

FIELD GUIDE 05

A UK field guide
Current to June 2026

THE IGNITE ALMANACK OF **KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE**

Getting what your best people know out of
their heads and onto the page.

A FIELD GUIDE FOR UK SMES

IGNITEAI SOLUTIONS

THE PROBLEM

Your best knowledge is sitting in two or three people's heads.

It has never been written down. It lives in their heads and only there, which means nobody else can open it, search it, or find it when they need it. That is the whole problem.

Start with the knowledge that does exist somewhere. McKinsey reckons the average employee spends 1.8 hours a day just searching for information. That is 9.3 hours a week. Put it another way: you hire 5 people, 4 show up to work, and the fifth spends the week hunting for answers.

I was that fifth person for years. As an operations manager in the military, I lost 30 to 40 minutes a day finding things. Check SharePoint. Search my emails. Then ring the one bloke who had it sitting in a Teams chat nobody else could see.

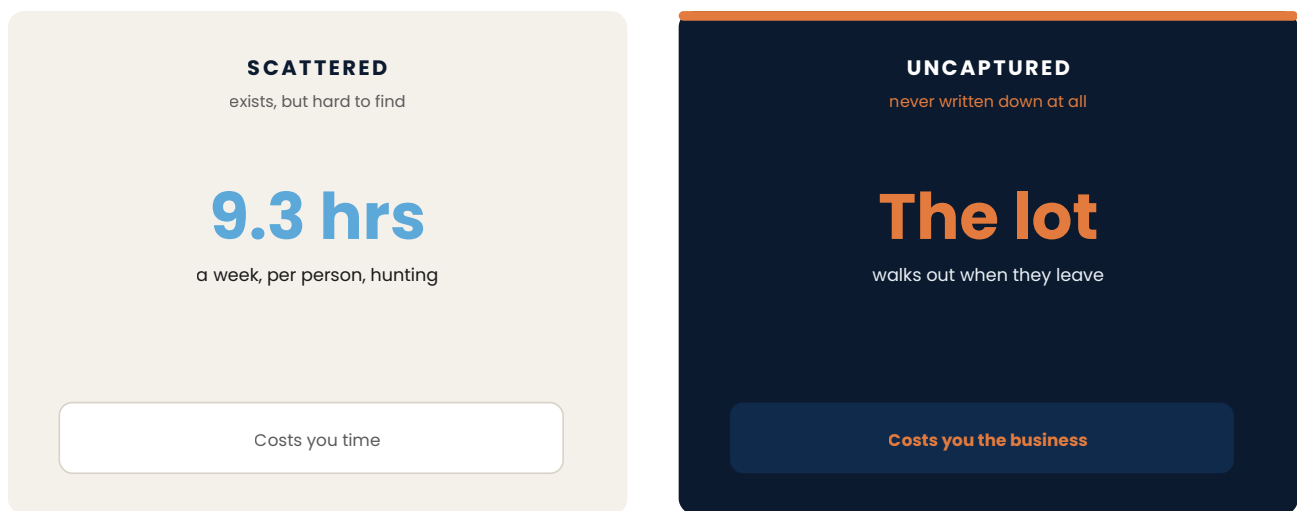
WHY THIS MATTERS

That 9.3 hours is just the floor. It only counts knowledge that exists somewhere, a file or a thread, hard to find but findable. The knowledge that costs you most was never written down at all. It only lives in someone's head.

THE IDEA

There are two kinds of lost knowledge, and one is far worse.

I have spent the last 18 months inside small and medium businesses, mapping where the work actually happens. The same pattern shows up almost every time. The most important knowledge in the building has never been written down. People just crack on and do the thing. They have done it for years. They are brilliant at it. And not one step of it exists anywhere but in their head.



The scattered stuff is slow and findable. The uncaptured stuff is the real exposure, because it has no backup at all.

One is a tax on every week. The other is a cliff you walk off the day the wrong person hands in their notice.

The single point of failure.

Every business has them. The person the whole thing quietly runs through. Most owners can name them in a second. What they cannot see is how much of the business is running through a handful of skulls, and what happens in each case when it does.

When that person is...	What happens to the work
Off for the day	The work stops. Nobody else knows the steps, so it waits until they are back.
Busy or stretched	A queue forms behind them. They become the bottleneck for everyone who needs the thing they hold.
Gone, handed their notice	It walks out the door with them. Years of how-it-actually-works, gone in a month's notice.
Asked to train a new starter	It eats the time they already do not have. So onboarding gets lip service, the new person learns just enough to get by, and the knowledge stays exactly where it started, in one head.

THE LOOP THAT KEEPS IT STUCK

This is why the problem never fixes itself. The one person who could train the next is the one with no spare hours to do it, so proper onboarding keeps getting skipped and the dependency deepens. The operation runs on knowledge held in exactly one place, with nothing backing it up. That makes it a business-continuity risk, because the work has no second person who could pick it up.

Why this matters more now than it did two years ago.

Everyone is talking about agents. Systems that do not just help you work, they run the work for you. Here is the catch nobody mentions in the demo. An agent can only run a process it can see. If the process lives in someone's head and nowhere else, there is nothing to hand over. You cannot automate a workflow that was never written down.



So the businesses that win the next 18 months are the ones that get what their best people know onto the page before they try to automate anything. Capture first. Automation has something to stand on only after that.

There is a second prize, and it arrives long before any agent. Capture a process once and the next new starter learns it in days, by reading what good looks like, instead of leaning on your busiest expert for a year. Every capture makes onboarding faster and the team less dependent on any single head. That is how an organisation compounds what it knows, each capture building on the last.

HOW TO START

How to get it out of their heads.

The reason it never gets written down is that you cannot just ask a busy expert to document their own job. They will not, and if they try it comes out thin. So you pull it out of them instead. This is the sequence we use.

- 1 Find your single points of failure.** Ask one question of each area: if this person were off for a month, what stops? The names come fast.
- 2 Interview the process out of them.** Do not hand them a blank template. Get them talking through the thing they do, and record it. AI can run the interview, one question at a time.
- 3 Turn the talk into a written process.** AI converts the recording or transcript into a clear step-by-step, with the decision points flagged. They review and correct it, which takes minutes, not hours.
- 4 Put it where people and machines can reach it.** A proper knowledge base, searchable, one source. Not a document buried in a folder nobody opens.
- 5 Then point an agent at it.** Now the process is visible, an agent can run it or assist it. You have automated something real, because it finally exists.

TRY THIS ON MONDAY

Pick the one person whose month off would hurt the most. Book 45 minutes. **Ask them to talk you through the thing only they can do, and record it.**

That recording is the first asset in your knowledge base. You have started the capture, and it cost you three quarters of an hour.

Three prompts to capture what is in their heads.

Paste these into Claude or ChatGPT. They do the hard part, pulling the knowledge out and shaping it. Replace the words in [brackets] with your own.

PROMPT 1: FIND THE SINGLE POINTS OF FAILURE

You are an operations adviser. I run a [type of business] with [number] staff. I am going to describe my team and who does what: [describe it]. Help me find the single points of failure: the people whose knowledge exists only in their head, where the work would stop if they left. List them, and for each, the one process most urgent to capture.

Surfaces the names and the priority order before you spend a minute capturing.

PROMPT 2: INTERVIEW THE EXPERT

Interview me to capture exactly how I do [name the process], so a new person could follow it. Ask one question at a time. Dig into the steps I do on instinct and the judgement calls I make without thinking. After about ten questions, turn my answers into a clear step-by-step procedure with the decision points marked.

This is how the hardest-to-replace knowledge starts to exist outside one head.

PROMPT 3: TURN A RECORDING INTO A PROCESS

Here is a transcript of [name] describing how they do [process]: [paste it]. Turn it into a clean step-by-step SOP a new starter could follow. Flag every point where a decision or judgement is needed, and list anything they mentioned that still needs clarifying.

Converts a 45-minute recording into a document your whole team can use.

THE NEXT STEP

GET IT ON THE PAGE

The scattered knowledge costs you 9.3 hours a week. The uncaptured knowledge costs