



## Book Review:

**Reading Time:**

3 minutes

**Reader Benefit:**

- ◆ Learn what working knowledge is all about;
- ◆ Insights about how you can utilise knowledge to work for you;
- ◆ Buy the book to discover the true and real value of knowledge.

Title: **Working Knowledge**

Author: Thomas H. Davenport and Lawrence Prusak

Publisher: Harvard Business School Press

Pages: 199 pp, includes Notes and Index

Reviewer's Rating: ☺☺☺☺☺

**Rating Legend:**

*Inspiring* ☺☺☺☺☺ *Excellent* ☺☺☺☺ *Good* ☺☺☺ *Average* ☺☺ *OK* ☺

***Website Summary:*****Managing What You Know**

To sustain their competitive edge in the knowledge-based economy, most (if not all) companies realise that knowledge management is a critical issue. This enlightening book covers the salient points of the knowledge management equation and is a good indication of where knowledge can be used to add value to the human experience.

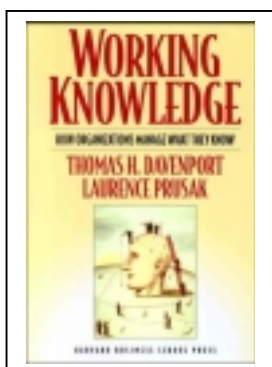
***Synopsis:*****Managing What You Know**

To sustain their competitive edge in the knowledge-based economy, most (if not all) companies realise that knowledge management is a critical issue.

There is a rising sense of urgency to recognise that knowledge can make a substantial difference between business success and survival. And the tension is rapidly increasing.

The authors concur that the questions arising from the knowledge-creating activities that take place within and between humans happen in the context of: *Comparison, Consequences, Connections and Conversation.*

Succinct in style and scope, this book delivers an illuminating approach to knowledge management by helping the reader to discern the likely answers.





## Managing What You Know

*Book Review by Leon A. Enriquez*

To sustain their competitive edge in the knowledge-based economy, most (if not all) companies realise that knowledge management is a critical issue. There is a rising sense of urgency to recognise that knowledge can make a substantial difference between business success and survival. And the tension is rapidly increasing.

Obviously, some questions that arise about knowledge need to be addressed as follows: How does it look and sound in daily life and work? How is it different from data and information? Who has it? Where is it? Who uses it? What do we talk about when we talk about knowledge? What key cultural and behavioural issues must we address to make use of it?

This enlightening book covers the salient points of the knowledge management equation and is a good indication of where knowledge can be used to add value to the human experience.

“Our primary aim is to develop preliminary understanding of what knowledge is within organisations,” state the authors Davenport and Prusak in the book’s Introduction. “Our aim, finally, is to provide a general perspective on how firms work that will give managers a means for decisively improving performance.”

Although the idea is of recent coinage, knowledge management initiatives include instituting a knowledge repository, supporting diverse types of knowledge (such as best practices, lessons learned, product development knowledge, customer knowledge, human resource management knowledge, methods-based knowledge, etc.), and standard knowledge infrastructures (such as groupware and intranet-based technologies). From the authors’ observations, signs of broad acceptance of knowledge management abound.

“Impressive as this progress has been, we feel it’s important to reiterate that it represents only the first phase of knowledge management’s potential impact on organisational dynamics,” state Davenport and Prusak. “What firms must do in the second phase of knowledge is to integrate it with familiar aspects of the business: strategy, process, culture, behaviour.”



According to the authors, many factors have led to the current “knowledge boom”.

This convergence of causes is one reason that thinking clearly about knowledge has become so important so quickly. The reasons are as follows:

- ◆ The perception and the reality of a new global competitiveness is one driving force; and
- ◆ Rapid change and increased competition for the currencies of increasingly sophisticated consumers.

In nine chapters that are easy-to-read and understand, the authors clearly address the following topics:

- ◆ What do we talk about when we talk about knowledge?
- ◆ The promise and challenge of knowledge markets
- ◆ Knowledge generation
- ◆ Knowledge codification and coordination
- ◆ Knowledge transfer
- ◆ Knowledge roles and skills
- ◆ Technologies for knowledge management
- ◆ Knowledge management projects in practice
- ◆ The pragmatics of knowledge management

“Knowledge derives from information as information derives from data,” highlight Davenport and Prusak. “If information is to become knowledge, humans must do virtually all the work.

This transformation happens through the following: comparison, consequences, connections, and conversation. And finally, knowledge must trigger action if it is to make practical sense.”

The authors concur that the questions arising from the knowledge-creating activities that take place within and between humans are:

- ◆ *Comparison*: How does information about this situation compare to other situations we have known?
- ◆ *Consequences*: What implications does the information have for decisions and actions?
- ◆ *Connections*: How does this bit of information relate to others?
- ◆ *Conversation*: What do other people think about this information?



“It’s worth reflecting on some of the key components of knowledge which includes experience, truth, judgement, and rules of thumb,” note Davenport and Prusak. “A knowledge advantage is a sustainable advantage.”

Succinct in style and scope, this book delivers an illuminating approach to knowledge management by helping the reader to discern the likely answers.

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