international Oil and Gas major. The whole organisation is focused on transforming data into knowledge and decisions. Henry Edmundsen and his colleagues gave us an insight into how Schlumberger keeps its 78,000 people worldwide informed and connected. Key ideas that were explored included allowing KM to ‘evolve’; using common sense and not relying on gurus and books; recognising that IT is a distribution enabler, but it is people communicating with each other that is central; grass roots initiatives are as important as the official big plan; measuring and demonstrating ROI and value generated is important even in a supportive environment.

### TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES SESSION

In this session, we drew together experiences across the membership and beyond so that members would come away from the meeting, not only with deeper insights on the tools and methodologies, but also with practical templates and approaches for direct implementation. The tools and methodologies explored included: Social Network Analysis; A Communities 'Tool-Kit'; KLIMT - KLIMT (a workshop process used within the DoH that addresses teams); Knowledge Audit; Knowledge Harvesting; Action Based Learning and After Action Review.

### FINDING EXPERTISE AT CLIFFORD CHANCE

This meeting gave us the chance to understand how Clifford Chance, the world's biggest law firm, finds expertise and knowledge and integrates it within its global operations in 28 offices in 19 countries with 8,000 employees worldwide, for 5,000 subject experts and lawyers. Clifford Chance were able to show the enormous benefits as well as the challenges in linking people and documents together to provide powerful 'know-who' and 'know-what' capabilities. The Clifford Chance experiences, whilst breaking new ground, gave many pointers for others in the integration of systems, people and process.

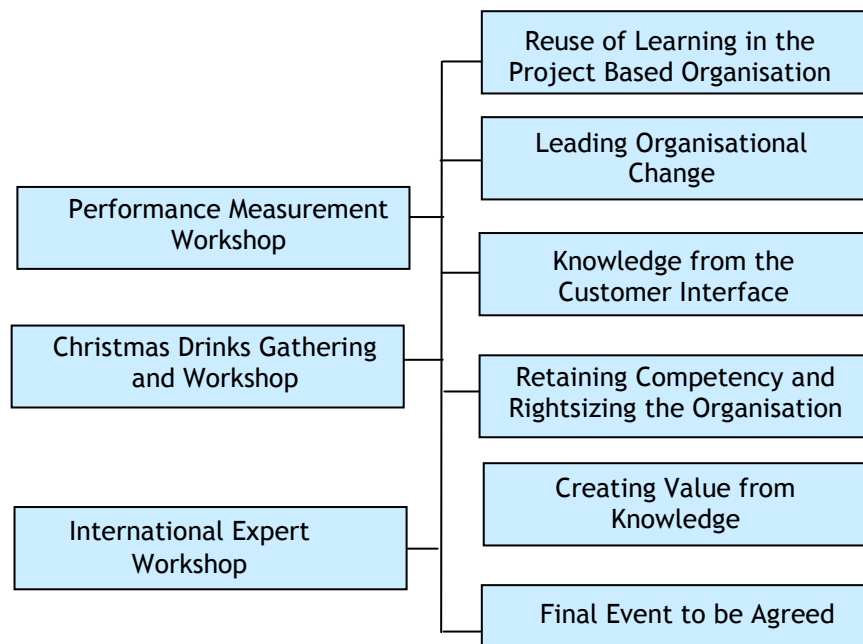
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## THE FORUM PROGRAMME

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The programme of International Expert Workshops, Hot Topics Workshops and Learning Journey Visits will be designed to take note of the agendas of the individual participants and the member organisations they represent. The schematic below indicates the nature of the current programme

Programme Launch June 2005 (prior to 2 month summer recess)



Programme end May 2006

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## **COST OF MEMBERSHIP AND TIMING FOR THE FORUM**

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The Forum operates on the basis of a 12-month programme and the content is tailored to the interests of participants who have joined that programme. The cost of participating in the Forum Programme is £10,000 +VAT.

The programme of Forum activity commenced in June 2005 and will be completed in May 2006. Participation is on an organisational basis to enable maximum benefit and learning to be gained - often up to three people are involved from each participating organisation in any one Forum event, and attendance from different functions is very much encouraged.

Members become part of a peer network targeted at taking the vast learning on the principles, tools and techniques of KM and enabling them to be more fully embedded for improved organisational performance. It is a network that seeks to benchmark thinking and seek and share guidance.

To support this network there is an active members-only website where linkages can be made with Forum members, key players and other groups of practitioners. The site provides an entry point to all Forum material, from previous years, and to content collected at a variety of overseas conferences and through our networks. To assist in this process summary meeting notes are created after each meeting, these are posted on the web site.

Members also frequently use the Synchroni team as an access point to a wide range of expertise for help in finding solutions to specific problems. This can be done either by broadcasting the query around the network of current and former Forum members or through a wider range of contacts in the UK and overseas.

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## **I AM INTERESTED! HOW DO I JOIN?**

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To indicate your interest, please either call Synchroni Ltd on 01560 486648 or e-mail Caroline Vance [cvance@synchroni.co.uk](mailto:cvance@synchroni.co.uk) or Paul Ormerod [pormerod@synchroni.co.uk](mailto:pormerod@synchroni.co.uk).

We look forward to welcoming you to the Forum....