



Community of Practice as a Means of Sharing Knowledge, Technology and Lessons Learned

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"an association of seafood professionals"



**NATIONAL
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Nobody knows as much about seafood as you do!

- The people working in this industry each and every day.
- In the harvesting/production, supply and services sectors, in research and development, in universities, private and public labs, and in government.
- Collectively, this group contains a wealth of knowledge - experience, insight, wisdom - that can be leveraged to solve a number of challenges facing the seafood industry today.
- I will focus on how the "Community of Practice" concept can be effectively applied to enable you to share knowledge, technology and lessons learned - to leverage the collective knowledge of the seafood community.



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"An immense and ever-increasing wealth of knowledge is scattered about the world today - knowledge that would probably suffice to solve all the mighty difficulties of our age - but it is dispersed and unorganized. We need a sort of mental clearinghouse for the mind: a depot where knowledge and ideas are received, sorted, summarized, digested, clarified and compared."

- H.G. Wells, 1940



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- Using computers and the Internet (Web) we now have the technology to enable us to realize the vision of H.G. Wells and create “a depot where knowledge and ideas are received, sorted, summarized, digested, clarified and compared.”
- We also have a concept that unites the technology and the people that will use it -

Community of Practice



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Community of Practice - a definition

- **Community of Practice (CoP)** - a phrase coined by researchers who studied ways in which people naturally work and play together.
- In essence, a CoP is group of people who share similar goals and interests.
- In pursuit of these goals and interests, they employ common practices, work with the same tools and express themselves in a common language.
- Through such common activity, they come to hold similar beliefs and value systems. ***What holds them together is a common sense of purpose and a real need to know what each other knows.***



Community of Practice...cont'd

- CoP is a group 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.
- These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions.
- As they spend time together, they share information, insight, and advice.
- They help each other solve problems.
- They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs.
- They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards.



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Community of Practice...cont'd

Looking at the seafood community from a professional development perspective:

- You share concerns about what is happening in the seafood industry and how you can help to improve things.
- You share a set of problems, which is about how to make this industry more sustainable, profitable, and attract more young people.
- You are passionate about what you do and seek others that are equally passionate about what they do.



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A Seafood Professional CoP

- To bring together people in the seafood community that have a real interest in solving the many challenges faced by all of you each and every day.
- The real power of a CoP is in its ability to facilitate contributions from people in the seafood community from all over the globe, enabling you to maximize the use of scarce resources - skilled people, time, and money.
- A CoP is the framework within which each of you can deposit our knowledge and ideas, where you can sort, summarize, digest, clarify and compare them, across distance and time.



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A Seafood Professional CoP

- Allows you to become the stewards of your collective knowledge.
- So that you can share it across distance and time.
- To bring people, experiences and ideas together to solve problems and overcome challenges.
- It's dynamic and interactive, with more information and knowledge being added every day.
- *My challenge is your challenge; your solution is my solution.*



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A Seafood Professional CoP

- Enables you to rapidly build and manage your own knowledge management platform that you could use for a wide variety of personal & professional development objectives.
- Enables you to have discussions on topics or themes and provide a searchable archive for future reference.



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Some CoP Applications

- Compiling & centralizing information that currently resides on personal computers and in the minds of people all over the world.
- Supporting initiatives by people, groups and organizations.
- Distributing news and other timely information to the seafood community all around the world.
- Notifying producers / suppliers / associations / researchers about important issues, news, trends, etc.
- A tool to develop professional knowledge & expertise.
- A means of identifying tasks and delegating responsibilities.
- A tool to help expand your contact network.



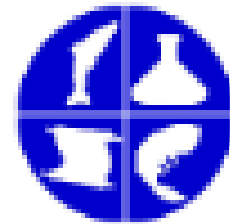
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A Popular CoP Example



Manage your professional identity. Build and engage with your professional network. Access knowledge, insights and opportunities.

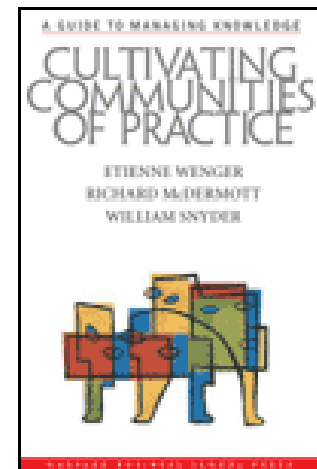
IAFI - an Association of International Seafood Professionals is on **LinkedIn**



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CoP Resources

- Communities of Practice
<http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>
- *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge.* By Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William Snyder, Harvard Business School Press, 2002.



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CoP Software

- Tomoye - The future of communities of practice <http://www.newsgator.com/products/tomoye.aspx>



- iCohere – Online Communities of Practice <http://www.icohere.com/webcommunities.htm>



Conclusion

- Nobody knows as much about seafood as you do.
- You have the knowledge, experience and skills within your community to effectively solve many of the challenges facing you.
- The **Community of Practice** concept, coupled with the power of the Internet, is a vehicle to share and learn from each other – to leverage the knowledge of many.

