

Communities of practice - reflection on team work

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Communities of Practice - Reflection on team work By Presented to
Communities of Practice - Reflection on team work Communities of Practice
are a recent concept. However, like all good ideas it seems to have caught
on quite fast. There are several reasons why this novelty is now almost a
permanent fixture in organizations around. The main benefit to be drawn
from such units is that, there is an assembly of like minds, who come
together with the purpose of using their knowledge and experiences, to the
benefit of the organization. These organizations cannot function optimally
without the full cooperation and contributions of members. This is what shall
be at the center of this paper. I shall specifically seek to evaluate my role in
a virtual community of practice that I have recently been involved in with a
view to identifying me and my colleagues' contributions to the effectiveness
of the overall group. Finally, I shall explore areas that need change for the
purpose of my future involvement within such groups. The first and
paramount contribution that I made to the group is basically carrying out my
assigned tasks. This is a critical component to the effective functioning of the
group. The reasons are simple. In such a group, a few people are charged
with the task of attending to some obligations. If they fail, they not only let
themselves down, but the whole group too. Remember that most
communities of practice are voluntary groups. It is therefore easy for more
committed members of the group to lose faith with the community because
some members are not taking their responsibilities seriously enough.
Another contribution that I made to the effectiveness of the group is that I
attended meetings religiously. This is very important in a community of
practice. This is where all the ideas are generated. There deserves to be a

committed pool of members who ensure that the community is a success. In addition, a symbolic value can be drawn from such attendances. They cultivate the idea that these groups, although voluntary, do have serious issues to deliberate. This shall create great pulling power and more members shall join. In as far as communities of practice are concerned, the more the merrier (Probst & Borzillo, 2008). When working in a group however, regardless of the amount of exertion that a single member may make, there needs to be contribution from all the members if the exercise is to be a success. My colleagues in this group also made contributions that enhanced the effectiveness of the group. Top of the list is the fact that they are from different backgrounds. Diversity is a strong point when it comes to group dynamics. The members were able to bring knowledge that was specific to the different backgrounds that they were from. There were varied ways of looking at problems and equally varied ways of finding solutions (Lin & Beyerlein, 2006). Another importance that working in a group brings is the varied experiences of the members. This is a very strong point. The members in the group had been exposed to a whole array of situations and so they easily came up with solutions drawn from their experiences. This was a good learning experience for those in the group who had not gone through such experiences themselves. This also provided great entertainment value and an escape from the facts that were otherwise the rule in such meetings. There were personal experiences shared which seem to mean more and more in this digital age (Lin & Beyerlein, 2006). Looking to the future, there are a few adjustments that have to be made in the way that business is conducted, both at the personal and group level to ensure the community is

even more effective. At the personal level, there is a need for me to cultivate friendships that are even more personal with other members. These relationships are high on the priority of other members who attended such community meetings. They realize that there is great enjoyment to be drawn from engaging other members within the same profession and who share similar life experiences. At the group level, there is a need to meet even more regularly. This glue holds the group together. Therefore more meetings need to be scheduled so that the members can get to interact more. There might not be a specific number of meetings scheduled, but there should be a minimum threshold. Because of occupational demands, it was not possible to hold such meetings more often. However, the desire does exist among the members to have even more such meetings. This has to be tapped into to ensure that the members find as much fulfillment as is possible from their interactions in the group (Ardichvili et al., 2003). Largely, existing within a Community of Practice was a hugely fulfilling experience for me. I have to share my knowledge with others and to learn from them. Some of my fondest beliefs were challenged and in the process, the truth came out more clearly. I have discussed in detail above both me, and my colleagues contributions that made the community a great success. These have to be replicated in the future. Not to be ignored however, are the areas that need improvement, which I also discussed. It is time that Communities of Practice were fully harnessed to the benefit of the organization. References Ardichvili, A., Vaughn, P., & Wentling, T. (2003). Motivation and Barriers to participation in virtual knowledge-sharing communities of practice. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 7(1), 64-77. Lin, Y., & Beyerlein, M. (2006). Communities of

practice: a critical perspective on collaboration. *Advances in Interdisciplinary Studies of Work Teams*, 12, 53-79. Probst, G., & Borzillo, S. (2008). Why Communities of practice succeed and why they fail. *European Management Journal*, 26, 335-347. Wenger, E. (2006). Communities of practice: brief introduction. Communities of practice. Retrieved April 2, 2013, from <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/> Wenger, E., & Snyder, B. (2000). Communities of practice: The organizational frontier. *Harvard Business Review*, 78, 139-145. .