

SUPSI

Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana

Teilschule der

FERN
FACH
HOCHSCHULE
SCHWEIZ

Community of Practice

Marco Bettoni & Gabriele Schiller

JEKPOT
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

Olbia, 19 giugno 2007

Short biography

Marco Bettoni

- Since 2005 - Research Director at FFHS (Brig): Knowledge Networks, CoP
- 2003-2005 - Researcher at ETH (Zürich): Knowledge Cooperation
- 1991-2004 - Researcher & Lecturer at FHBB (Basel): Knowledge Technologies

Gabriele Schiller

- Since 2006 – Consultant with FFHS (Brig): Vision and CoP
- 1998-today – international consultant: Collaboration
- 1995-1997 – AMD EuropeTeam Distribution MarkCom: Lotus Notes adaption+training+contents

Contents

SUPSI

Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana

FERN
FACH
HOCHSCHULE
SCHWEIZ

Introduction

Theory: Approaches and Definitions

Practice: How to build a CoP

Technology: ICT support for CoPs

Communities of Practice – Part 1



Theory: Approaches and Definitions

A Community of Practice ...

... is a network of people

who share experiences, knowledge, tools

about a topic of common interest.

They develop mutual relationships,

help each other and steward together

the knowledge of that topic.

Knowledge Interactions

In a Community of Practice members ...

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| explain their work | discuss their expectations |
| discuss their needs | solve problems |
| discuss their aspirations | explore common issues |
| share information | create tools |
| share hints & tips | create standards |
| share advices | create generic designs |
| share insights | create generic documents |
| help each other | organize documents |
| consult each other | maintain a Web site |
| discuss their approaches | |

Benefits to the organization

(short-term)

CoP improve business outcomes:

- Arena for problem solving
- Quick answers to questions
- Reduced time and costs of information search
- Improved quality of decisions
- More perspectives on problems
- Coordinate and find synergies across OEs
- More daring in trying new things (risks)
- ...

Benefits to the organization

(long-term)

CoP develop organizational capabilities:

- Execute a strategic plan
- Authority with clients
- Increased retention of talent
- Capacity for KM projects
- Ability to innovate
- Ability to foresee technological developments
- Ability to take advantage of emerging markets
- ...

Benefits to the individual (short-term)

CoP improve experience of work:

- Help with challenges
- Access to expertise
- Better able to contribute to team tasks
- Confidence in one's approach to problem
- Fun of being with colleagues
- More meaningful participation
- Sense of belonging
- ...

Benefits to the individual (long-term)

CoP foster professional development:

- Forum for expanding skills and expertise
- Network for keeping abreast of a field
- Enhanced professional reputation
- Increased marketability and employability
- Strong sense of professional identity
- ...

Costs of a CoP

Roles

- time spent participating, salaries
- training for roles

Activities

- expenses for meetings (f2f, e- or phone-conferences, etc.)

Technology

- enabling infrastructure (forums, workspaces, etc.)

Content

- producing, publishing, maintaining (newsletter, library, DB, summaries, etc.)

[adapted from: Fontaine, M.A. & Millen D. R., 2002]

CoP - Solution to the KM Dilemma

A Network Organisation

... that complements the hierarchy

... where knowledge makes cooperation possible

... where more knowledge allows higher participation

... where higher participation leads to more knowledge sharing

... that places the human being in the centre of KM

... that values both the individual and the social dimension

... that takes ownership of critical knowledge areas ...

is what a CoP can deliver!

Historical retrospect

- 1991 - CoP as *"intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge"*
- 1994 - CoP as unit of analysis in work organization
- 1996 - CoP recognized as "excellent platform for knowledge work"
- 1998 - CoP still unmentioned in mainstream KM
- 1998 - CoP concept systematically developed by Etienne Wenger
- 2000 - Communities and networks recognized as valuable in KM
- 2001 - Organisations increasingly design KM solutions as CoPs
- 2002 - *Cultivating CoPs: A KM Guide* by E. Wenger et al.
- 2004 - Discipline of creating and managing CoPs: *'poorly defined'*
- 2004 - Learning for a Small Planet (research program by E. Wenger)
- 2005 - Knowledge Cooperation (CoP-oriented KM model)
- 2006 - *Community of Research (CoRe)*

CoP examples

- 2007 Research in a university (Bettoni & Bernhard)
- 2006 Oil & gas, aircraft, automotive, construction, research council, financial services (Kazi & Wolf)
- 2004 Virtual Communities for Learning (Barab et al.)
- 2003 Job Families at Volkswagen (Schulz)
- 2003 Employee networks at Achmea (Dignum)
- 2002 Tech Clubs at Daimler Chrysler (Wenger)
- 2002 Airbus, BP, Clarica, Eli Lilly, Ford, HP, IBM, Shell, World Bank (Wenger)
- 2002 Vocational education CoPs for Australian National Training Authority (Mitchell)
- 2000 KM experts at Siemens (Enkel)

Part 1 - Summary

We gathered insight into

Definitions about

- CoPs
- Interactions in CoPs

Benefits – short-term and long-term

- to the company
- to the individual

Costs

- roles – activities – technology – content

CoPs as KM solution

Historical background

Examples