Communities of Practice: An Introduction

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Session Outline

- Intro to Communities of Practice
- Connecting to the MTWC CoP
- Posting Content
What is a Community of Practice?

“Group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly”
- Etienne Wenger, HBR 2000

MTWC CoP is how we will continue to build the community after the Summit.
## CoP Compared to Other Work Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>What holds it together</th>
<th>Time line</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community of Practice</strong></td>
<td>To develop members' capabilities; to build and exchange knowledge</td>
<td>Members select themselves</td>
<td>Passion, commitment and identification with groups' expertise</td>
<td>As long as it makes business sense or there is interest in maintaining the group</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formal work group</strong></td>
<td>To deliver a product or service</td>
<td>Everyone who reports to the group's manager</td>
<td>Job requirements and common goals</td>
<td>Until next reorganization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project team</strong></td>
<td>To accomplish a specified task</td>
<td>Employees assigned by senior management</td>
<td>The project’s milestone and goals</td>
<td>Until the project has been completed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Informal network</strong></td>
<td>To collect and pass on business information</td>
<td>Friends and business acquaintances</td>
<td>Mutual needs</td>
<td>As long as people have a reason to connect</td>
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From *Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier* by Etienne Wenger and William Snyder, Harvard Business Review, February 2000
Why have a Community of Practice?

CoPs are not about bringing knowledge into the community but about helping to grow the internal knowledge of the community.
The value of Communities of Practice

Short-Term Value to Members
• Help with challenges
• Access to expertise
• Confidence
• Fun with colleagues
• Meaningful work

Short-Term Value to MTWC
• Collective Impact
• Knowledge sharing
• Synergies across stakeholders
• Reuse of resources

Long-Term Value to Members
• Personal development
• Reputation
• Professional identity
• Collaborative advantage
• Marketability

Long-Term Value to MTWC
• Innovation
• In-depth knowledge of stakeholders
• Facilitate partnerships
• Sharing best practices
The MTWC Community of Practice

MTWC Role

- Seed participation
- Encourage participation
- Monitor activity metrics
- Monitor success criteria and impact
- Facilitate CoP events

Members’ Role

- Check the Google+ community regularly
- Suggest topics and participate in discussions
- Post content
- Answer questions from other members