

Communities of Practice
“Communion and Conversation Event”
The Task Force on the Vision and Viability of Middle Governing Bodies
Albuquerque NM
February 14-16, 2007

“Knowing in Action”

Learning is about work, work is about learning, and both are social. The community of practice is the “critical building block of a knowledge-based company,” the place where peers in the execution of real work create and carry competencies of the corporation. Processes don’t do work, people do. The real genius of organizations is the informal, impromptu, often inspired ways that real people solve real problems in ways that formal processes can’t anticipate. When you are competing on knowledge, the name of the game is improvisation, not rote standardization.

John Seely Brown and Estee Solomon Gray
in *Creating a Learning Culture* by Marcia Conner

Community of Practice Challenge:

- Participants:
 - 4 people: A1, A2, B1, B2
 - 6 people: A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3

- 1st Conversation: 2 hours (at a physical table if possible)
 - Possible questions
 - What is the appropriate outcome of my office? (What will be different in 3 years because of my work and my office?)
 - What is the best use of myself, my offices, and my resources to make this happen?
 - What am I willing to try / risk?

- Conversation Rounds: 1 hour phone conversations between pairs of people
 - Task: to argue, test, witness, internalize, challenge, change

 - 4 people: 3 conversations each

A1 A2	B1 B2;
A1 B1	A2 B2
A1 B2	A2 B1

 - 6 people: 3 conversations each

A1 B1	A2 B2	A3 B3
A1 B2	A2 B3	A3 B1
A1 B3	A2 B1	A3 B2

- 2nd Conversation: 2 hours (at a physical table if possible)
 - What have we done? What have we learned? What do we tell others?

- Repeat?