



Framework to Capture Institutional Knowledge

Here is a 5-step framework you can implement today to stop legacy knowledge from disappearing overnight.

1. Map

Identify critical knowledge holders and vulnerable systems.

- Ask: "If [Name] left tomorrow, what would we lose?"
- Use a risk matrix to prioritize: Impact × Likelihood.

Risk Area	Impact	Likelihood	Priority
Critical Knowledge Holder A Departure	High	Medium	High
Critical Knowledge Holder B Departure	Medium	Low	Medium
Vulnerable System X Failure	High	High	High
Vulnerable System Y Failure	Low	Medium	Low

2. Tag

Clarify what actually needs to be preserved:

- Tribal knowledge (undocumented systems and fixes)
- Decision history (why certain paths were taken)
- Key relationships (who they go to when things break)

3. Transfer

Create structured mentorship and pairing programs:

- Cross-train team members
- Shadow senior engineers during major ops
- Rotate support responsibilities strategically

4. Store

Use tools your team will actually engage with.

- Document in wikis, not Word docs
- Make it searchable, version-controlled, and reviewed quarterly
- Normalize internal demos and teach-backs

5. Activate

Knowledge isn't useful if it's buried.

- Build it into onboarding
- Run drills where legacy knowledge is tested
- Turn documentation into live training material