Communities of Practice in the US Army

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### What we are about

#### Vision

Every company-level leader worldwide connected in a vibrant conversation about leading and building combat-ready teams.

#### Values

- “Positive Voice” with a focus on solutions
- Passion for Quality
- Committed to the Army
- Innovative & Creative
- “Grass Roots”
What is a CoP?

- Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge in this area by utilizing various resources such as tools, documents, routines and common vocabulary to consistently interact with others.

Wenger

INFED
The Tension

We know what is best. Soldiers will do it our way.

Soldiers need to follow the doctrine.

I do this everyday. I know what I am doing.

The doctrine is outdated. There are better ways now.
Why a CoP?

• Organization must manage their knowledge by closing the second loop in double loop learning

5 years?!?!
Why a CoP?

CoPs are the foundation of a solid Knowledge Management Program
Integrative Learning Model

Emergent
Tacit, Expertise

Hierarchical
Formal, Explicit

Community
of
Practice

Assumption:
The “touch points” of the enterprise know what best practice is.

Assumption:
The Leader/Organization know what best practice is and tell the field to implement.

The power to transform the organization happens when you bring the formal and the informal together!
CoP Foundation

Trust/Relationships/Awareness

Conversation

Purpose

Content  ———  Context
Individual Transfer

Person A
- Tacit Knowledge
- Context
- Conversation

Barrier

Explicit Knowledge

Person B
- Tacit Knowledge
- Context
- Conversation

Information

Content
Discussion is Core

- Its more than document storage
- Connecting people in a vibrant conversation to elicit knowledge
How to Start

- Determine Core Purpose
- Find the Core People
- Gather basic content
- Find Taxonomy of content
- Build slowly with a people centric approach
- Develop method to bring lurkers into the core
The Technical End

• It is not about tools or feature sets. It’s the blending of these tools to connect people in vibrant conversation that is critical.
Army Communities
Technical End

- Good Conversation Engine
- Conversation imbedded throughout the knowledge storage
- Flexible Taxonomy Based Navigation
- Awareness Tool sets
- Manageable and brandable by non-techie
- Flexible storage of Knowledge
- Every thing leads back to real people
Questions

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