

A Transformational Experience for Teams in Organisations

# COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: THEIR VITAL ROLE IN PRODUCING VALUE IN ORGANISATIONS®

**...Within a few years communities of practice will be as natural to our concept of organization as teams have become. From a human resources standpoint, it is the first serious chance HR has to be strategic...creating communities of practice in areas strategic to the business. It takes seriously the idea that our best resources are our people....**

**Dr. ETIENNE WENGER**  
Harvard Business Review



**This Professional Development Experience** offers powerful insights and methods for transforming teams into highly productive communities of practice designed to apply creative and innovative thinking to directly increase value.



## What are Communities of Practice?

**They are groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.**

Dr Etienne Wenger describes them as .. “groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise — engineers engaged in deep-water drilling, for example, consultants who specialize in strategic marketing, or frontline managers in charge of cheque processing at a large commercial bank. Some communities of practice meet regularly — for lunch on Thursdays, say. Others are connected primarily by e-mail networks”. A community of practice may or may not have an explicit agenda on a given week, and even if it does, it may not follow the agenda closely. Inevitably, however, people in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems.

Because its primary output — knowledge — is intangible, the community of practice might sound like another “soft” management fad. But that’s not the case.

During the past five years, Wenger has seen communities of practice improve organizational performance at companies as diverse as an international bank, a major car manufacturer, and a U.S. government agency.

Communities of practice can drive strategy, generate new lines of business, solve problems, promote the spread of best practices, develop people’s professional skills, and help companies recruit and retain talent.



## Why are Communities of Practice so important to an organization's value?

Numbers are considered the measure for business success. Yet it is not the financial and performance targets that produce the outcomes or value.

It is the relationships and actions among people, clients, suppliers and their patterns of working and thinking together, communities of practice in other words, that produce the outcomes and the value.

A creative leader understands the need to nurture the relationships between all stakeholders in order to satisfy customer needs. A successful leader understands that communities of practice are the enablers in which these relationships are developed and maintained.

Cross functional communities of practice are the repository of knowledge, intelligence and information that when functioning fully provide breakthrough thinking that transforms organisations.

A successful and creative leader knows communities of practice are the source of immediate value and long term viability and sustainability.

## How will this learning experience benefit me and my team?

**“Communities of Practice: Their Vital Role in Producing Value in Organisations”®**

explores the theories and processes that drive communities of practice by using creative thinking and innovation tools and techniques.

This experience enables

- You to gain world class insights and understanding in how communities of practice are structured and how they operate to produce value
- You will experience and gain knowledge of the tools and techniques required to create communities of practice for value
- You will learn how to lead and facilitate communities of practice creatively and innovatively within your organisation for immediate value and long term viability.

## Programme Content

### The Structure and Workings of Communities of Practice

An introduction to the concept of communities of practice and an exploration and surfacing of current practices and experiences through global case studies.

The importance of sharing and trust in communities of practice. A clarifying statement about the purposes of communities of practice.

### Leadership in Communities of Practice

The first part of this module explores the theoretical aspects of organisational innovation with a particular emphasis on systemic collaboration and its value

The second part explores how you work creatively. A theory on co-sensing, co-presencing, co-collaboration and co-creating and their vital roles in creating value is explained and explored.

### Facilitation in Communities of Practice

You experience a range of tools and techniques for facilitating communities of practice and are given the opportunity to create and conduct a facilitation involving peers.

### Communication within Communities of Practice

How to find the value touch point in your community, gauge the success of meetings, how to disseminate the knowledge surfaced, the tools and techniques available to do that, and how to set future agendas.

### 360 Feedback

Each module finishes with a 360 degree reflective dialogue where you share your views with your peers or coach on the processes experienced and site cases of how you might be able to take advantage of this new knowledge personally and professionally and apply it immediately for value in the work place..

## Programme Structure and Delivery

Each module in **“Communities of Practice: Their Vital Role in Producing Value in Organisations”** © is designed to stand alone. Thus the programme can be designed and delivered in various ways to suit you and your teams professional development needs.

- **A condensed one day programme.**

This is an ideal way to introduce communities of practice in-house to senior management and their teams.

- **A 5 unit programme - half day a week**

This programme allows for the introduction of communities of practice in-house and adds a coaching dimension. In each session the theory is introduced and applied to an existing problem or concept in your work place. Each new session commences with a review of the application of the previous weeks programme.

- **An individual leadership coaching programme.**

The modules and the content are arranged to suit your personal leadership needs and time commitments.

## Programme Coaching Service

### **“Communities of Practice: Their Vital Role in Producing Value in Organisations”** ©

provides an introduction to the theory and application of communities of practice. It is recommended in order for you to develop real proficiency in these capabilities and skills that a programme of regular coaching and group work be designed and implemented as a follow up.

A specially designed Creative Leadership Forum on-line feedback survey is offered to you free of charge at the end of the experience to help you and your team assess the tools and techniques you felt most appropriate, productive, effective and suitable for on-going personal and professional development.

### **An Example of Value in Communities of Practice**

Xerox gave 25,000 field-service engineers access to a knowledge-sharing system that contributes savings of nearly 10 percent on parts and labor, translating into \$15 to \$20 million per year. Dan Holtshouse, director of knowledge initiatives, talks about «the 50,000 solution tips that have been entered into the knowledge base, all on a purely voluntary basis, in exchange for contributors' being recognized. What we have learned is the importance of creating a work environment with a culture and incentives that are conducive to sharing, and to support that environment with improved work processes and strong technology.»





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## The Creative Leadership Forum

**The Creative Leadership Forum** is a world class not-for-profit independent action learning centre led by a global advisory council, designed for senior executives from business, government and non-government organizations to come together with creative practitioners and facilitators in a space that minimizes the fear of failure

- to gain new knowledge
- to integrate this learning as it emerges
- to generate findings to a wider public for the common good

**The Creative Leadership Forum** designs and delivers creative leadership, creativity and innovation programmes to business, community and government leaders through its global network of internationally experienced creative practitioners and facilitators.

**The Creative Leadership Forum Faculty**  
All Creative Leadership Forum programmes are delivered by internationally recognized practitioners in creative leadership, creativity and innovation.

Each practitioner must be a full member of the Creative Skills Training Council, Asia Pacific, an invitation only global on-line community of practice sharing knowledge obtained through practice in creative leadership and creative and innovation skills development. The Creative Skills Training Council is made up of creative practitioners/facilitators, business leaders, academics, designers, artists, behavioural and cognitive scientists recognised globally by their peers as leaders in practise, research or application in this field.

## Contact



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## Member

The Creative Skills Training Council,  
Asia Pacific - [www.cstc-apa.com](http://www.cstc-apa.com).



The Australian Services Roundtable -  
[www.servicesaustralia.org.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.org.au)



### **An Example of Value in Communities of Practice**

Schlumberger oilfield services engineers reaching out for answers by using their «InTouch» system to quickly resolve field problems. Peter Day, InTouch program manager, credits the program with «\$200 million in cost savings and revenue in 2001, along with a 95 percent reduction in the time required to solve difficult operational problems and a 75 percent decrease in the time necessary to update engineering modifications.»