20 Years of Developing Dynamic Organisations
Welcome to The Henley Forum

We help our members develop dynamic organisations, to survive and thrive in challenging and rapidly changing conditions.

In our 20 years as a vibrant community, we have been...

- bringing thoughtful practitioners, practically-minded academics and imaginative thought leaders together
- actively working to connect people involved in knowledge, learning and change work across functions and sectors
- collaborating with our organisational partners to develop new knowledge and practical wisdom that gives them the edge in addressing some of their most challenging problems.

Our ultimate aim is to develop more dynamically capable organisations where people know, learn, adapt and innovate. We want to catch people doing things well; we want to celebrate and share what’s working in practice; we want to look forward and push the boundaries of leading-edge practice.

Over recent years, we have seen profound changes in the working environment. These changes have created a resurgence of interest in many of the topics and issues that we have worked on with our members over the years. The persistence of familiar challenges reminds us that knowing, learning, adapting and innovating are not tick-box exercises. In a dynamic environment, we must keep our work energised by revisiting enduring learning and adapting our responses as new people join and as the working context evolves.

Our 20th Anniversary is a perfect opportunity for us to revisit the wealth of knowledge and practical insights that we have co-created in collaboration with our members. This special souvenir booklet effectively showcases our previous projects by highlighting Top Tips and Questions for Reflections for practitioners.

Throughout the 20th Anniversary year, we will continue to reflect on the knowledge and insights created so far whilst looking towards the future of knowledge management and organisational development practice. We will share special insights and commentaries by our members, friends of the Forum and notable thought leaders in the field on how they envision the future. At the end of the year, we plan to develop another special booklet, consolidating these insights into Top Trends and Reflections on the Future.

Dr Sharon Varney and The Henley Forum team
Join The Henley Forum community

The Henley Forum has been a thriving community since 2000, bringing together business practitioners, industry thought-leaders and world-class academics to develop new insights to these challenges.

Our ongoing programme of workshops, seminars, discussion groups and highly focused research projects tackles current, real-world knowledge, learning and change issues affecting organisations. Our Organisational Partners shape our research and development agenda to get insights into their most challenging issues.

We have a rich heritage to build on. We have a promising future ahead, as we continue to work with our organisational partners to address complex and contemporary real-world challenges.

The Henley Forum members come from a wide variety of disciplines in private, public and third-sector organisations. Some are world-class practitioners, others are just discovering the benefits and challenges of developing dynamic organisations through knowledge, learning and change work. Our diversity creates new connections that add value.

Contact Ellie Done to discover more about how membership can benefit you and your organisation: henleyforum@henley.ac.uk | +44 (0) 1494 418768
Connecting with the Forum creates the opportunity to network with colleagues equally committed to knowledge sharing and informed decision-making, to share experiences and draw on the expertise of fellow members.

Sue Lacey Bryant, NHS Health Education England
The essence of the Forum has always been interactive research, involving a highly collaborative approach between academics and practitioners throughout the research process. Over the years, we have completed over 60 research projects, exploring topics that resonate with our members. The research projects are developed into project reports, practitioner guidance tools and summaries. The Knowledge in Action series, for example, is produced to enable knowledgeable practice and to develop dynamic organisations. In 2009, Dr Christine van Winkelen and Professor Jane McKenzie, both former directors of The Henley Forum, began to consolidate the practical guidance generated from the previous research projects; the royalties from the resultant publication, Knowledge Works (Wiley & Sons, 2011), continue to contribute to the financial resources of the Forum.

Over the years, the remit of the Forum has evolved considerably. In 2013, the name of the KM Forum was changed to the Henley Forum for Organisational Learning and Knowledge Strategies, as we broadened our remit and emphasised collective learning and capability building. In 2015, Dr Sharon Varney took over as Henley Forum Director, bringing in new ideas and an increased focus on organisational development and change management within the Forum’s research agenda. This attracted organisational development specialists to join and work alongside knowledge and learning colleagues. The name of the Forum was changed in 2018 to The Henley Forum, and the new tagline ‘Know | Learn | Adapt | Innovate’ was coined to reflect the evolving remit, now encompassing knowledge management (KM), organisational learning (OL), organisational development (OD), innovation and change management.

At our 10th anniversary, a number of eminent previous speakers took the opportunity to consolidate and reflect on the Forum’s work; a ‘future search’ workshop explored knowledge-related issues and themes for future investigation. Over the years, we have continued to revisit issues and topics that have arisen, addressing and exploring them in different contexts. Now for the 20th anniversary of The Henley Forum, we again aim to reflect on the wealth of knowledge and insights accumulated over the last 20 years and to identify challenges and opportunities for KM for the next 20 years.

What our members have to say...

“Our membership of the Forum has been invaluable. We’ve implemented many new learnings and insights. We’re on the right path.”
Monica Danese-Perrin, Lloyds Banking Group

“Our membership of The Henley Forum over the last 10 years has allowed us to deliver improvements to our customers and develop our own people to enhance the flow of knowledge around our business.”
Andy Wall, United Utilities
Our members’ website

Our members’ website provides a rich resource for knowledgeable organisations: research reports, practitioner guides, tools, webinars, presentations and audio recordings.

Here, you can access a wealth of knowledge, insights and guidance, including:

- our collaborative **research projects** tackling knowledge, learning and change issues affecting organisations
- **proceedings** from our regular annual conference, themed events and Forum meetings
- other **resources** including practitioner guides, our Knowledge in Action series and webinars

As a member, you get access to all current and previous resources, including...

- 63 **Research projects**
- 38 **Knowledge in Action series**
- 35 **Practitioner guides and tools**
- 11 **Webinars**

You can also download everything you need to play **The Collaboration Maze**, a serious game developed to share key learning from a Henley Forum research project, to help navigate the maze of internal partnerships for change.
Top Tips – 20 for 2020

Over the years, we have co-created rich knowledge and practical insights with our organisational partners. The following Top Tips will give you practical guidance on applying the insights in practice, in your organisations.

1. To ‘sell’ KM in your organisation, communicate how KM initiatives contribute to the individual as well as overall business outcomes and objectives.

2. Identify key influencers in the organisational networks as champions of change to maximise engagement with knowledge initiatives and learning activities.

3. To critically evaluate practice and facilitate improvement, emphasise three questions:
   - What?
   - So what?
   - Now what?

4. Individuals with experience of using technology are more likely to choose the right one for collaboration. Give them the autonomy to customise their workspaces.

5. To effectively share lessons learned, use storytelling emphasising four questions:
   - What happened?
   - To whom did it happen?
   - How did they feel?
   - What was the learning?

6. As a learning leader, create opportunities for informal chats to help peers connect and learn together.

7. In order to evaluate knowledge and learning activities, include multiple perspectives to define what ‘good practice’ means for different individuals at different organisational levels.

8. Change in complexity is evolution, not revolution. To manage change in complex environments, implement small nudges rather than grand plans.

9. Change can be daunting. Sharing past experiences of change and senior managers’ concerns and apprehensions will create empathy and meaningful conversations to help navigate change.

10. To support innovation, use formal and informal settings such as virtual chat rooms, knowledge cafes and activity-based workshops for individuals to share new ideas and create clever solutions.

11. Identify positive stories such as senior management commitment to KM, effective collaboration, navigating change and successful innovation and broadcast them through the organisation.

12. Create spaces in the organisation for informed sensemaking and emphasise actions and relationships rather than fixed processes and comprehensive plans. In dynamic environments, it is easier to change perspectives through meaningful conversations than to change rigid processes and structures.

13. Acknowledge that change is a continuous process. Regularly review progress and manage expectations through clear and relevant communication.
14. To build effective **communities of practice**, be clear about the purpose and how it aligns to individual as well as organisational interests.

15. Engage ‘**knowledge activists**’ who actively build relationships and network in the organisation to connect knowledge seekers to sources of knowledge.

16. When planning for knowledge and **expertise retention**, proactively identify the purpose and the users of the knowledge, as well as the kind of knowledge that is important to retain. This will inform the appropriate knowledge sharing mechanism.

17. As knowledgeable **decision makers**, ask yourself:
   - Why is this decision important?
   - What evidence do I have to support/explain my decision?
   - Have I considered all perspectives?
   - Can I learn from past experiences?

18. **Future skills** for KM, OD and OL practitioners include being resilient, developing strategic perspectives, and networking and creating spaces for sensemaking.

19. Use **social network analysis** as a way of visualising implicit and informal expertise and relationships in the organisation for facilitating collaboration, sensemaking and leadership development.

20. Assessing and identifying blockages in **knowledge flows** between individuals, the organisation and external stakeholders will help focus the attention of KM initiatives to improve connectivity and KM effectiveness.

Each Top Tip is informed by our research projects, which are available on our **members’ website**. Hyperlinks to the corresponding resources (project summaries, practitioner guidance and tools) are highlighted in blue throughout this document.

To receive a copy or for a reminder of the members’ website login, please email **henleyforum@henley.ac.uk**.
Questions for Reflection – 20 for 2020

Informed by our past research, the following questions will help you think critically about practice. The questions are designed to help you brainstorm ideas and identify opportunities in your context.

1. How do we know what we know? How do we define knowledge in our context?
2. How might we understand the internal and external context of our organisation, barriers, opportunities and the strategic value of KM?
3. How might we align KM practice to the business orientation and strategic objectives?
4. How might we continuously review KM practice, knowledge content and organisational needs to ensure ongoing strategic value of KM?
5. How might we understand the distinction between complex and complicated?
6. How might we enable and encourage our leaders to break the rules of traditional hierarchies and collaborate as equals to energise collaboration in the organisation?
7. How might we establish internal partnerships between KM and HRM to facilitate individual and organisational learning?
8. How might I become a learning leader? How might I challenge my own expertise and practice?
9. How might we establish the connection between lessons learned and actions to improve practice and organisational performance?
How might we support our leaders to become better decision-makers?

How might we enable innovation and knowledge creation to adapt to the rapidly emerging environments?

How might we identify critical knowledge at risk of loss in order to retain and transfer it in the event of staff turnover and organisational restructuring?

How might we strengthen team relationships and facilitate conversations to improve team readiness and capability for change?

How might we support and develop our knowledge managers on the key skills for KM effectiveness?

How might we develop internal partnerships across organisational silos to collaboratively navigate change?

How might we redefine change to overcome resistance to it?

How might we develop and engage leaders across organisational hierarchies to develop dynamic capabilities and implement systemic change?

How might we evaluate knowledge and learning activities to identify improvement opportunities?

How might we give individuals control to explore technological collaboration tools and adapt usage to their needs to maximise engagement?

How might we balance knowledge exploitation and exploration to deliver sustainable and efficient organisational performance?

Working collaboratively with our members, we have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and insights that will help you reflect critically on these questions to develop dynamic organisations. All project reports, practitioner guidance tools and Knowledge in Action series are available on our members’ website (log-in required).

Each Question for Reflection is informed by our research projects, which are available on our members’ website. Hyperlinks to the corresponding resources (project summaries, practitioner guidance and tools) are highlighted in blue throughout this document. To receive a copy or for a reminder of the members’ website login, please email henleyforum@henley.ac.uk.
Thank you to all our organisational members of the past 20 years.


The Henley Forum

Henley Business School
Greenlands
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire, RG9 3AU

henleyforum@henley.ac.uk
Tel +44 (0)1491 418 768

henley.ac.uk/henleyforum