

## **8 Conclusions and recommendations**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter revisits the main research problem and sub-problems as outlined in Chapter 1, presents a number of recommendations arising from the research, and then indicates possible areas for further research identified during this project.

### **8.2 Answering the research problem**

The research problem was outlined in Chapter 1, and is revisited here in the light of the results of the non-empirical and empirical research conducted during the project. The results of that research have been presented in Chapters 2, 3, 4 (the non-empirical literature review), Chapter 6 (empirical data findings), and Chapter 7 (empirical data analysis).

#### **8.2.1 Main research problem**

The main research problem was, “To gain an understanding of the potential of stories and storytelling as knowledge sharing practices to enhance world-class performance within a particular community at Kumba Resources.”

The answer to this problem will be measured by the extent to which the following sub-problems were achieved. The details of the answer to each sub-problem are contained in the relevant chapters, and the key learning points contributing to gaining an understanding in each area will now be reviewed.

### **8.2.2 Research sub-problem 1**

This research sub-problem was stated (see section 1.5.1) as: “What can be learned from a non-empirical investigation into knowledge management as a context for the research project?”

The approach used in the answering of this research problem was to carry out a structured search of the management literature relating to the field of knowledge management. As a result of the investigation, the researcher was able to present an understanding of the nature of knowledge, knowledge management and the relationship between knowledge management and strategy. The results of this research indicated a wide range of views in the literature in each of the three main areas investigated. It became clear that there was no consistent, widely adopted definition for knowledge (see section 2.2.1). What was common, however, was the wide recognition given to the potential for the achievement of corporate objectives where knowledge is employed as a management resource (as discussed in section 2.2.2).

The lack of common agreement in the literature extended to knowledge management, both in terms of definition and its application in organisations. Through the literature review, however, a clearer understanding was gained about the nature of knowledge (see section 2.2) and knowledge management (sections 2.3.), and an analysis and synthesis was presented of a number of aspects of the field (see sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.7).

The next main area of enquiry into the context for the research was addressed in section 2.4 (knowledge management and strategy). The non-empirical research here provided an in-depth understanding of the relationship between knowledge management strategy and business strategy, as well as the possible approaches to the development and implementation of a knowledge management strategy.

In summary, this sub-problem was answered both in the conduct of the research itself, as well as in the documentation of the research in Chapter 2. The output from this

research was used to help to frame the context for the research as a whole, as well as contributing to the development and use of the research instrument and later empirical research activities (including data gathering and analysis).

### **8.2.3 Research sub-problem 2**

The second sub-problem was defined in section 1.5.2 as, “What can be learned from a non-empirical investigation into the use of stories and storytelling as knowledge sharing practices as part of a knowledge management strategy as a context for the research project?”

Chapter 3 documented the results of the non-empirical research, which investigated four main aspects relating to the use of stories and storytelling. First, was an understanding of the origins and definition, formats and structures of stories. Next, the literature review investigated the use, benefits and pitfalls associated with the use of stories and storytelling as part of a knowledge management strategy, with a specific focus on the sharing of knowledge. The literature review then also identified a number of proposed models for the use of stories and storytelling and included the selection of one of these models as part of the analytical framework to be used in the empirical research to be conducted as part of this project. The final element of the answer to this sub-problem was documented in section 3.5, which investigated aspects of the implementation of stories and storytelling as part of a knowledge management strategy.

Overall, the findings of this part of the non-empirical research led to the following learning points in that stories and storytelling:

- Have been in use for thousands of years as a means of communication
- Have been recognised for at least the past thirty years as a powerful means of communication in organisations
- Have been recognised since the early days of the knowledge management movement as a powerful way to share knowledge in organisations
- Come in many different formats and structures

- May serve many different purposes (including being related to knowledge management)
- Offer many potential benefits when sharing of knowledge is being implemented in organisations
- May have circumstances where stories and storytelling should not be used to share knowledge
- May be usefully supported by a model or framework that supports the development and deployment of the use of stories and storytelling.

As in the case of the non-empirical research for sub-problem 1, the output of this part of the research, into the use of stories and storytelling as knowledge sharing practices as part of a knowledge management strategy, was used as input to the assessment and analysis of the specific situation in the case study organisation (the Kumba Resources CICOP).

#### **8.2.4 Research sub-problem 3**

The next research sub-problem presented was: “What can be learned from a non-empirical investigation into the nature of world-class performance as a context for the research project?”

An initial review of the literature indicated that there was a lack of clarity as to the meaning of the term *world-class performance* and, as a result, the researcher developed a proposed framework for world-class performance that was presented in Chapter 4.

After a brief review of the nature of world-class performance, the elements of the proposed framework were investigated in turn: best practices; benchmarking; standards; quality management, and capability maturity models. This framework, once developed through the non-empirical research documented in Chapter 4, was later used as part of the analytical approach to the interpretation of the case study data findings and analysis (as presented in Chapter 6 and 7). This research sub-problem

was therefore achieved both through the non-empirical investigation itself as well as the documentation presented in Chapter 4.

The key learning points to arise from this non-empirical research were that:

- The term *world-class performance* is generally not well defined in the literature; where it is defined there is no general agreement that the definition should be used.
- Each of the elements of the proposed world-class performance framework is well defined for general use: best practices; benchmarking; standards; quality, and capability maturity.
- Despite the significant volume of management literature which debates these topics, they cannot all be directly applied to the use of stories and storytelling as knowledge management practices, as there is relatively little specific application of these concepts in the area of these practices, or because the concepts have not been sufficiently defined.
- The most directly applicable of the elements of the proposed world-class performance framework in the context of this research is the capability maturity model, about which a significant amount of discussion has taken place in the literature.

The output of this non-empirical research was also used to help to frame the research concepts and methods, the specific structured interview research instrument, the subsequent analysis of empirical data, and lastly, the recommendations to the case study organisation contained in this chapter (see section 8.3).

#### **8.2.5 Research sub-problem 4**

Having completed the non-empirical phase of the research, and given the overall research problem, the next research sub-problem, as defined in section 1.5.4, could be addressed: “What can be learned from the use of stories and storytelling to share knowledge as part of a knowledge management strategy within the case study organisation?”

This research sub-problem was at the heart of the empirical research activities, and was achieved through the use of the research methodology as defined in Chapter 5. This methodology was executed through the use of a case study investigation (within a specific community in Kumba Resources), using mainly qualitative techniques. The empirical research included the use of three primary data gathering mechanisms: interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured); observation, and gathering of artefacts. The results of these data gathering activities were presented in Chapter 6, and analysed in Chapter 7. The empirical research was conducted using output from the three areas of non-empirical research into the topics of: knowledge management; stories and storytelling, and world-class performance.

The key learning points arising from the research are that:

- Knowledge management is a concept that was well defined in the case study organisation (at three levels: Kumba Resources as a whole; Kumba Resources knowledge management function, and the Kumba Resources CICOP).
- The concept of the use of stories and storytelling was recognised at all three levels of the organisation.
- The concept of world-class performance was understood (if not always well-defined) and part of the objectives at all three levels of the organisation.
- Stories and storytelling were in active, planned use in the CICOP during the period of the empirical research project.
- There was an overall low level of maturity in the CICOP of both the practice of knowledge sharing in general and, more specifically, the use of stories and storytelling as part of the CICOP knowledge sharing strategy.
- The use of stories and storytelling was inconsistently applied across the CICOP (a characteristic of the low level of maturity).
- Use was made of a specific tool to support knowledge sharing through storytelling (the storyboard) that has had relatively little coverage in the management literature.

With specific reference to the model of world-class performance in relation to stories and storytelling in the CICOP:

- That the transfer of best practices was largely driven on an informal basis (a characteristic of a low level of maturity)
- That benchmarking of the use of stories and storytelling in the CICOP was little in evidence and where it was in evidence was informal
- That the absence of recognised standards in the broader knowledge management field resulted in no use of standards associated with stories and storytelling in the CICOP
- That although the concept of quality management was well-established in the Kumba Resources business as a whole, as well as in other CICOP activities, very few specific actions had been taken to apply this concept to the use of stories and storytelling in the CICOP
- That the concept of capability maturity was in current use in the CICOP but that this concept had also not been applied to the use of stories and storytelling in the CICOP
- That when the research instrument was used to help to gather empirical data (through a structured maturity assessment) the overall assessment in eighteen areas measured, failed to reach level 2.0 (on a scale of 0 to 5.0) in any one area, indicating an overall informal approach to the use of stories and storytelling in the CICOP.

The output from the data gathering activities was used as the input to the data analysis; the output from the data analysis will be used as the input to answer research sub-problem 5 (in section 8.3).

#### **8.2.6 Research sub-problem 5**

The last of the five research sub-problems was outlined in section 1.5.5: “How might the performance of the organisation in terms of the use of stories and storytelling be enhanced as a result of the application of the findings from the non-empirical research combined with the findings of the empirical research?”

The answer to this sub-problem is achieved through the presentation of the recommendations contained in this chapter (see section 8.3).

### **8.2.7 Answering the overall research problem**

The answering of the overall research problem can be measured by the extent to which the five sub-problems have been answered through the two primary aspects of the research project have been delivered: the non-empirical and empirical phases. The non-empirical research has been documented in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and the results of this research were used to help to define and execute the empirical research that has been documented in Chapters 6 and 7.

In summary, there exists significant potential to increase the level of maturity in the use of stories and storytelling in the CICOP as a contributor to world-class performance, within the CICOP, and therefore, within the organisation as a whole. In addition to gaining an understanding of the potential of stories and storytelling as knowledge sharing practices to enhance world-class performance within a particular community (the CICOP) at Kumba Resources, there was also the opportunity to make a number of recommendations arising from the analysis of the research data findings. These recommendations are presented in section 8.3.

In addition, there is the potential that the scope for improved performance may be applied in other parts of Kumba Resources business, although this would be best addressed by further research (see section 8.4).

## **8.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations presented here are made specifically for the use of stories and storytelling in the Kumba Resources CICOP. The documentation of these recommendations and inclusion into the final research report are in line with the suggestions of a number of authors as discussed in section 5.4.2, and contribute to



answering sub-problem 5, as discussed in section 8.2.6. The sequence which will be used in presenting the recommendations in this section is that of the topics included in the original research instrument (see Appendix 1).

The data findings and data analysis (see Chapters 6 and 7) were framed in terms of the application of world-class performance and specifically the capability maturity scale as included in the research instrument (see Appendix 1). In overall terms, the level of maturity for each of the following parameters measured in the empirical data gathering activities was low (below 2 on a scale of from 0 to 5, see Table 6.4), and the subsequent investigation through the semi-structured and unstructured interviews, observation and collection of artefacts (as covered in Chapter 6 and analysed in Chapter 7) did little to alter these maturity ratings. In general terms, therefore, the recommendations that follow are intended to help the Kumba Resources CICOP increase their maturity level on the rating scale as a contributor to an improvement in world-class performance, specifically in the use of stories and storytelling as knowledge sharing practices.

It is also suggested that the broader context within Kumba Resources (the organisation itself and the knowledge management function, which provided the internal context for the research, as discussed in sections 6.2 and 6.3) could benefit from further application of the world-class framework (as outlined in Chapter 4) as an analytical/diagnostic tool and for helping to identify a road-map for the future and sustained achievement of world-class performance (see section 8.4).

### **8.3.1 Ownership of stories and storytelling**

The necessity for ownership of the elements of a knowledge management strategy was identified in the literature review (see Table 3.6). Clear ownership of stories and storytelling used as part of a knowledge management strategy can assist in the effective use of those stories to support knowledge sharing.

It is therefore recommended that, in seeking to leverage the use of stories and storytelling, the Kumba Resources CICOP should ensure that there is clear ownership,

both locally where the stories are developed and used, as well as more broadly (consistently) across the organisation.

### **8.3.2 Executive sponsorship of the use of stories and storytelling**

Effective implementation of a knowledge management strategy will be more likely where there is clear executive sponsorship (leadership) (see Table 3.6). This also applies to the use of stories and storytelling, when used as an element of that strategy.

It is therefore recommended that, as the Kumba Resources CICOP seek to improve the effectiveness of the use of stories and storytelling, they ensure that they have clear and consistent executive sponsorship across the organisation, rather than at the level of the individual operational sites as at present.

### **8.3.3 Objectives for stories and storytelling**

It is clearly recommended in the literature that was reviewed (see Table 3.6), that objectives should be set for the use of any knowledge management practice, such as the use of stories and storytelling. The more clearly defined and consistent these objectives are, including their measurement, the more likely they are to be achieved.

It is therefore recommended that, when embarking upon further use of stories and storytelling for knowledge sharing, the Kumba Resources CICOP should have clearly defined, documented and measurable objectives, appropriate to the purpose for which the stories are to be told.

### **8.3.4 Funding of stories and storytelling**

Knowledge management initiatives are more likely to be successful where there is an appropriate level of funding (see Table 3.6) and given the wide range of choice which exists in the formats in which storytelling can take place, significant funding may or

may not be required depending on the type of storytelling selected (such as the difference between oral storytelling and the use of professional actors in an industrial theatre implementation).

It is therefore recommended that, when considering further use of stories, the Kumba Resources CICOP ensure that appropriate funding is in place to support the development, initial implementation and ongoing support for the use of this management practice. In addition, in seeking a higher level of maturity, the Kumba Resources CICOP should ensure consistency, setting of measurable objectives and the proactive management of funding for stories and storytelling.

### **8.3.5 Tools to be used for stories and storytelling**

As was identified in the literature review (see Table 2.8 and Table 3.1) there are a number of different tools which may be used to support the use of stories and storytelling for knowledge sharing<sup>1</sup>.

It is recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP, when considering future use of stories and storytelling, ensure that they are making best use of the various tools available (such as different modes of delivery, use of multimedia, industrial theatre etc) taking into account the objectives for the knowledge sharing activities.

### **8.3.6 Training and education for stories and storytelling**

The need for appropriate training and education as part of the implementation of a knowledge management strategy was identified in the literature (see Table 3.6).

It is recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP should, in future, carefully evaluate what training and education is required (for the development of the stories;

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘tools and techniques’ although used in the original research instrument was later refined in Chapter 2 (see section 2.3.7). Thus stories and storytelling are recognised as *practices* where a range of *tools* may be used to support the practice.

telling of the stories, and listening to the stories) and achieve a degree of consistency across the Kumba Resources CICOP in so doing.

### **8.3.7 Measures of stories and storytelling**

Several authors surveyed in the literature identified the importance of putting in place measures for the effectiveness of a knowledge management strategy (see Table 3.6).

In the case study empirical research, the subject of measuring the effectiveness of the use of stories and storytelling was little discussed. However, it is recommended that, to ensure adequate management support and funding (both in financial terms and the commitment of appropriate levels of human resources), the Kumba Resources CICOP ensure that plans are put in place to measure the effectiveness of the use of stories and storytelling. Such measures should include:

- Frequency (of the telling of the story)
- Size of audience (minimum, maximum, average)
- Duration of the storytelling session (minimum, maximum, average)
- Effectiveness of the storyteller (through feedback assessments)
- Receptivity of the listeners
- Overall impact of the story
- Relative impact of the story compared to other methods of communicating the message (such as written or oral presentations or industrial theatre)<sup>2</sup>
- Relative impact of one story compared to another.

### **8.3.8 Success stories of stories and storytelling**

One of the most powerful ways of supporting any element of a knowledge management strategy is to generate a success story, according to a number of authors identified in the literature (see Table 3.6).

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<sup>2</sup> The various alternatives were identified in section 3.2.2 and Table 3.1.

It is therefore recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP ensure that these success stories are identified and used consistently across the organisation, and that they are maintained and their effectiveness is measured.

### **8.3.9 Benchmarking internally or externally**

One of the elements of the proposed world-class performance framework (as presented in Chapter 4) was the use of benchmarking and this issue has also been identified in the knowledge management literature (see Table 3.6).

It is therefore recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP, in seeking to improve the effectiveness of their use of stories and storytelling, should explore the benefits of benchmarking their efforts, both internally as well as externally with other organisations. In seeking greater levels of maturity through their benchmarking efforts, they should seek to establish a degree of consistency across the organisation in terms of the use of benchmarking as well as setting specific and measurable objectives for the benchmarking activities.

### **8.3.10 Reward and recognition for use of stories and storytelling**

Reward and recognition can take many forms, including financial and non-financial incentives. Whatever forms such rewards might take, their importance has been recognised in the literature when it comes to implementing knowledge management (see Table 3.6).

It is recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP, in seeking to further the use of stories and storytelling, should investigate the appropriate reward and recognition for these practices. In seeking a higher level of maturity, they should ensure a consistent approach, based on objectives for and measurements of the types of reward and recognition appropriate to the particular environment in which the Kumba Resources CICOP operates (in line with the corporate culture).

### **8.3.11 Storytelling model**

The literature search identified a number of possible models for the use of stories and storytelling (see section 3.4.1 and Table 3.6). Without the use of a storytelling model an organisation runs the risk that the use of stories and storytelling to support knowledge sharing may be less effective, due to the failure to consider all of the aspects of the use of this potentially powerful management practice (such as an adequate focus on the effective development of the story itself, or the skills of the storyteller and of the story listeners).

It is recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP should ensure a consistent approach is implemented in terms of the use of the selected storytelling model, including the measurement of the effectiveness of the use of the model in the achievement of the knowledge sharing objectives.

### **8.3.12 Capture and reuse of stories**

One of the elements of effective knowledge management that was identified in Chapter 2, was the ability of organisations to learn. The learning opportunity can extend to the ability to capture and re-use stories once they have been created as has been discussed in the literature (see Table 3.6).

It is therefore recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP, in seeking to improve their effectiveness in the use of stories and storytelling, should consider how they plan to capture and make available for reuse the stories which have been identified (and gathered) or created (perhaps based on anecdotes gathered from within the organisation), using whatever methods and technologies are appropriate to the specific situation (such as the use of audio and video recording techniques, or committing the story to some other form of permanent capture such as in writing). The Kumba Resources CICOP should identify appropriate ways to ensure effective reuse of the stories, hence leveraging their investments.

### **8.3.13 Catalogue of stories maintained**

As an extension to the concept of capturing and re-using stories as highlighted in section 8.3.12, easy retrieval through the use of a catalogue of stories has been identified in the literature (see Table 3.6).

Therefore, it is recommended that the Kumba Resources CICOP should maintain a catalogue of stories, with a classification system that not only ensures speedy and flexible retrieval, but also will thus promote more active use of the stories. Such a system might well be supported by the Kumba Resources intranet.

### **8.3.14 Use of stories and storytelling internally and externally**

It was identified in the literature (see Table 3.6) that the value of stories and storytelling is not limited to the use within a single community.

It is therefore recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP should evaluate the extent to which the storytelling practices used in the community may have applicability elsewhere, both in other communities inside Kumba Resources or outside the organisation, such as with customers or suppliers or business partners.

### **8.3.15 Role of technology in stories and storytelling**

There has been extensive discussion in the literature about the use of technology to support a knowledge management strategy (see section 2.3.4 and Table 3.6).

Therefore, it is recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP should carefully evaluate what technology is appropriate to support the use of stories and storytelling. It is clear from the empirical research that there has to date been a marked preference for the use of paper-based storyboards, without a clear justification as to why this particular medium is used in preference to, or in combination with any other medium

in support of the oral storytelling method (such as audio and/or video recordings and later playback).

### **8.3.16 Understanding of where not to use stories and storytelling**

A number of authors have highlighted the fact that it may not be appropriate to use stories and storytelling to share knowledge in every circumstance (see section 3.3.3 and Table 3.6).

It is therefore recommended that, the Kumba Resources CICOP investigate the conditions under which it would be inappropriate for the use of stories and storytelling in pursuit of the objectives of the organisation.

### **8.3.17 Stories and storytelling community of practice**

The value of the community of practice has not only been identified in the literature (see section 2.3.7 and Table 3.6), but also is clearly already recognised within Kumba Resources, based on the numbers of communities of practice in existence during the research project.

However, it is recommended that the Kumba Resources CICOP evaluate the extent to which an additional community of practice should be formed within the broader organisation (Kumba Resources), with the specific objective of supporting the use of stories and storytelling.

### **8.3.18 Stories and storytelling value rating scale**

Given the significant number of stories that are in active use across the business, it is recommended that the Kumba Resources CICOP evaluate the development of a value rating scale in two areas. Firstly, this should take the form of an evaluation of the relative value of the stories in use at the operational locations. Then, secondly, a value



rating in terms of the ways in which the stories are told (for example, comparing the use of oral storytelling methods, industrial theatre, through graphical support through the use of storyboards).

### **8.3.19 Summary of recommendations**

If the Kumba Resources CICOP is serious about improving world-class performance and plan to continue to use stories and storytelling as knowledge sharing practices, then the implementation of the recommendations contained in sections 8.3.1 to 8.3.18 could have a significant impact on the achievement of improved performance.

## **8.4 Recommendations for further research**

There were two main areas identified for further research during this research project: the world-class performance framework, and the expansion of the research base beyond the limits of the case study organisation. Both these issues will be explored in this section.

### **8.4.1 World-class performance framework**

The world-class performance framework first presented in Chapter 4 of this research report, proved to be a useful tool in defining the performance of the various aspects of the case study organisation that were the focus of this research report. However, in the opinion of the researcher, there remains a significant opportunity to enhance the value of this framework through further development of each of the elements of the framework, as it applies in the field of knowledge management.

#### **8.4.1.1 Best practices**

Relatively little research has been conducted to date in South Africa in terms of the practices used in support of a knowledge management strategy. Further research could usefully be conducted to improve the understanding of the use of best practices, with particular regard to the South African situation. This research could be conducted with a number of focus areas:

- Size of organisation (large, medium and small enterprises)
- Type of organisation ownership (state-owned enterprises, non-governmental organisations, publicly-held companies, privately held companies etc)
- Industry grouping (for example, within financial services, manufacturing, retail etc)
- Knowledge management dimension (for example, processes, practices, tools, strategies, measures, etc).

The results of this research into best practice could then be used for comparison to the situation in those focus areas in other countries or regions of the globe.

#### **8.4.1.2 Benchmarking**

Due in part to the relative lack of maturity of the knowledge management community in South Africa, relatively little work has been done either by organisations or industry groupings to benchmark the effectiveness of the organisations' knowledge management strategies. Such benchmarking activities could include a focus on internal benchmarking (within organisations), external benchmarking (between organisations), or international benchmarking (between the situation in South Africa and other countries or parts of the world).

These benchmarking activities might usefully be supported not only by the organisations themselves but by independent bodies (which either already exist or are specifically set up for that purpose). Further academic research into the field of benchmarking for knowledge management would then be justified.

### **8.4.1.3 Standards**

As was identified in Chapter 4 of this research report, little formal progress has so far been made in the development and implementation of national or global standards in the field of knowledge management. The opportunity exists for the knowledge management community within South Africa to more actively participate in the development of formally accepted standards (whether they originated within the country, or adopted or adapted from outside the country). Further academic research, perhaps even participating in the identification of the need for such standards, would seem justified.

### **8.4.1.4 Quality Management**

Although the general field of quality management is relatively well established, as was discussed in Chapter 4, there is little research which has so far been conducted in South Africa, amongst those organisations with a knowledge management strategy, in terms of how they integrate that strategy with their quality management initiatives. This could provide a useful additional avenue for further academic research.

### **8.4.1.5 Capability Maturity Model**

The concept of capability maturity formed a key part of the analytical model used in the conduct of this research. However, the extent to which those organisations who seek to leverage a knowledge management strategy in South Africa are aware of, or are actively using, such a model to assist them in improving their organisational performance, is not clear. It would be useful, therefore, to conduct additional research to understand the extent to which the use of this model could be applied, not only in the field of knowledge management but also in other aspects of the performance measurement and development of organisations.

As the concept of capability maturity has already been applied in a number of other fields (as discussed in Chapter 4), it may even be useful to investigate the possibility

of developing a broader model, particularly tailored for the local South African situation (but with the potential for global application) which examines the overall maturity, when knowledge management success is one of the contributory performance factors.

#### **8.4.2 Expansion of the research base**

This research project was focused on one aspect of the activities in one organisation over a relatively brief period of time. The implication of this is that the research base might usefully be expanded in a number of ways as discussed in this section.

##### **8.4.2.1 Comparative study in Kumba Resources**

The investigation into the case study organisation that was the focus of this research, in terms of the methodology described in Chapter 5, was a snapshot case study. The potential exists to conduct further research, over an extended period of time, within the case study organisation, in an effort to understand the long-term implications of the use of stories and storytelling as part of the knowledge management strategy.

##### **8.4.2.2 Comparative study with other South African organisations**

The research problem that was the focus of this case study research, was limited to improving the understanding of the use of stories and storytelling within a single organisation. The scope of the research might usefully in future be extended to include other organisations in the same industry or organisations in another industry to compare results of the use of stories and storytelling.

##### **8.4.2.3 Multi-company study within South Africa**

A further avenue of research might usefully be to conduct a multi-company study into the use of stories and storytelling, where the objectives of this future research would

be broader than the narrower comparative basis (between only two organisations) proposed in section 8.4.2.2.

#### **8.4.2.4 Multi-company study across African countries**

As identified in Chapter 4, the impact of globalisation is widely felt and, therefore, the benefits of further research might well be achieved through not limiting the scope of any further investigation to the borders of South Africa. In particular, given the growth of the regional groupings such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU), there may be good reason to support the objectives of the SADC and AU, through further research, perhaps with a focus on indigenous knowledge, with a view to identifying the specific African cultural context to knowledge management across the continent.

#### **8.4.2.5 Global study**

The impact of globalisation mentioned in section 8.4.5 naturally leads to the suggestion that further research might usefully be conducted on a global basis into the use of stories and storytelling in support of a knowledge management strategy. The results of the literature survey conducted, and then reported in Chapter 3, indicated a certain level of awareness in the management literature of the potential benefits of the use of stories and storytelling, but there was limited evidence of the extent to which organisations operating on a global basis are able to leverage the potential benefits of storytelling. This area then might also yield fruitful additional research.

### **8.5 Summary**

This final chapter has reviewed the extent to which the original research problem was addressed, as well as discussing a number of recommendations for the improved use of stories and storytelling as part of a knowledge management strategy in the case study organisation. In addition, a number of areas for possible future research have

been identified and discussed, arising from this research project. This research report represents the culmination of a formal research project but at the same time presents an opportunity for those accessing the report to not only benefit from the results of this research but also to assist them in their own future research efforts.