

Community of Practice (CoP) Peer Workforce AOD

What is a CoP?

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

Three characteristics are crucial:

The domain: A community of practice is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.

The community: In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other.

The practice: A community of practice is not merely a community of interest—people who like certain kinds of movies, for instance. Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice.

It is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a community of practice. And it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community.

Adapted from: <http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

A Community of Practice (CoP) is:

“Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis”.

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.