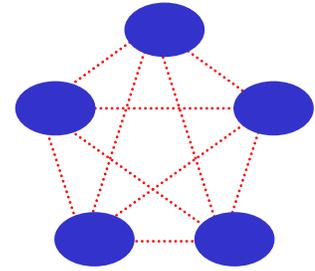


The 5 I's of Knowledge Worker

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Much has been written about knowledge management and knowledge workers. But what do knowledge workers do within their organizations? The simplistic answer is "they think".

But in order to provide a more actionable definition of knowledge worker, here is a taxonomy for the various types of knowledge worker and their roles within the context of managing knowledge and engineering knowledge systems. This taxonomy of knowledge worker types takes a process view – what knowledge workers actually do in a function-neutral manner. Five classifications of knowledge worker comprise the taxonomy: (1) **inventors**, (2) **innovators**, (3) **integrators**, (4) **implementers**, and (5) **instigators**. All five roles must be filled by an organization to navigate the transformation from and asset-based to an information-based economy.



- (1) **Inventors** create knowledge to trigger step-changes in satisfying customer needs and meeting market demands with brand new products and services.
- (2) **Innovators** modify, refine, and build upon ideas to generate new knowledge that stretches beyond existing knowledge.
- (3) **Integrators** aggregate, consolidate, synthesize, and broker existing knowledge to develop holistic, systems views. These holistic views provide new perspectives and insights.
- (4) **Implementers** apply, utilize, and execute the "know how" within an intrinsic knowledge base. Implementers unleash the tangible, extrinsic value inherent in knowledge – value that is unreleased until applications are realized.
- (5) **Instigators** challenge ideas, old and new, throughout the knowledge process. They drive out-of-the-box thinking as well as ground new ideas, innovation, integration, and implementation in the harsh realities of feasibility and viable economic returns. Instigators say "Yea" and say "Nay."

These knowledge worker types cut across business functions. For example, inventors and innovators reside in functions other than research and development. During major change and business transformation, inventors and innovators formulate new strategies, develop new business models, improve cross-functional processes, and otherwise impact a business beyond product.

So what? Determine the team personality required for each stage of your business transformation lifecycle. "Profile" employees and team members based on individual personalities as demonstrated by tangible behaviors. Develop and manage a fine balance of personalities through the transformation process. Introduce new personalities as required. Visibly recognize and reward specific team members for playing the various roles. Include all types of knowledge worker – inventors, innovators, integrators, implementers, and instigators – in your economic transformation.