

# How knowledge leaders turn academic research into industry impact

December 15 2015, by Susannah Woodward

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Knowledge leaders need better institutional support to effectively apply management research and successfully drive innovation and change within organisations, a new study has found.

Published today in the *Human Relations* journal, the paper identifies how organisations can overcome the difficulty of translating research-based [knowledge](#) into workplace practices. It comes at a time when governments around the world are striving to boost societal and economic impact from research investment.

"Our study reveals how the most effective leaders 'unstick' research by actively 'being the knowledge'," said lead author, Dr Michael Fischer, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne and University of Oxford.

"They create emotional engagement and 'buy in' by subtly disrupting their teams and organisations to turn research into [industry](#) impact."

The paper is based on a broader UK government-funded research partnership, led by Professor Sue Dopson, Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, with researchers at the University of Melbourne, King's College London and Warwick Business School.

This study examined 137 senior managers in six leading organisations in the UK health industry.

"We examined how managers use academic research in their decision-making to affect organisational innovation and change," Professor Dopson said.

"We identified the importance of 'knowledge leaders' who develop a deep-seated personal investment to apply formal knowledge to their specific setting and create the momentum for change."

Dr Michael Fischer acknowledged that being a change agent was sometimes easier said than done.

"Knowledge leaders are few and far between, but their leadership is key to moving research across university and industry boundaries," he said.

The findings have major implications for government, universities and industry in developing knowledge [leaders](#) to accelerate the flow of research across university and industry boundaries.

**More information:** M. D. Fischer et al. Knowledge leadership: Mobilizing management research by becoming the knowledge object, *Human Relations* (2015). DOI: [10.1177/0018726715619686](https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715619686)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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