INVESTORS / LEADERS / SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Identify potential sponsors, SMEs, mentors and young leaders for the CoP.

Get support from top management as the sponsor & to suggest useful executive action for young leaders. Officially appoint SMEs and mentors for advices and guidance.

SMEs are the backbone bringing specialized knowledge often pivotal in addressing and resolving intricate challenges. Senior professionals as mentor, with their years of experience serve as beacons for newer members. Young leaders positioned at the crossroads of strategy and execution, often offer an unique vantage point.

Operational Leadership: Social Learning Team

WHAT

Organizations that have adopted a strategy of systematically cultivating communities of practice have found that people who take leadership in their communities can usually use some help. These organizations have established a special team for this purpose. We call it a social learning team.

WHY

Organizationally, the location of a social learning team can be significant. It is best for it to report to a part of the organization where communities of practice are valued for their strategic contributions and where the work of the team is strongly supported, legitimized, and if needed, protected by management.

HOW

The aim of this team is to run the initiative, take a lead in integrating it in the organization, and provide a "one-stop shop" for people who lead or want to lead communities of practice. Their role includes responsibilities at three levels, which are outlined in the table below.

Typical responsibilities for the social learning team in the initiative

Role in the initiative	Responsibilities of the social learning team
LEAD THE INITIATIVE	• Be the voice of communities, including at times putting up arguments or even fighting for them when there is resistance in some organizational contexts • Find, educate, support, and coach sponsors

	• Help connect communities with sponsors and negotiate expectations and accountability • Liaise with relevant organizational structures such as HR or IT as well as relevant other initiatives • Create links across communities when appropriate • Drive value-creation assessment and coordinate dissemination and reporting processes
PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	• Educate people about communities of practice • Provide training and coaching to community leaders • Help with community launch and renewal, agenda design, facilitation • Document guidelines and tips • Integrate ongoing assessment into community learning
ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURAL ISSUES	• Steward the optimal use of technology, both tools and practices, for community needs and activities • Work with IT to ensure that needed technology is available • Help work out logistics for community meetings (e.g., meeting rooms, travel, etc.