

Internal Knowledge Base - A Complete Guide

What is Internal Knowledge Base?

An internal knowledge base provides a centralized space for employees to share and access information when needed. Internal Knowledge Base can contain general information such as training documentation for easy onboarding of new employees to sensitive information of company's internal process. Unlike external knowledge bases, which are accessible by everyone, internal knowledge bases are for internal members (staff/employees) of an organization. In short, an [internal knowledge base](#) is set up by a company strictly for internal use by the employees.

What is the purpose of an Internal Knowledge Base?

An internal knowledge base is created by an organization strictly for its team members to access private or confidential knowledge. It should contain as much information and documentation as possible in order to help employees do their jobs efficiently and with the least interruption.

Why does an organization need an Internal Knowledge Base?

An internal knowledge base is another word for private knowledge management and sharing system set up by a company to build and refine its institutional knowledge, empowering team members to access the information they need whenever required. The information stored in an internal knowledge base is meant to help employees be more productive by allowing them to retrieve the information they need to perform a specific task when they need it so that they can better do their jobs. There are several reasons it is crucial to deploying an internal knowledge base:

Centralized Space

Employees spend a significant amount of time and energy every day looking for information buried in emails, documents, and spreadsheets, which compromise their productivity and performance. The result is a staggering loss for the company. The solution is to centralize all the information in one location (IKB) for the team, which helps them to retrieve the information easily. This will reduce employees' time spent on trivial activities because searching information on a knowledge base is a cakewalk and they can concentrate on the crucial tasks.

Easy Onboarding

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Table of Contents

- [1. What is Internal Knowledge Base?](#)
- [2. What is the purpose of an Internal Knowledge Base?](#)
- [3. Why does an organization need an Internal Knowledge Base?](#)
 - [3.1. Centralized Space](#)
 - [3.2. Easy Onboarding](#)
 - [3.3. Improved Employee Productivity](#)
 - [3.4. Tacit Knowledge Transfer](#)
- [4. How to create an efficient internal knowledge base?](#)
 - [4.1. Define the Purpose](#)
 - [4.2. Choose the Best Knowledge Base Software for Your Company](#)
 - [4.2.1. User Friendly](#)
 - [4.2.2. Fast and Responsive](#)
 - [4.2.3. Efficient Search Engine](#)
 - [4.2.4. Feedback](#)
 - [4.2.5. Collaboration](#)
 - [4.2.6. Role Management](#)
 - [4.3. Populate the Knowledge Base](#)
 - [4.4. Analyze and maintain](#)
- [5. Internal Knowledge Base Best Practices](#)
 - [5.1. Link Information](#)
 - [5.2. Define Technical Jargon](#)
 - [5.3. Engage Employees](#)
 - [5.4. Manage User Roles & Permissions](#)
 - [5.5. Manage Access Carefully](#)
 - [5.6. Feedback](#)
 - [5.7. Measure & Improve Knowledge Base](#)
- [6. Conclusion](#)

Employee training is a hectic and time-consuming task. With an internal knowledge base, you can store all training material as articles, which results in lower onboarding cost and training, as employees can refer to knowledge base articles when required.

Improved Employee Productivity

With an internal knowledge base, employees have 24×7 access to business knowledge. When business information is readily available to employees, it gets easier for employees to focus on significant tasks. Whenever they are stuck somewhere or need assistance with anything, be it a company policy, in-the-know information, client details, organizational structure, or project-related data, an in-house knowledge platform has all the answers to employee questions.

Tacit Knowledge Transfer

A few years ago, it was long-tenured employees who spent a big part of their career with the same company passed along the knowledge. However, in today's workplace, where more generations work side-by-side, knowledge is not properly filtered all the time throughout the organization. With an effective internal knowledge-sharing platform, you can keep the tacit information more easily.

How to create an efficient internal knowledge base?

Setting up an internal knowledge base is a monumental task and requires time and effort. But with the right preparation, strategy, and a [knowledge management system](#), you can create an internal knowledge base swiftly.

Define the Purpose

Internal knowledge can include company processes and policies, training materials, product documentation, legal policies, HR enquires, sales and marketing presentations, design templates and images, and support documents. The first step is deciding who is going to be your audience; as this will influence what content you want to include.

- You can either create a separate internal knowledge base or can merge it with your existing external knowledge base if it already exists. The choice certainly depends upon the scalability of your knowledge base tool about which we will discuss in the next point.
- The next important decision is to define your internal knowledge strategy and category structure and it should center around your audience and their needs. You can go with a strategy such as a start with small and easy such as creating training materials and then expand later on to company processes.

Choose the Best Knowledge Base Software for Your Company

At this stage, you clearly know who is your audience and what information you need to store, share and analyze. Therefore, the next step is choosing the [best knowledge management software](#) equipped with features that will help you in achieving your purpose of **creating an internal knowledge base**.

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User Friendly

The knowledge base software should have an interactive and user-friendly interface and should not require any coding and installation knowledge.

Fast and Responsive

Multi-national companies have teams not restricted to the geographical space of company premises. The scenario has changed for small organizations even because of COVID, which has restricted employees to work from home with limited facilities. Therefore, your knowledge base software should perform well on low-speed networks even.

Efficient Search Engine

If you are designing a knowledge base for your customer support team, this is the most relevant feature. Your support response time determines the loyalty of your customers. The more advanced search engine which can search partially and swiftly will improve employee performance and as a result your profits.

Feedback

Employees always have suggestions, ideas for improvement. Thus, your knowledge base software should have commenting option to allow your employees to share their opinions, ideas, and knowledge.

Collaboration

In most cases, documentation is not written by a single individual, and, more likely, a team of multiple employees performs the task. The team members need to collaborate on articles to share their reviews and suggestions; therefore, make sure your knowledge base software allows for collaboration.

Role Management

The knowledge management tool should allow permissions for granular control over your entire knowledge base. Content creation goes through a cycle where content is developed by a certain level of users and published by another level. A system with different levels of authors assists in creating a proper structure for employee roles. Refer to our complete list of

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Populate the Knowledge Base

Populating the knowledge base doesn't mean starting from scratch and reinventing the wheel. It is more likely that you have information already keyed in documents. You can convert these documents into knowledge base articles/documents with the help of knowledge base software.

An important point to note; while selecting a knowledge base tool, make sure it has the facility of importing your existing documents as knowledge base articles and searching in the imported content. Our knowledge base software "PHPKB" offers these features.

Analyze and maintain

There is limited value in creating lots of great content if you don't keep your articles current and relevant. For example, if your HR policies have changed but you have outdated documents; it can create chaos and conflicts in an organization. Not only your knowledge management tool should notify the writers about periodic reviews, but you should also encourage your employees to suggest new and missing information areas.

Maintenance and analysis go in parallel. Reviewing knowledge base activity is not only helpful to see what information your staff are most interested in but also to see if they are really paying attention to the knowledge articles you thought might be useful for them.

Internal Knowledge Base Best Practices

There are a few best practices to keep in mind while and after setting up your company knowledge base.

Link Information

When knowledge creators link their content with other relevant information, it improves information flow and communication. Linking relevant information not only reduces the duplicate content and re-work but also ensures that attached content can be found easily.

For example, our knowledge base software has a "[Link Articles](#)" feature, which generates the article markers to allow the content writers to link another article in its source.

Define Technical Jargon

A knowledge base is worthwhile only if it is reader-friendly. However, keeping the internal knowledge base reader-friendly is a tough challenge when subject experts write each article. There are a few technical terms and abbreviations which are unavoidable. Therefore, make sure you define technical terms and link them appropriately.

[PHPKB knowledge management software](#) automates this for you; you can define your abbreviations, technical words as glossary items, and PHPKB's auto-linking feature will link every occurrence of a term with its definition. It will make the reading an enjoyable ride for your users because they get everything on their plate.

Engage Employees

An internal knowledge base can only help your business flourish if you encourage engagement from all employees. Motivate your employees to suggest new ideas and pain points to add further information to your internal knowledge base. Rewarding

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them for their contribution certainly encourages them; but you can also use knowledge base features, such as content review reminders, to keep the knowledge base up-to-date.

Manage User Roles & Permissions

Knowledge base creation is a team effort, and everyone should have clarity of their roles to create an optimized knowledge center. For instance, in a specific department, junior members can act as writers and managers can act as editors who can moderate and publish content written by writers. A proper workflow avoids confusion and misunderstanding and yields optimum results.

Manage Access Carefully

Not only that you define the roles for content creation, but you should also restrict the access to sensitive information to authorized users only. Moderate the access to any details concerning the staff or employee feedback, talks of mergers or acquisitions, and certain client information. PHPKB offers 'User Groups' to set flexible group-based category permissions for granular control over your entire knowledge base.

Feedback

Just designing a knowledge base is not sufficient, but also be sure that it is serving its purpose. Using the knowledge base's feedback features, such as comments, rating, and polling, helps in finding the flaws of the system. The fact is that no matter how much effort you put into your knowledge base, employees will always have something to suggest turning it into a more useful resource. Allow your workforce to share what they feel by adding feedback questions to your knowledge base.

Measure & Improve Knowledge Base

The knowledge base creation is not the end of the process. Instead, it is an ongoing process and requires efforts to keep it up to date. Therefore, measure the performance of your knowledge base periodically. Most of the knowledge base systems come up with various metrics like:

- Failed Searches
- Most Rated and Poorly Rated Articles
- Most Commented Article
- Upvotes and Downvotes Received on Articles

The analysis of these metrics helps you to find out the improvement areas and gives ideas for new content creation.

Conclusion

Effective communication is fundamental in running a successful company and it starts with your documenting your company's knowledge in a secure internal knowledge base. Therefore, put a considerate amount of effort into creating and updating it.

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