

### **Jela Webb**

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Jela is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton and published author specialising in information and knowledge management. She is also the founder of AZIONE an information and knowledge management consultancy through which she works with organisations helping them to meet the challenges of operating successfully in the information economy.

#### **Professional Qualifications**

- Certificate of Credit Teaching Skills, 2005
- MSc Information and Knowledge Management 2002
- MBA 1998
- ACIB (Chartered Institute of Bankers – 1986)

#### **Professional Expertise**

Jela has taught IKM for over a decade and has consulted with individuals and organisations in the private and public sector in the UK, continental Europe and the USA.

#### **Clients include:**

- Large multi-national energy company
- Major public sector organisation - HMRC
- Irish government – Foreign Office
- Professional member organisation - CIPD
- Leading UK Business Schools – Ashridge, Regents Business School
- UK based Universities

#### **Accomplishments**

Jela was one of the first women to be appointed as a credit analyst in Nat West Group from where she went on to lead and manage teams of varying sizes for which she won awards. She is particularly adept at formulating and implementing new organisational strategies and in the late 1990's played a key role in developing the Bank's e-learning strategy. Moving into the emerging IKM field in 1998, she was responsible for developing and implementing a leading-edge KM programme for Nat West and received approaches from other organisations to assist with KM strategy formulation. She has worked as Interim Knowledge Manager for Shell where she re-launched its global KM framework. She enjoys writing and contributing to articles in the IKM arena.

#### **Previous Experience**

Jela's business career began as banker in Nat West Group where she was involved in many aspects of the provision of financial and related services to a broad customer base. She has enjoyed the responsibility of managing significantly sized lending

portfolios and is adept at analysing risk. Working as a mentor to staff on 'fast-track' programmes she particularly enjoys the challenge of getting the best out of people and moved into HR where she assumed responsibility for 1100 staff during a long-term managerial absence. A move to a Regional Manager role saw her assume responsibility for a range of geographically dispersed Lending and Security centres; under her leadership they were consistently in the top performing units nationwide. Subsequently moving into Head Office, she headed up the KM and Development team and was instrumental in developing and implementing the Bank's KM capability. Jela left NatWest in 2000 to form her own business and to pursue an MSc in Information and Knowledge Management. Graduating in 2002 she was one of the first people in Europe to hold this qualification.

Working independently and as an Associate of Ashridge Business School, Learnership and TFPL she works in both the private and public sector. Projects include the development of an information literacy programme for HM Revenue and Customs, advising the Irish Foreign Office on KM strategy and researching knowledge sharing in the dynamic SME sector.

Jela speaks at business conferences where she enjoys sharing her knowledge. Her academic roles include teaching and supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate students. She also coaches knowledge workers considering a career change.

She has published articles and reports on IKM and Risk Management. Her book 'Strategic Information Management: A Practitioner's Guide' was published in 2008 and in 2013 her co-authored book 'Total Information Risk Management' was published.

#### **Specific Information and Knowledge Management Experience**

Examples of assignments include:

- Developing an information literacy training programme for HM Revenue and Customs, initially available to Graduate trainees and subsequently adopted for the whole organisation.
- Authoring published Reports: 'KM for SMEs: Solutions and Strategies' and 'Risk Management Report and Toolkit'
- Developing a specialist elective 'Managing Organisational Learning and Knowledge' for CIPD professional qualification award
- Re-launching a KM programme in Shell
- Reviewing reward and recognition packages in Shell to encourage knowledge sharing
- Advising on strategic direction for KM for construction industry companies

## Information Management Project 2014

- Author of Ashridge Business School 'Learning Guide to Knowledge Management'
- Presenting sessions to MBA Alumni on KM

### **Professional Affiliations**

University Forum for HR Development  
IM Leaders Group (CILIP)

### **Languages**

Serbo-Croat (conversational)

### **Jela writes...**

I was first attracted to information management via the research I conducted when completing my MBA dissertation 'Nat West as One Business: Team Working in the Organisation' in the late 1990's. I read an article in the Harvard Business Review about the business benefits that had accrued at BP as a direct result of encouraging employees to share information and knowledge. It really struck a chord with me and led me to apply for a post heading up a new KM team in Nat West Bank. I was successful and spent two very exciting years developing and implementing a KM initiative.

Having gained some practical experience, I wanted to develop my theoretical experience and subsequently completed a Master's degree in information and knowledge management. Upon graduation I was invited to be the lead lecturer on two of the modules. I continued to teach on the degree until it was withdrawn in 2010. The withdrawal of the degree (through lack of student numbers) was a low point in my career. Many of our students had gone on to achieve significant successes but the recessionary climate meant that funding for study was severely cut back with organisations reducing spend on training and development.

Career high points include being approached by Chandos Publishing (now part of Elsevier) to write a book. 'Strategic Information Management' was published in 2008 to very good reviews. Being involved in the development of a new MBA programme at Brighton (MBA Knowledge and Innovation Management) as module leader for the core KM module has been a more recent highlight with excellent feedback from participating students. The publication of a co-authored book 'Total Information Risk Management' in 2013 was another highpoint.

Through my involvement as lecturer, author and consultant I have been fortunate enough to develop a career in IKM that has seen me work with a variety of individuals and organisations.

Looking ahead I plan to continue with my Professionals portfolio career. I am hoping to see a new degree programme offered at Brighton - an MSc Management with Knowledge Management. I am firmly of the view that in order to manage knowledge well, organisations need to first manage information well. This new pathway will incorporate both information and knowledge management.

My wishes for the profession are that IM develops into a dynamic discipline that no organisation can afford to ignore. The potential for success is enormous. Recognise that information is one of the most important organisational assets and give it the attention it so rightly deserves!

Tips for those entering the profession...

- Information is at the core of all organisations so don't be put off by those who say it isn't – stick to your guns
- A mixture of practical and theoretical experience/knowledge will stand you in good stead – always look for opportunities to broaden your knowledge base
- Attend conferences and workshops and go with an inquisitive mind-set. Ask questions, seek out the best practitioners and 'pick their brains'
- Get a mentor
- Enjoy yourself!

