

# ARMY OPERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

## KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENTS

In an operational environment where “we must learn faster, understand better, and adapt more rapidly”<sup>1</sup> knowledge flow is essential. Knowledge flow requires an integrated knowledge environment where information moves freely between people, between systems, and between people and systems. Unfortunately, knowledge does not flow naturally in our complex environments; barriers come in all shapes and sizes. The **knowledge assessment** is a structured process that looks at all components of the knowledge environment—People, Processes, Technology, Content, Organizational Structure & Culture and Knowledge Leadership—and identifies barriers to knowledge flow.

To date, the US Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) has conducted knowledge assessments on more than ten organizations ranging in size from ASCCs to directorates to individual staff functions. While the knowledge activities varied from organization to organization, the knowledge gaps observed have been very similar. Some of the most prevalent areas of gaps include: staff battle rhythm, knowledge management infrastructure, effective use of a common operational picture, email and meeting management, organizing content and effective use of collaborative tools.

Each knowledge assessment is performed by a team from CAC and involves a series of interviews with key leaders, mid-level managers, and employees in the organization. The Knowledge Assessment identifies:

- Gaps
- The causes or factors contributing to the gaps
- The impact each gap has on the organization
- Measures of effectiveness and priorities for addressing the gaps
- Recommendations for strategies and approaches to close the gaps

An action plan with practical and operational solutions, along with a pilot and evaluation, usually follows the assessment. The knowledge assessment, like the mission analysis phase of the Military Decision Making Process, ensures we have identified the right problems and considered all the relevant facts, assumptions, and current available information before we begin looking at solutions. Each knowledge assessment engagement is unique and must be tailored to the needs of the organization.



Before beginning a knowledge assessment you should have a clear understanding of what triggered the knowledge assessment and what the organization believes is the assessment goal. Each phase of the Assessment model identifies and defines the gaps and helps the customer recognize long term causes and measures of effectiveness.

<sup>1</sup> *A Leader Development Strategy for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Army*, November 25, 2009, United States Army Combined Arms Center

For more information or to request a Knowledge Assessment, please visit:

<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/598135> (Army Knowledge Online sign-in required).