

Building Together Nurturing Leadership through Communities of Practice LMI 2012



Attention grabber

Did you ever encounter a problem and wonder if a colleague probably knows how to easily solve it

Jeanne

Our goals for this workshop are first to provide you with background on CoP's – what they are, what they are not and how we came to use them at ASU.

Next, we'll explore strategies for using and implementing CoP's at your institutions, including looking at challenges and best practices. Finally, we'll look at the organizational benefits to using CoP's, including leadership opportunities and overall organizational development.

Introductions

I'm our names

Scott

Before we start we'd like to know a bit more about who you are

Size: Small, medium, large

Type: academic, public, school, medical, corporate -- OTHER

Classic story of the photocopy repair techs meeting over breakfast

Example about insurance workers and shared knowledge from the book (citation later)

Importance of a common purpose

Communities of Practice are



Scott

Slide text:

What they are

What they are NOT

Examples: Photocopy repair techs, insurance companies

Focus around a common purpose

Inclusive of all levels of the organization

Replacement for formal organizational structure

Evaluated as part of employee performance

Examples

Classic story of the photocopy repair techs meeting over breakfast

Example about insurance workers and shared knowledge from the book (citation later)

Importance of a common purpose

Definition

A group of people who share a craft and/or a profession. It is through the process of sharing information and experiences with the group that the members learn from each other, and have an opportunity to develop themselves personally and professionally. (Wikipedia)

CoPs what are they?

focus around a common purpose

they come and go needed based on the needs of group or organization

might be replaced by a formal structure, or morph into something else

Typically inclusive of all level of the organization

Transition

AUL created Sustainability group dealing with recycling, being more green, appointed two chairs, started meeting regularly

Not a "true" CoP

Communities of Practice are not

The collage consists of three distinct images. At the top center is a complex hierarchical organizational chart with multiple levels of boxes connected by lines. Below it, on the left, is a photograph of a group of people sitting around a large conference table in a meeting room. On the right is a document titled 'MAINTENANCE' and 'TROUBLESHOOTING CHECKLIST' with various sections for symptoms and remedies.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/30975003@N06/3837106588/>

http://www.flickr.com/photos/john_hall_associates/3238420703/sizes/m/in/photostream/

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/umpqua/60761789/>

What are they not?

Does not replace our formal structure.

For example we have supervisors forum which is a formal organization chaired by the library Business Operations Manager. It meets monthly and shares formal communication and practices that we all must follow.

We also have supervisors CoP. One “rule” it has is not Dept heads can be on it. The goal was to allow supervisors who are lower in the management hierarchy to talk more freely and build their own confidence in dealing with supervisory challenges

Not formally evaluate

If an employee mentioned they are in a CoP that their willingness to volunteer and contribute can be part of their evaluation, but we do not evaluate their performance in the CoP.

We had a supervisor ask that very question about how should he evaluate that performance and the answer is you don’t.

CoPs at ASU

- Collection Maintenance
- Organizational Development
- Research and Writing
- Emerging Technologies
- Library Supervisors

Jeanne

In 2006 ASU changed from a decentralized university with 4 independent campuses to a single university with 4 campus locations. In this new arena the library was charge to become “One Library in Many Places” in spite of the different organizational cultures on each campus.

By 2009, the libraries has 4 top level administrative vacancies so the UL formed a steering committee to work out a reorganization. CoP’s were introduced through this reorganization effort as a way to help build community for those doing similar work across the campuses. These are examples of the CoP’s that have formed since then.

We’ve seen many benefits from using CoP’s. They have greatly increased the feeling of “one library in many places.” In particular, the OD CoP proposed, planned and sponsored a first ever library-wide all-day retreat in which we closed all libraries and met for a day of community building and professional development. This retreat built community across all campuses and even across departments that did not interact regularly. People met people they had only seen via email or names mentioned in the directory.

CoP’s have also increased trust and collaboration across the organization because people have opportunities to work with peers from other libraries that do the same

work they do and they can work out issues and problems together.

Have provided flexibility to the organization in that groups can come together to work on problems or issues without having to form formal workgroups or committees. As some of our survey participants noted, CoP's help keep things from "falling through the cracks of the formal organization"

The CoP's have provided opportunities for peer leadership. The retreat planning, for example, included people from all areas and levels of the organization leading different parts of the event.

Scott

How do they work at ASU?

All have developed organically, with the OD CoP being the first one

No formal head – although there may be a highly interested facilitator or convener.

Meetings can be scheduled on a recurring basis, or on an as desired basis

There are rarely any formal minutes or reporting.

Most groups have a check your title at door policy. So a person can be an entry level clerk or a department head. Their contributions are considered equal.

Most CoPs at ASU maintain a "what is said in this meeting, stays in this meeting". This is critical so that people can build their own confidence in their ability, or allows them the ability to ask about a problem they are experiencing.

'community' that cares about our quality of worklife and our development."

"Departments that seldom interact are coming together and communicating. In a workplace that is very compartmentalized, this is refreshing."

"Communities of Practice foster unexpected ideas and innovation, peer-to-peer help in problem solving."

Replace with word map based on survey results

How could Communities of Practice be used to address your organization's goals or challenges?

Scott will find ideas for moving people around

(15 minutes total)

7-10 minutes for them to discuss

Report out of 2-3 groups, 2 minutes each (5-7 minutes)

Implementation

How will CoPs fit in your organization?



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/54027476@N07/4999919941/>

Ginny

Clarify how CoP's fit into the formal structure

--State support of Administration, department heads, supervisors

(Not formal committees)

--Purpose: brainstorming, innovation, free sharing and discussion of ideas, sharing of best practices, project work, proposal creation, etc – to fit your organization's needs

--Official contact method for proposals/project ideas

Organizational Support

--Meeting spaces and scheduling (rooms available, calendars, contacts to arrange)

--Announcements/Info – How to let others know about meetings, etc.? (organization distribution list? Staff newsletter? Other? – how to submit info to these)

Resources

For collaboration

Choose a collaborative work space: department intranet? Wikispaces?
Wiggio? Google sites/docs?

Process for resource requests if needed

What challenges would your organization face in implementing CoPs?

What strategies could be used to address these challenges?

Scott will find ideas for moving people around

(25 min. total)

Up to 15 minutes for group discussion

Report out briefly with example groups (10 minutes)

Challenges →
→ Solutions

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/52890443@N02/4892536396/>



Participants may not recognize the opportunities for leadership presented in CoP's and they also may not recognize what they are doing IS leadership.

Example quote for "unknown leadership:" "The knowledge that I might actually be able to improve something so we (the library) can help to fulfill ASU's goals of a better, more productive and sustainable university. Many times I feel like I'm treading water and the CoP's are the only way I can actually participate in the big picture and help fulfilling ASU's overall goals."



**Nurturing
Leadership**

**Encouraging
Collaboration**



Additional Resources

- *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, by Etienne Wenger, Cambridge/New York City, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- “Library Leadership 2.0: the intersection of diversity and leadership,” ALA webinar, presented by Karen Downing and Alexandra Rivera on May 15th, 2012, archived recording:
<https://alapublishing.webex.com/alapublishing/lr.php?AT=pb&SP=EC&rID=5238417&rKey=f53bfc4593e5cc42>
- Today’s presentation, *Building Together: Nurturing Leadership through Communities of Practice*, available on SlideShare:
<http://www.slideshare.net/bluemus/lmi-presentation>

Questions/Discussion

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Ideally, 10 minutes minimum