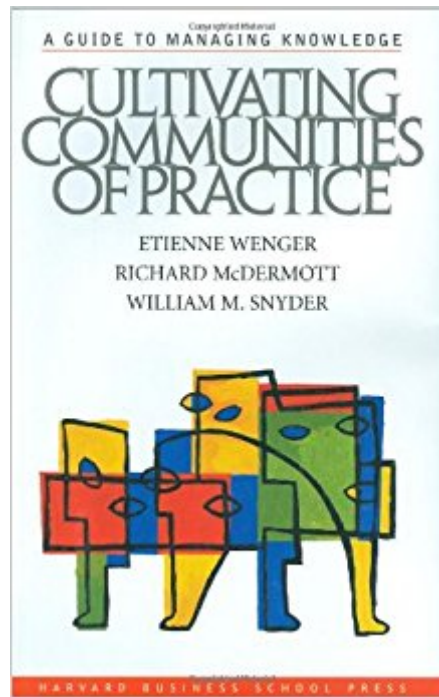


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# Cultivating Communities Of Practice



## Synopsis

Today's economy is fueled by knowledge. Every leader knows this to be true, yet few have systematic methods for converting organizational knowledge into economic value. This book argues that communities of practice--groups of individuals formed around common interests and expertise--provide the ideal vehicle for driving knowledge-management strategies and building lasting competitive advantage. Written by leading experts in the field, *Cultivating Communities of Practice* is the first book to outline models and methods for systematically developing these essential groups. Through compelling research and company examples, including DaimlerChrysler, McKinsey & Company, Shell, and the World Bank, authors Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William M. Snyder show how world-class organizations have leveraged communities of practice to drive strategy, generate new business opportunities, solve problems, transfer best practices, develop employees' professional skills, and recruit and retain top talent. Underscoring the new central role communities of practice are playing in today's knowledge economy, *Cultivating Communities of Practice* is the definitive guide to fostering, designing, and developing these powerful groups within and across organizations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder draw on the past to describe the usefulness of a community of practice. In the Stone Age knowledge was passed on to others while people gathered around a fire and discussed hunting strategies. A community of practice is a group of people who may be trying

to solve a problem and who interact about a topic in order to deepen their knowledge. The aim is shared insight and information. The authors write that in the time of ancient Rome corporations of metalworkers, potters, masons and craftsmen formed communities with a combined business and social function. Moreover, in the Middle Ages artisans formed guilds as a way to share knowledge and experiences. Therefore, the authors argue that community as a basis for knowledge creation and management has a long historical tradition. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder believe that knowledge management needs to become more systematic and deliberate. The authors believe in the collective nature of knowledge, which involves every person contributing their perspective of a problem. A Community of Practice (CoP) allows for the connection of isolated pockets of expertise across an organization. The CoP consists of a domain of knowledge, a community of people and the shared practice they are developing. The community environment allows for interactions, relationships, sharing of ideas and the opportunity to ask difficult questions. The purpose of the CoP is to create, expand and exchange knowledge. The authors believe that a large number of CoP members rarely participate. Instead they watch the interaction and learn from the discussions that occur, learning from them. The authors believe that the most valuable activities consist of informal discussions that occur between members to solve a particular problem.

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