

Communities of Practice Guide



PHASE #3: GROW

By this phase you already have a general sense of who your CoP members are, the overall vision and purpose of your CoP and you have designed some activities and modes of communication. Now that there is a general sense of rhythm, it's time to consider expanding!

Grow your community culture

Before thinking too much about expansion, you may want to consider what it is you are expanding.

- What is your CoP culture? The tone?
- Which members are engaged in the activities and communications that have been designed? How are they engaged?
- How are your CoP members viewed by non-members?

Notes:

Grow your CoP Brand

Given your response to the questions above, it may be helpful to consider a CoP brand/image. No matter how large or small your group, any group will benefit from a professional name or logo. It will strengthen the presence of your group both internally and to an external audience. Remember, if you are in a thriving CoP, this can be added to your resume or C.V. A brand or image will help legitimize your group to the general public. Creating a brand or image will communicate both your CoP vision to your audience (non-members) and help establish a shared identity/purpose for your CoP members.

- Are members of your group fun/playful/energetic? Or are your shared interests more serious?
- How does your brand/image share this?

Notes:

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Grow your CoP membership

Now that you're thinking about a brand/image for your CoP, consider who you'd like to recruit using this brand/image.

- How will potential members learn about your CoP?
- What would you like them to know about your CoP?
- How do new members join? Become oriented?
- How do new members move into leadership roles?

Smaller groups may want to use word-of-mouth to expand, or perhaps post flyers in areas where you think potential new members may spend their time (bulletin boards, elevators, etc.). Larger groups may want to post advertisements in journals or magazines of similar or tangential topics. Don't forget, once new members join, you will want to engage them right away in activities and communications. How do they learn what it means to be a member? How do they learn about potential leadership roles in your CoP?

Notes:



*Like a local neighborhood,
dynamic communities are rich
with connections that happen
both in the public places of the
community and the private
space of community members*
—Cultivating Communities of
Practice