Communities of Practice: Facilitation and Governance

12 – 23 July 2027
Washington DC (USA)

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Communities of Practice: Facilitation and Governance

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Communities of Practice: Facilitation and Governance is a two-week course for the people who lead, sponsor or steward practitioner networks inside an organization. You learn to run sessions that draw out expertise, write a charter with clear decision rights, operate digital and multi-site groups and report impact to sponsors. You leave with your own Charter and Facilitation Playbook. The course is delivered by Mercury Training Center.

About This Course

Many practitioner groups start with energy and fade within months: nobody owns decisions, meetings drift, experts stop contributing and sponsors cannot see the value. You should already coordinate a cross-team group or own an expertise area. You practice on charter drafts, facilitation rehearsals, platform setups and impact reports.

Who It Is For

- Staff who convene and facilitate a network of practitioners across teams or sites.
- Specialists who hold expertise in a field and steward its standards and lessons.
- Managers who sponsor a network, fund it and expect results from it.
- HR, talent and training staff who link peer networks to development and succession.
- Digital workplace staff who run the platforms where these groups meet online.

This course is not for newcomers who want a first introduction to what a community of practice is, who are better served by a shorter foundation course. It also does not suit project teams with a fixed deliverable and deadline, who need a team leadership or project management course instead.

Competencies You Will Build

- Session Facilitation: you run a meeting where experts share cases, challenge each other and agree on a next step.
- Charter Design: you write purpose, scope, roles and decision rights that the sponsor signs.
- Role Clarity: you set out what sponsors, coordinators, core contributors and occasional participants each do.
- Digital Stewardship: you set up and moderate an online space so that answers are found and reused.
- Impact Reporting: you show sponsors value through stories, activity data and business indicators.
- Scaling Judgment: you decide when to split, merge, federate or close a group.

What You Will Be Able to Do

By the end of the course you will be able to:

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- Given a silo problem between departments, define the domain, the target participants and the first three activities of a new network.
- From a declining group's activity record, diagnose why contribution dropped and plan a relaunch.
- Using a stakeholder map, secure a sponsor and agree what the network will report and when.
- Given a conflict between senior experts, run a structured conversation that ends with an agreed position or a recorded difference.
- From a set of tacit know-how held by retiring staff, select capture methods and a home for the results.
- Using a value-creation framework, build an impact report that a sponsor can act on.

Course Content

Day 1: Foundations and Types of Practitioner Networks

- Wenger's Domain, Community and Practice Model Applied to Workplace Groups
- History of the Concept and Its Use in Organizations
- Network Types: Helping, Best-Practice, Innovation and Knowledge-Stewarding
- Characteristics of Healthy Groups Versus Teams and Committees
- Role in Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning

Day 2: Launching a Network

- Domain Definition and Problem Statement for a New Group
- Participant Mapping and Recruitment of Founding Contributors
- Sponsor Pitch and Securing Leadership Support
- First-Ninety-Days Activity Plan
- Launch Event Design and Early Wins

Day 3: Charters and Decision Rights

- Charter Template: Purpose, Scope, Boundaries and Deliverables
- Decision Rights and Accountability Matrix
- Governance Models by Maturity Stage
- Alignment With Organizational Policy, Culture and Information Rules
- Charter Review and Sign-Off With the Sponsor

Day 4: Roles and Responsibilities

- Sponsor, Coordinator, Core Group and Periphery Roles
- Facilitator Role Description and Time Allocation
- Subject Matter Expert Stewardship of Standards and Lessons
- Recognition of Contributions and Career Linkage
- Succession Planning for Coordinators

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Day 5: Facilitation Techniques

- Peer Assist and After-Action Review Sessions
- Case Clinics and Structured Problem-Solving Rounds
- Psychological Safety and Inclusive Participation
- Handling Dominant Voices and Silent Participants
- Conflict Resolution Between Senior Experts

Day 6: Leadership and Influence

- Leading Without Formal Authority
- Mentoring, Coaching and Peer Learning Pairs
- Trust Building Across Departments and Sites
- Stakeholder Communication and Newsletters
- Sustaining Engagement and Celebrating Results

Day 7: Digital and Hybrid Networks

- Platform Selection for Discussion, Documents and Search
- Moderation Rules and Online Etiquette
- Tagging, Curation and Findability of Answers
- Hybrid Meeting Design for Distributed Members
- Engagement Problems in Online Spaces and Their Fixes

Day 8: Change, Innovation and Tacit Know-How

- Linking Networks to Change and Transformation Initiatives
- Idea Pipelines and Continuous Improvement Through Peer Groups
- Tacit Know-How Capture From Retiring Experts
- Integration With Talent Management and Training Plans
- Readiness for Future Technology and Work Patterns

Day 9: Measuring Value and Scaling

- Wenger-Trayner Value-Creation Framework for Impact Stories
- Activity Metrics, Feedback Surveys and Business Indicators
- Sponsor Reporting and Continuous Improvement Plans
- Scaling Across Regions, Units and Sites
- Deciding to Split, Merge, Federate or Close a Group

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Day 10: Facilitation and Governance Practice

- Exercise: Drafting the Charter for Your Own Network
- Exercise: Facilitating a Peer Assist With Feedback
- Exercise: Building an Impact Report for a Sponsor
- Relaunch Plan for a Declining Group
- Completing Your Charter and Facilitation Playbook

Case Studies and Exercises

The following are suggested activities.

- Case study: Engineers across several oil and gas sites solve the same equipment problems separately; you design the network that links them and decide its governance.
- Case study: A hospital nursing practice group has lost participation; you diagnose the cause and decide on a relaunch or closure.
- Exercise: For a public sector agency with many retiring specialists, you select methods to capture their know-how.
- Exercise: For a bank's risk analysts spread across branches, you set up a digital space and its moderation rules.

What You Take Back

You return with your Charter and Facilitation Playbook, built for a network you lead or plan to start. In your first month back you use it to agree the charter with your sponsor, run the next session to a set format and send the first impact report.

- A charter ready for sponsor sign-off, with decision rights.
- Role descriptions for sponsor, coordinator and core group.
- Session formats for peer assists and case clinics.
- An impact report template with indicators.

Quick Answers FAQ

What do I need before Communities of Practice: Facilitation and Governance?

You need to coordinate, sponsor or support a group of practitioners, or be about to. Basic familiarity with what a community of practice is helps; the course moves quickly to charters, roles, facilitation and reporting.

How does CoP facilitation and governance training differ from an introductory community of practice course?

An introductory course explains the idea and how to start a group. Facilitation and governance training covers running sessions, setting decision rights, operating digital and multi-site groups and proving value to sponsors over time.

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Why do communities of practice fail after launch?

Most fade because nobody owns decisions, sessions lack a format, contributors get no recognition and sponsors see no evidence of value. A charter, clear roles, regular facilitated sessions and simple impact reporting address each cause.

What do I take back from community of practice governance training?

You take back a Charter and Facilitation Playbook for your own network: charter, role descriptions, session formats and an impact report template, ready to agree with your sponsor.

For Your Manager

After this course the team member can set up and govern a practitioner network, facilitate sessions that surface expertise and report the network's value in terms a sponsor can use. They bring back a Charter and Facilitation Playbook, first used to agree the charter with the sponsor and run the next network session.

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