

# LOTUS AND IBM KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

## An Overview



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This overview describes the Lotus and IBM strategy for Knowledge Management. It highlights the key elements of Knowledge Management and the benefits that it brings to organizations. This clear, high-level vision of Knowledge Management serves as a solid introduction to Knowledge Management and the Lotus and IBM products, services, and solutions that enable it.



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## The Dynamics of Knowledge Management

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Knowledge Management will soon pervade business practices in the same way that e-business pervades commerce. Similar to e-business, this trend started out on the fringe of computing and gained incremental credibility from the successes of early adopters. But what is Knowledge Management and why is its arrival imminent?

Today a company's value centers on its "intangible assets." This term, which was coined by industry consultant Karl-Erik Sveiby, pertains to the *competencies, relationships, and information* that exist virtually anywhere within a company, from the minds of employees, to back-end database files, to documented policies and procedures. Knowledge Management technologies essentially capture these intangible assets and provide a context for their application and preservation within the business environment. This process not only strengthens organizational competitiveness and long-term growth potential — it builds company value.

Even though this value may originate from the farthest quarters of an organization, its cultivation can deliver bottom-line results. These results have generated demand for Knowledge Management solutions at a time when the enabling technologies have reached their peak. In fact, this convergence of *supply* and *demand* is a key indication that the discipline has arrived on a lasting course.

Similar to e-business, Knowledge Management will play a critical role in corporate longevity and ultimately distinguish the winners from those companies that merely survive. It will enable companies to apply their intangible assets, and in the spirit of e-business, revolutionize the way they do business. In fact, elements of Knowledge Management are already manifest in many successful e-business practices such as electronic procurement where knowledge accelerates and bolsters the entire procurement process.

Lotus® believes that there are five core technologies that underpin Knowledge Management: *Business Intelligence, Collaboration, Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Discovery, and Expertise Location*. Among these, Business Intelligence is growing with OLAP, Data Mining and other techniques for analyzing structured data; Collaboration is shifting to a blend of synchronous, asynchronous and community-focused tools; and Knowledge Transfer is quickly expanding into eLearning. Moreover, Knowledge Discovery and Expertise Location are emerging as new ways to access previously unattainable content and human expertise.

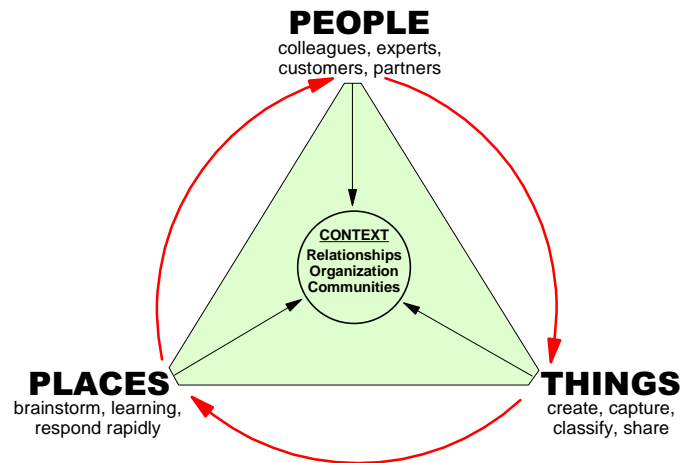
Portals are the technological linchpins to these technologies. They bind them together and provide an entry to the knowledge that exists both within and beyond organizational boundaries. By providing this access to knowledge, as well as a context for its use, these technologies ultimately deliver on the promise of Knowledge Management.

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## People, Places, and Things

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Lotus and IBM® have identified People, Places, and Things as the three essential ingredients of an effective Knowledge Management infrastructure. According to this concept, *people*, not facts, are the focal point of Knowledge Management. People bring powerful insights and expertise to the business process and require *places* where they can create and act on knowledge, and *things* to help them meet their business goals.



*People, Places, and Things are the three essential ingredients of Knowledge Management.*

- *People* represent the employees, customers, partners, experts, and other individuals who are central to an organization's business success. Knowledge Management technologies provide them with the context and tools for effective interaction. These technologies also offer features that identify people in terms of who they know, what they know, and how proficient they are at a given task.
- *Places* are the virtual workspaces in which people come together to brainstorm, learn, and interact. Knowledge Management technologies provide these workspaces and equip them with structured content, learning tools, and communications technologies, so that users can make asynchronous and real-time connections.
- *Things* include the data, information, and processes that are created, captured, classified, and shared across an organization. Knowledge Management enables the end user to access and apply these things to their business goals.

Lotus and IBM offer a wide range of products and services that not only support People, Places, and Things, but also enable them to interact in a context that delivers real business value. For example, the Lotus K-station™ portal brings diverse sources of knowledge together like never before. Its capabilities can be supplemented with the Lotus Discovery Server, which makes it easy to locate expertise and information within an organization. IBM also provides a series of portal tools, including the IBM Enterprise Information Portal (EIP), which enables business users to rapidly access, manipulate, and deliver content through a rich set of development components and services. These IBM and Lotus products cross-integrate so customers can build robust, scalable, and complete portal solutions based on their unique organizational needs.

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## Lotus Knowledge Management Solutions

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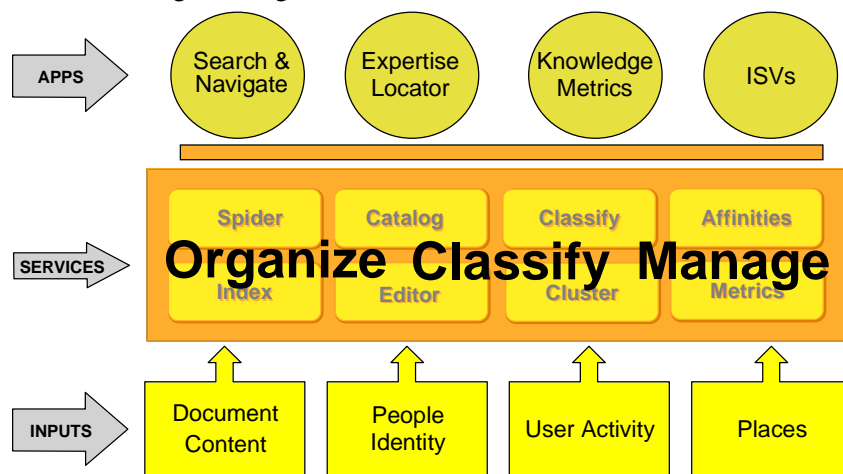
Lotus has developed an integrated collection of Knowledge Management technologies that include:

- **Lotus K-station.** A knowledge portal that organizes content, applications, and people for both individuals (Personal Places) and communities (Community Places).
- **Lotus Discovery Server.** A sophisticated solution that probes an organization's combined knowledge and discovers the relationships between People, Places, and Things so that they can be applied to specific business challenges.

As key elements of the overall Lotus and IBM Knowledge Management strategy, these solutions are the technological manifestation of the business methodologies framed by the "People, Places, and Things" concept.

K-station provides a collaborative portal, or single point of entry, through which end-users and communities can conduct their business tasks. This solution enables end-users to organize their work by community, interest, task, or job focus, and provides powerful out-of-the-box capabilities for team collaboration.

The Lotus Discovery Server provides sophisticated discovery tools that categorize content and an organization's expertise into browsable and searchable catalogs. Both Lotus K-station and Discovery Server are fully integrated, and can be used together or as stand-alone Knowledge Management solutions.



*Lotus K-station and Discovery Server are key components of the Lotus and IBM Knowledge Management strategy.*

## **Lotus K-station**

Lotus K-station is a browser-based collaborative portal, or access point, through which individuals can acquire, share, and transfer business knowledge. K-station gives both users and developers the unique ability to rapidly create personalized, Web-accessible team workspaces within the portal. Online awareness and real-time chat capabilities are also available throughout the portal, so you can easily see who's online, connect with them instantly, and get answers fast.

## **Lotus Discovery Server**

The Discovery Server provides expertise profiling and location; sophisticated content cataloging and retrieval; and comprehensive search and knowledge audits. The server crawls through structured and unstructured content in order to extract, organize, and store the data that may be relevant to a given business task. The server also tracks relevant end user activity, identifying those individuals who may be best suited to address the task. The server was designed to be used as a rich back-end service to Lotus K-station or as a stand-alone Knowledge Management solution for any other corporate portal.



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## Implementation Scenario

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When a Knowledge Management infrastructure is properly assembled, People, Places, and Things are combined into a context that delivers business value. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process is a good example of a team-oriented business challenge that is well served by Knowledge Management technologies. In this scenario, an end user starts by creating an “RFP place,” which is a *Unit of Context* for accomplishing a business task. Unlike a file directory, this RFP place is a virtual workspace where the document can be created, reviewed, and ultimately accessed for future use. The lead person in this case uses the system to identify experts and invite team members to the newly created RFP workspace.

After locating and assembling the group, the lead person then communicates the project goals and milestones to the team members. At this point, the place becomes either a *Planned or Spontaneous Community*, meaning it takes shape either in pre-planned or ad hoc fashion. It is provisioned with a variety of collaborative tools that meet the task at hand, including items such as: member lists, profile links, real-time chat, document libraries, message boards, and project calendars. The team uses provisions like these to collaborate, research, draft, edit, and ultimately produce an approved RFP. The underlying Knowledge Management technology not only provides an organized and systematic means to reach this end, but also offers a means to preserve the work so that future authors can fully leverage the collective expertise and output of this RFP effort.

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## **Conclusion**

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In order to survive, companies must harness and apply their inherent competencies, relationships, and information. The means toward this end is Knowledge Management, a discipline that Lotus and IBM define as the interaction of People, Places, and Things in a meaningful context that discovers and preserves value. By understanding Knowledge Management in this way — and providing the unifying technologies for community and enterprise-wide support — Lotus and IBM are helping their customers leverage intangible assets and thrive in the information age.

For more information, please visit our Web site at [www.lotus.com/km](http://www.lotus.com/km)



