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Facilitation Guide for Cultivating Communities of Practice



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FACILITATION GUIDE FOR CULTIVATING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

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ISSUES FACED BY JKR :

1. **Knowledge in JKR is in silos.** It is stored in repositories known only to some and only available to selected individuals. Access then becomes an issue.
2. **Critical knowledge within individuals gets 'lost'** when they leave the organisation or retire. Meaningless effort is spent in recreating the lost knowledge.
3. **Workers who need "just in time" knowledge are unable to know who has what knowledge.** Connecting to a right person to impart experience or advice becomes a challenge.
4. **Valuable contributions to knowledge sharing & transfer cannot be forced.** Top management faces this challenge even if they can allocate employees to knowledge sharing activities, or assign them to dedicated projects and instruct them to contribute their knowledge to their organisation;

The solution lies in creating a knowledge enabling environment for people to share their experiences and in establishing special methods for identifying, creating, storing, sharing and using the kind of knowledge that is often not documented.

By cultivating Communities of Practice in the organisation -

- People who seek knowledge will get to 'learn' from the SMEs and peers;
- People will know **who has what knowledge and where** it is stored;
- Knowledge can be **immediately accessed** via online tools;
- How the knowledge was conceptualised will be **transparent to all**; and
- The valuable contributions to the organisation's knowledge base can be **shared and applied**.

1. JKR COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (CoP) TOOLKIT SET

A set of toolkit has been designed to guide in creating and cultivating communities of practices (CoPs), and in implementing and sustaining a knowledge sharing environment in JKR. The toolkit set comprises the following-

- i. **CoP facilitation guide:** a guide for CoP facilitators (the how-to manual). Facilitators need this guide to facilitate a CoP workshop and face-to-face meetings;
- ii. **CoP Training module:** the lesson plan and syllabus of CoP awareness course, the objectives, learning outcome, course programme details (topics covered, duration of each topic), mode of delivery and resources required; and the
- iii. **CoP Starter kit:** a guide for those who want to start a CoP domain, what should they know about CoP, how it can benefit them, what skill they must have, and what they need to do to ensure it can be sustained.
- iv. **Online CoP (JCoP) user guide:** a guide to use the online tool to interact with CoP members

The set of toolkit can be downloaded from JPedia (epsmg.jkr.gov.my). In addition, the CoP toolkit developed by MAMPU can also be referred to.



2. FACILITATION GUIDE

The Facilitation Guide is designed to assist in facilitating a CoP workshop with people who are from the same domain of knowledge, interested and willing to meet on a regular basis to resolve issues pertaining to their practices. In order to conduct this workshop, you will need to make clear to all participants:

- Why you are having a meeting or
- What problems they need to resolve.

To have a successful session where opinions and thoughts are shared, the leader and/or facilitator must prepare for the meeting to produce an effective dialogue that will deliver meaning. The checklist below serves to guide the facilitator on the preparations that need to be done.

a. Facilitator's Checklist

No.	Activity	Detail
1.	A dialogue with the Stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the areas they want to resolve in the domain 2. Who should be part of the core group of the communities. All are welcome to be part of the CoP's inner or outer circle. 3. Gather opinions of the proposed agenda 4. Determine the source of knowledge assets to build the Domain
2.	The CoP Workshop Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare the Workshop Plan 2. Plan on how to know the Communities (SMEs, Practitioners and the Novices) 3. Work out the Event Logistics 4. Prepare the Collateral (Guides & Knowledge Capture Sheets) 5. Prepare workshop briefing slides and scripts 6. Research on Organisational Learning Models 7. Determine the Domain Taxonomy 8. Build the Promotion Strategy
3.	Promoting the CoP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Send Agenda and Objectives of the Workshop 2. Promote the benefits of building the Domain 3. Identify influential parties on the benefits of building the communities and enlist their help as connectors 4. Connectors know a Lot of people and are able to bring in new ideas to the Communities
4.	At the Discussion Forums	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present the Agenda and the Objectives of the Workshop 2. Discuss the Deliverables of the Workshop 3. Walkthrough the sessions and the visual aids 4. Promote the capturing of discussions via Knowledge Capturing Sheets or Online Tools (eg: GoogleDocs) 5. Identify What, determine How and Where and seek opinions on issues explored. 6. Use the Online CoP to 'capture' the conversations 7. Present the issues captured and explain the road map of what is going to happen next.
5.	The Workshop Takeaways	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the issues with the Domain Experts 2. Persuade the Domain Experts to validate the issues posted by the participants. 3. Highlight the issues to communities and seek solution to the issues

b. Planning the Workshop

1. An area to consider is whether or not the intended result is best achieved by conducting a pre-workshop meeting with selected stakeholders (the core group).
 - Design a draft agenda to serve as guide to initiate discussions.
 - Determine the purpose for the session with the team.
 - The purpose of the meeting needs to be clear to both the facilitator and the participants.
 - Opinions and other alternatives will be discussed and be prepared for change if necessary.
 - Create the CoP agenda based on feedbacks, which comprises clear and concise areas to be discussed and planned outcomes for each session.
2. In order to effectively facilitate this workshop:
 - Design the hand-outs according to the session and must have a thorough knowledge of the material contained in the hand-outs. Must be prepared to actively contribute by posing and answering questions.
 - Read other material on the topic of discussion (domain) prior to the dialogue to enhance knowledge of the subject.
 - Take the information contained in the research and use it to develop briefing and presentations.
 - Design 'knowledge capture sheets' for the participants to record their points of discussions.
 - Must be skilled in group facilitation and have a variety of facilitation tools at hand such as Discussion Guide and the Knowledge café technique.
 - Have a clear understanding of what the participants want to accomplish by the end of the workshop and the means to guide the group to this end.
3. In order to ensure a productive workshop, it is important to enlist a selected interest group to be the right communities and creating a need for people to come for these workshops. Workshop participants may come from a wide range of experiences and divisions. They may be:
 - ✓ **Knowledge Donors :**
 - Communities members who are interested in 'fixing things' (finding solution) and communities development and want to explore the concept and share their ideas;

- Practitioners who wish to meet up with other practitioners and share experiences and acquire new knowledge; or
 - ✓ **Knowledge Seekers :**
 - Newcomers who wish to learn from the discussions and shared experiences in the workshops.
 - Identify **key stakeholders** as a part of the solution and not the problem. A successful dialogue will include a diversity of people who have a substantial interest in the 'productivity' welfare of your communities.
 - Effectively remove yourself as a facilitator or leader of the discussion and build a rapport with the group. If the participants see you as a participant, you will become a person rather than someone who has been formally attached to the discussions.
4. The facilitator must be responsible to make sure that all logistical arrangements are made for the workshop, either doing it yourself or confirming that someone else has made all the necessary arrangements associated with the workshop. Assume nothing! Double check all arrangements.
 5. An ideal workshop group is between **20 and 25 participants**. This will ensure there are sufficient feedback and ideas on the discussion to problems or issues that are raised.
 6. An often overlooked item is the **meeting space**.
 - If participants are uncomfortable with the set-up of the space, then dialogue will be diminished. The meeting planner must identify an appropriate location and be in charge of the room arrangement.
 - Round shape design of tables often is the most effective arrangement as it allows for face-to-face attention for all the participants. It brings out the **informal environment** to the discussion.
 7. **Workshop Supplies** to consider -
 - flip chart stand(s) and paper,
 - marking pens & masking tape,
 - pens and paper for the participants,
 - Post-it notes or stickers for exercises and
 - copies of any hand-outs to be used.

- Laptop computer and projector if possible
 - Take a snapshot of the flip chart to be circulated to the participants if necessary.
8. The interests of participants and the time that is available will **determine the issues** that are explored in a particular workshop and the **depth** of this exploration. The recommended minimum time for a workshop is **three and a half hours**. Less time than this will make it very difficult to explore issues and processes in a participatory and interactive manner. However, experience suggests that the majority of people will be interested in a one- or two-day workshop.
9. Regardless of the length of the workshop, every workshop should consist of the following parts:
- An introduction or briefing,
 - A review of the purpose of the workshop and of participant expectations,
 - A series of topic overviews and exercises,
 - Identification of issues and discussion of those issues, and
 - A closeout consisting of the completion of a session evaluation and development of next steps.

c. Conducting the Workshop

(Refer to Page 11 : for sample workshop slides)

1. The sharing of experiences in a CoP is a voluntary process and cannot be forced upon the knowledge contributor. Hence an important part of the dialogue process is to realize that individuals will get different takes on the meeting, and it will be up to you to make sure that all members benefit from the outcomes of the discussions. Sessions like these are mostly reciprocal in nature.
- Set the tone of the meeting or dialogue by personally greeting as many of the participants as you can.
 - Light refreshments would soften the tone as well. Make sure that you have a sign-up sheet at the entrance to be able to get information that will surely assist you in follow-up meetings.
 - Help people feel comfortable, communicate to the participants that their presence will go a long way in building trust and ultimately, commitment.
 - The first dialogue is geared toward discussing the outcomes of the previous workshops. It will be important for the participants to begin to work through a gallery walk to identify areas of discussion at the previous workshops.
 - To trigger active discussion, visual aids (in the form of large worksheets) of the 'captured' discussions that had taken place and the outcomes can be pasted on

- the wall. This can create more in-depth views and opinions of the issues being discussed and form a catalyst in building the knowledge base.
- “Checking in” by asking simple questions to help set the tone. Questions like, “Why is this meeting important to you?” or “What needs to happen here today for this meeting to be a success?” may be useful. “Checking out” by repeating the same question as feedback for future development and also an evaluation of the success of the meeting.
2. Now that you have set up the meeting and everyone is comfortable, how will you treat the people during the meeting? Here are a few simple tips to remember when trying to carry on conversations with professional adults who have come to the meeting.
- If people are going to invest their time in what is usually a very busy schedule, then they will want to know what kind of benefit they will get by attending this meeting.
 - One of the first tasks for a facilitator/leader will be to show what tangible or direct benefits the participants will gain with the knowledge they acquire from the meeting. Strategies and innovation are often developed based upon the input from this type of dialogue.
 - As busy as all of our schedules are, we have a desire to take care of our own. This comes from a lifetime of managing our own lives. Small group discussions will often allow participants to use a question that is posed to them and develop a list of responses to bring back to their respective communities.
 - This way, the learning curve allows responsibility in their statements and actions during the dialogue.
 - Practitioners participating in the dialogue will most likely come to the meeting with a lifetime of professional experiences. No two people will match exactly.
 - The facilitator will need to know how to take the wealth of experience that these people have and make it productive for the meeting.
 - Before beginning a strategic process, it may be useful to ask the group how many of them have ever participated in strategic planning methods and which particular method they are comfortable with.
 - From the show of hands, allow some time for these people to share their stories. This will make sure that the process you are beginning is rooted through the experience of the group and not some outside unrelated and boring lecture.



**Communities of
Practice :
Turning
Conversations into
Collaboration**

d. Documenting the Workshop Take-away

1. Capturing the experience and various scenarios in the form of worksheets or other knowledge capturing devices like an online CoP will be crucial for building the knowledge repository and provide a source of reference for the practitioners who were not able to attend the face-to-face sessions but are able to access the discussion threads and outcomes of these sessions.
2. Participants must acknowledge that the CoP functions as a tool to create an environment where experts, practitioners and novices come together to share and acquire new knowledge and at the same time build new contacts.



3. HOW TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL FACILITATION

□ **Adults Want to Learn and Are Motivated by Internal and External Forces.**

- Adults want to learn, yet they feel they are being told what to do in many meetings they attend. The facilitator must present the dialogue in such a way that it promotes a benefit to the participants.
- If the individual who is invited can take at least one piece of the dialogue home with them, learning will have been confirmed.
- Youth often equate learning with memorizing materials to pass a test, whereas adults only learn if they view the learning as it applies in their professional lives.
- With communities development dialogue, how does the material fit with them? This is the question that should be the premise of the conversation.

□ **External Forces or the 'Form'**

- External forces that will motivate the discussions will be such items as communities celebrations, success stories in project implementation, launching a new innovation/product etc. While all of these are powerful forces, they will only remain as long as the need exists. Once the need has been satisfied, the external forces cease.

□ **Internal Forces or the 'Substance'**

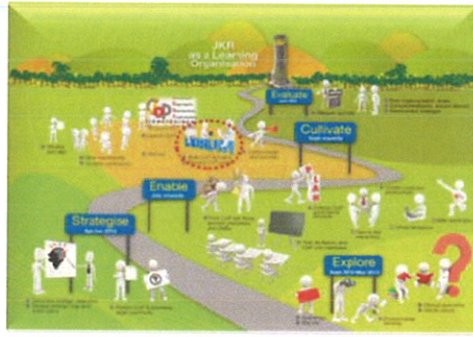

- Internal forces are far greater and manifest themselves in such things as self-esteem, achievement, competition, and accomplishments. The secret to conducting successful dialogues in the communities will be to appeal to the participants' internal needs and to work towards enriching their knowledge and professional lives.

□ **Success Factors**

- The key to the success of these dialogues is to listen to what the communities has to say.
- Materials can be used to stimulate the discussion, but no two communities will be alike. This is what makes these conversations genuine and, in most cases, unrehearsed.
- Building your communities to be able to solve problems carries a tremendous advantage.
- These are the communities that get the competitive edge in the organisation and in the social sectors.
- People like to work in a place where other people care.

Sample Slides for Domain Creation Forum:

No	Slide	Details
1.		A brief on the background of building the CoP program for JKR. Describe the activities (QUEST 1 – QUEST 7) that took place and what was achieved.
2.		<p>Explain the QUEST Dashboard and how the elements were established in order to build the CoP strategy Map for JKR.</p> <p>The QUEST program will be re-aligned to monitor and evaluate the CoP programme.</p>
3.		Elaborate on what JCoP is and how JCoP is going to assist the communities in sharing experiences and acquiring new ideas
4.		Briefly explain the CoP Milestones, the achievements and where we are heading to.

No	Slide	Details		
5.		Present the JCoP Journey in a 'rich picture format'		
6.	<p>PROGRAM OBJECTIVES</p> <div><div><p>1</p><p>Re-align the issues in the Domain (add, edit, merge, discard)</p><p>↓</p><p>Discuss & determine</p><p>Issues</p></div><div><p>2</p><p>Use JCoP: The Online CoP</p><p>↓</p><p>Capture and organize</p></div></div>	<p>Explain the programme objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Add, edit, merge, discard issues that were introduced2. Introduce JCoP as the online CoP to be utilised as a tool to 'capture conversations'		
7.	<p>Session 1 : 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM</p> <table><tr><td><p>Session 1 :</p><p>QUEST Brainstorming Labs: Issue Alignment</p></td><td><ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will analyse the issues one area at a time.2. Add, Merge, Edit or Discard issues that were raised by the participants at all the workshops</td></tr></table>	<p>Session 1 :</p> <p>QUEST Brainstorming Labs: Issue Alignment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will analyse the issues one area at a time.2. Add, Merge, Edit or Discard issues that were raised by the participants at all the workshops	<p>Activities For Session 1 :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will be grouped according to sub-domains2. Participants will analyze the issues (edit, add, merge or discard) the issues.
<p>Session 1 :</p> <p>QUEST Brainstorming Labs: Issue Alignment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will analyse the issues one area at a time.2. Add, Merge, Edit or Discard issues that were raised by the participants at all the workshops			
8	<p>Session 2 : 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM</p> <table><tr><td><p>Session 2 :</p><p>JCoP : The Online CoP to share and acquire new knowledge</p></td><td><ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will be introduced to JCoP2. The functionalities of JCoP3. How to use JCoP4. View and edit Profile5. Change password6. Enter issues : Post7. View, modify your issues</td></tr></table>	<p>Session 2 :</p> <p>JCoP : The Online CoP to share and acquire new knowledge</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will be introduced to JCoP2. The functionalities of JCoP3. How to use JCoP4. View and edit Profile5. Change password6. Enter issues : Post7. View, modify your issues	<p>Activities For Session 2 :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will be introduced to JCoP2. The functionalities3. How to use JCoP4. How to register and edit profile5. How to post issues6. How to respond to the issues
<p>Session 2 :</p> <p>JCoP : The Online CoP to share and acquire new knowledge</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will be introduced to JCoP2. The functionalities of JCoP3. How to use JCoP4. View and edit Profile5. Change password6. Enter issues : Post7. View, modify your issues			

No	Slide	Details
9	<div><div>Session 3 (50 min) : 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM</div><div><div>Session 3 : JCoP : The Online CoP to share and acquire new knowledge</div><div><div>1. Participants will respond to issues</div><div>2. Build the Domain Threads</div><div>3. Explore the practices</div></div></div></div>	<p>Activities For Session 3 :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Participants will commence posting issues2. Explore the existing issues and respond to them

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