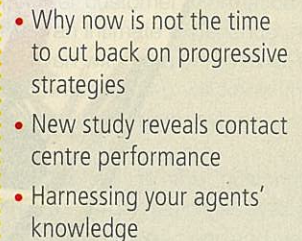




# No mothballs for innovation...

...despite  
the economic  
downturn

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- Why now is not the time to cut back on progressive strategies
  - New study reveals contact centre performance
  - Harnessing your agents' knowledge

Once upon a time Australia shut down for about six weeks following Christmas, much to the amusement of our international trading partners. Those days are long gone and the great Aussie summer break is a wistful memory due to current economic conditions. Australia is weathering the turbulent waters of the global economy better than some, but all industries will hunker down over productivity and efficiency gain priorities, meaning strategic, innovative projects may be mothballed.

But should innovative and progressive strategies be shelved in favour of a focus on traditional practices during tough economic conditions? Contact centres operate on tight operational budgets often not commensurate with the constantly improving productivity and results expected of them. Running a razor blade over the budget, cutting heads and carving off new projects is a fast way to produce gains in the current climate. Decision makers need to carefully consider whether this approach is sustainable weighed against risk to competitive edge, service levels and the high cost of staff level resurrection.

At the same time, there is no way to justify forging ahead with projects unless they can be definitively shown to produce benefits and sound fiscal outcomes. The industry needs to be very clear about which innovative practices and technologies are most likely

to deliver critical gains quickly and sustain them over the long term. One area tipped to offer the best results over the next two years is knowledge management (KM).

The ability to investigate the value of KM can be hindered by time constraints, resource availability and financial limitations. Producing the appropriate business case and cost justification to move forward with strategic, technology-based KM initiatives is a hurdle many may find hard to clear even if the benefits are apparent, but it seems help is on the way. Two students at the University of New South Wales have completed a study into the industry, which has resulted in their ability to accurately and effectively determine the real cost of poor knowledge management. The pair also developed a fast way to assess the ROI on KM projects, based on collection of real-time data through a purpose-built web portal.

Dominic Byrne and Matt Dixon authored *Measuring Staff Productivity Loss Relating to Knowledge Management* for their masters in Business & Technology at the University of New South Wales. The study centres on KM productivity gaps and profitability drags in contact centres and applied a new method for identifying KM-related Productivity Loss Factors (PLFs) and KM-related Productivity Efficiency Gains (PEGs).

