



## **Chapter I**

# **Introduction to Optimal KM/WM Systems**

## **Issues**

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- To explore the importance of the question, *what needs to be done*, for today and tomorrow
- To examine the difference between conventional wisdom versus a wider view of wisdom
- To take a look at the “big picture” when taking a holistic approach within an optimal KM/WM system environment
- To examine two successful applications of optimal KM/WM systems as found in organizations today

## **Introduction**

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Today, how well an organization can respond to changing times is paramount. Decision makers at all levels need to adjust to meet fast changing times in a typical company. Basically, a company needs to change its information system to fit the times. In turn, appropriate computer techniques and technologies can be applied that best meets the requirements for the changed business conditions. The current failures of small- to large-sized organizations indicate that their

information systems are not reflective of current business conditions even though the application of newer techniques and technologies may abound in the company. The turbulence of current business conditions, then, necessitates the need for decision makers to use the latest in information system developments, that is, optimal knowledge management (KM)/Wisdom Management (WM) systems. Initially, the chapter focuses on answering the question -“what needs to be done” to optimize the operation of a learning organization. In turn, there is a discussion about information and its tie-in with their upper levels - wisdom and truth. Not only is there an introduction to optimal KM/WM systems, but also there is a rich discussion centering on the elements underlying them. This background serves as a basis for defining these newer systems. Also, there is an introduction to functional areas found in optimal KM/WM systems along with two typical applications of these systems.

## **Focus on Answering the Question “What Needs to be Done?”**

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To avoid past mistakes of a typical organization, it is helpful at the outset to state that company decision makers tend to ask the same questions which most people ask. In turn, these decision makers assume that these are the right ones to answer. The better approach is not to give answers, but to ask questions of importance to the organization for growth opportunities. To state it another way, there should be a willingness by company decision makers to start not with the question “What do you think you should do?”, but with the question, “What needs to be done” to develop and grow an organization that is committed to optimize its performance today and tomorrow. The willingness to change the way questions are asked can have a profound impact on making wise judgments about growing an optimized organization. Succeeding in a changing environment may mean abandoning what has worked in the past. This is the basic approach found in optimal KM/WM systems. Asking and answering the right questions for the times is at the center of judging wisely by a company’s decision makers. Related to asking the right questions and getting wise answers center on the “big picture,” which may mean reinventing the organization. That is, there is a need for a tie-in of executive visioning with corporate planning for the big picture about what needs to be done from the short to long term for growing an optimized organization.

As will be seen throughout the text, a number of newer techniques and software packages that focus on a holistic approach to resolving an organization’s problems and capitalizing on its opportunities will be presented. Among these are:

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