**Knowledge worker roles**

Knowledge workers bring benefits to organizations in a variety of important ways. These include:

- analyzing data to establish relationships
- assessing input in order to evaluate complex or conflicting priorities
- identifying and understanding trends
- making connections
- understanding cause and effect
- ability to brainstorm, thinking broadly (divergent thinking)
- ability to drill down, creating more focus (convergent thinking)
- producing a new capability
- creating or modifying a strategy

These knowledge worker contributions are in contrast with activities that they would typically *not* be asked to perform, including:

- transaction processing
- routine tasks
- simple prioritization of work

There is a set of transitional tasks includes roles that are seemingly routine, but that require deep technology, product, or customer knowledge to fulfill the function. These include:

- providing technical or customer support
- handling unique customer issues
- addressing open-ended inquiries

Generally, if the knowledge can be retained, knowledge worker contributions will serve to expand the knowledge assets of a company. While it can be difficult to measure, this increases the overall value of its intellectual capital. In cases where the knowledge assets have commercial or monetary value, companies may create patents around their assets, at which point the material becomes restricted intellectual property. In these knowledge-intensive situations, knowledge workers play a direct, vital role in increasing the financial value of a company. They can do this by finding
solutions on how they can find new ways to make profits this can also be related with market and research.

[edit] Additional context and frameworks

Drucker defines six factors for knowledge worker productivity (1999):

1. Knowledge worker productivity demands that we ask the question: "What is the task?"
2. It demands that we impose the responsibility for their productivity on the individual knowledge workers themselves. Knowledge workers have to manage themselves.
3. Continuing innovation has to be part of the work, the task and the responsibility of knowledge workers.
4. Knowledge work requires continuous learning on the part of the knowledge worker, but equally continuous teaching on the part of the knowledge worker.
5. Productivity of the knowledge worker is not — at least not primarily — a matter of the quantity of output. Quality is at least as important.
6. Finally, knowledge worker productivity requires that the knowledge worker is both seen and treated as an "asset" rather than a "cost." It requires that knowledge workers want to work for the organization in preference to all other opportunities.[3]

The theory of Human Interaction Management asserts that there are 5 principles characterizing effective knowledge work:

1. Build effective teams
2. Communicate in a structured way
3. Create, share and maintain knowledge
4. Align your time with strategic goals
5. Negotiate next steps as you work

Another, more recent breakdown of knowledge work (author unknown) shows activity that ranges from tasks performed by individual knowledge workers to global social networks. This framework spans every class of knowledge work that is being or is likely to be undertaken. There are seven levels or scales of knowledge work, with references for each are cited.
1. Knowledge work (e.g., writing, analyzing, advising) is performed by subject-matter specialists in all areas of an organization. Although knowledge work began with the origins of writing and counting, it was first identified as a category of work by Drucker (1973). [4]

2. Knowledge functions (e.g., capturing, organizing, and providing access to knowledge) are performed by technical staff, to support knowledge processes projects. Knowledge functions date from c. 450 BC, with the library of Alexandria, but their modern roots can be linked to the emergence of information management in the 1970s (Mcgee and Prusak, 1993).

3. Knowledge processes (preserving, sharing, integration) are performed by professional groups, as part of a knowledge management program. Knowledge processes have evolved in concert with general-purpose technologies, such as the printing press, mail delivery, the telegraph, telephone networks, and the Internet. [5]

4. Knowledge management programs link the generation of knowledge (e.g., from science, synthesis, or learning) with its use (e.g., policy analysis, reporting, program management) as well as facilitating organizational learning and adaptation in a knowledge organization. Knowledge management emerged as a discipline in the 1990s (Leonard, 1995).

5. Knowledge organizations transfer outputs (content, products, services, and solutions), in the form of knowledge services, to enable external use. The concept of knowledge organizations emerged in the 1990s (Davenport and Prusak, 1998).

6. Knowledge services support other organizational services, yield sector outcomes, and result in benefits for citizens in the context of knowledge markets. Knowledge services emerged as a subject in the 2000s. (Simard et al., 2007).

7. Social media networks enable knowledge organizations to co-produce knowledge outputs by leveraging their internal capacity with massive social networks. Social networking emerged in the 2000s [6]

The hierarchy ranges from the effort of individual specialists, through technical activity, professional projects, and management programs, to organizational strategy, knowledge markets, and global-scale networking.

This framework is useful for positioning the myriad types of knowledge work relative to each other and within the context of organizations,
markets, and the global knowledge economy. It also provides a useful context for planning, developing, and implementing knowledge management projects.