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## **PRESS RELEASE – KMCI Releases Results of Market Study**

**September 30, 2003** – KMCI announced today the results of a market research study recently conducted in conjunction with the University of Vermont (UVM) to survey the educational needs and wants of Knowledge Management professionals. In total, 110 KM professionals from around the world participated in the survey which was posted online at UVM for a period of several weeks this past summer.

Among the key findings of the KMCI/UVM survey were the following:

1. Knowledge Management professionals hail from a wide variety of corporate disciplines, with less than half coming from KM functions, per se (47%). The majority of KM professionals are found in non-KM functions such as IT (13%), Operational or Senior Management (11%), Organizational Development (8%), R&D (6%), and many others, in smaller proportions.
2. Most respondents came from Private Industry (73%); Government (12%); Education (7%); and Non-Profit (8%).
3. On a scale of Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced, most of the respondents in our survey scored themselves as either Intermediate (42%) or Advanced (39%).
4. While mainly a male dominated profession, KM is not strikingly so. Male respondents accounted for 59% of the responses received with the balance (41%) coming from women.
5. Regarding educational needs in KM, most respondents felt their most urgent need for training was in *KM Strategy* (85%), followed closely by *KM Tools and Methods* (70%). Next came classes in how to enhance *Knowledge Sharing* (66%), *Innovation* (57%), and *KM Value Propositions and ROI Schemes* (56%). Scoring lowest in the rankings was *Theoretical Foundations in KM* (35%).
6. In terms of format or venue, only 23% of the respondents scored *In-Person Classroom Styles* of learning “Highly Appealing.” Most expressed a desire for electronic or collaborative learning schemes, or even more in the way of formal Masters or Ph.D. programs. Not surprisingly, *Distance Learning* options also scored high, a sentiment we attribute to the paucity of KM training programs out there and the scattered geographical reach of the profession.
7. Most respondents (55%) felt that university credits were desirable in connection with KM training.

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## Discussion

The results of this survey confirm many of our earlier suppositions about KM, including:

1. That KM is still very much in its formative stages, with little or no commonly held views or models of what it is and how, therefore, to organize for it. The lack of a common strategy for positioning KM in the organization is striking, as is the highly fragmented nature of positions and titles currently assigned to address it. In a sense, there is no typical or commonly-held view or form of KM, only many variations on a loosely defined theme.
2. That KM practitioners are still looking for insight at the level of basics, such as what the focus of KM strategies should be, and how to perform KM processes and interventions. Unlike other disciplines, such as Finance or HR, where the conventional wisdom of what they are and how to perform them is widely held and agreed to, KM is still very much in its formative stages of development.
3. That KM as a discipline, however, is persistent and tenacious. Its adherents are fiercely committed to it. It lives on, despite its inconsistencies.
4. That KM as a discipline is geographically broad and diverse, but thin in its ranks at the local level. The demand for training is ubiquitous around the world, but the lack of a critical mass at the local level means that global sources of training, especially electronic and distance-based ones, are in high demand. Whether or not the size of the related market can justify the cost required to create a robust offering in this space, however, is hard to say. The lack of a shared view on what the content of such a program should be would seem to argue against it.
5. That KM as a discipline is still miles away from a stage of development where standards would make sense. The inconsistent forms it takes around the world, and the rudimentary level of the educational needs expressed by its practitioners tell us that current standards-making efforts, wherever they may be, are wildly premature – even unhelpful. Before we can have standards, we must have principles and practices that have been tested and evaluated, for which there is more of a unified level of recognition and respect than we find in KM today.
6. That perhaps the most exciting and important development in KM is happening right before us today – the integration of KM and Risk Management or, as some are referring to it, *Knowledge and Risk Management (KRM)* – and yet signs of it were nowhere to be found in our study. In the post-Enron era of business, controlling the quality of organizational knowledge as a guard against illicit or risky actions taken by people on the basis of similarly illicit or unproven knowledge is a powerful new value proposition for KM. Still, much of KM seems to be hopelessly fixated on narrower concerns of knowledge sharing, even as it fails to make any sort of credible distinction between information and knowledge, much less between true (or low risk) knowledge, versus untrue (or high-risk) knowledge. KM has barely begun to touch on this subject, and yet this may be where KM makes its greatest contribution to business in the end!

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