Stages of community development

- **Discover/Imagine**
  - Level of energy and visibility
  - Potential

- **Incubate/Deliver Value**
  - Mature

- **Focus/Expand**
  - Sustain

- **Ownership/Openness**
  - Transform

- **Let go/Remember**

**Time**

**Stages of community development**

Stage 1: CoP is Potential

**Task 1: Planning the CoP**

- **Domain**
  - *define* a scope satisfying members & organisation

- **Community**
  - *find* people that could profit by networking & sharing

- **Practice**
  - *identify* common knowledge needs

- **Challenge**
  - *discover* extant networks and their issues
  - *imagine* new possibilities (members, issues, etc.)

*Source: Wenger et al. 2002*
**Planning the CoP - Work plan (a)**

- Determine the primary intent of the Community
  - help each others in everyday work problems
  - develop & disseminate best practices
  - steward tools, insights, approaches for members
  - develop highly innovative ideas

- Define scope and issues of the domain
  - issues important to the business?
  - members passionate about which issues?
  - scope wide enough for new ideas & narrow enough for raising interest

**Planning the CoP - Work plan (b)**

- Build a case for action
- Identify coordinators and thought leaders
- Interview potential members
- Connect Community members
- Create a preliminary design for the Community
Stage 2: CoP is Coalescing

Task 2: Nurturing the CoP

- Domain
  - *establish* the value of sharing knowledge
- Community
  - *develop* relationships and trust
- Practice
  - *discover* what knowledge should be shared and how
- **Challenge**
  - *incubate* trust (does not appear suddenly, emerges step by step from understanding each other)
  - *deliver* immediate value

Source: Wenger et al. 2002

---

*Nurturing the CoP - Work plan (a)*

- Build a case for membership
  - benefits of contributing
  - value of learning from other’s experience
- Launch the Community
  - highly visible event
  - quietly, with little or no fanfare
- Initiate Community events and spaces
  - weekly meetings, teleconferences, Web events
  - establish a sense of familiarity
  - create a rhythm in the member’s everyday life

Source: Wenger et al. 2002
**Nurturing the CoP - Work plan (b)**

- Legitimize Community coordinators
- Build connections between core group members
- Find ideas, insights, practices worth sharing
- Document judiciously
- Identify opportunities to provide value
- Engage managers

**Stage 3: CoP is Maturing**

**Task 3: Coaching the CoP**

- **Domain**
  - *define* role in organisation / relation to other domains
- **Community**
  - *manage* the boundaries (define new, wider)
- **Practice**
  - *organize* the community’s knowledge
- **Challenge**
  - *focus* on internal interests in cutting-edge topics
  - *expand* membership to new members

Source: Wenger et al. 2002
Coaching the CoP - Work plan (a)

- Identify gaps in knowledge and develop a learning agenda
- Define the Community's role in the organization
- Redefine Community boundaries

Coaching the CoP - Work plan (b)

- Routinize entry requirements and processes
- Measure the value of the Community
- Maintain a cutting-edge focus
- Build and organize a knowledge repository
Stage 4: CoP assumes Stewardship  
Task 4: Sustaining CoP's Momentum

- Domain
  - maintain relevance of domain, institutionalize voice
- Community
  - keep tone and focus lively
- Practice
  - keep on the cutting edge
- Challenge
  - ownership: of internally developed tools, methods, ...
  - openness: membership to new members

Source: Wenger et al. 2002

---

Sustaining Momentum - Work plan (a)

- Institutionalizing the voice of the Community
- Rejuvenate the Community
- Hold a renewal workshop

Source: Wenger et al. 2002
**Sustaining Momentum - Work plan (b)**

- Actively recruit new people to the core group
- Develop new leadership
- Mentor new members
- Seek relationships and benchmarks outside the organization

*Source: Wenger et al. 2002*

---

**Stage 5: Transformation**

**Task 5: Closing and Planning**

- Simply fade away
- Die by turning into a social club
- Split into distinct communities
- Merge with others
- Become institutionalized

*Source: Wenger et al. 2002*
Distributed CoP: Distinctive Factors

- **Distance**
  - more difficult to connect
  - members not visible unless they make a contribution

- **Size**
  - more distance can lead to greater size
  - cannot know hundreds of members personally

- **Affiliation**
  - conflicting priorities among senior managers
  - how to deal with intellectual property rights?

- **Culture**
  - communication behavior, misinterpretation of behavior
  - language differences, non-native speakers

Source: Wenger et al. 2002

Distributed CoP: Differences in Structural Elements

- **Domain**
  - greater diversity of viewpoints, needs, expectations
  - fewer opportunities to negotiate these issues
  - more limited number and scope of shared topics

- **Community**
  - fewer opportunities for one-on-one networking
  - more difficult to trust others in different affiliations
  - prefer to connect with others from same culture

- **Practice**
  - more difficult to achieve „craft intimacy“
  - different interpretations of the role of the coordinator
  - more difficult to understand & learn from each other’s practice

Source: Wenger et al. 2002