



CONVENE & CONNECT

Convening is the art of bringing the community (of practice) and relevant stakeholders together to connect members and engage them in meaningful conversations. The diversity of a community and a risk-free and inclusive environment help develop conversations and engage members.

Start small, create the conducive environment to convene and network people.

Proper community management to ensure diversity of views, prioritize equity for access to opportunities and resource and where everyone feels they belong and can actively participate.

Diversified, equity and inclusiveness environment where there is diverse representation, fairness and everyone feel valued and heard.

Activities oriented to developing the practice – Mutual Benchmarking

WHAT

Mutual Benchmarking

Members are usually curious about what others do and how well they do it. Mutual benchmarking is a way to formalize this curiosity and possibly even to use it as a baseline for tracking the value the community is creating, often over a longer period.

WHY

To bring the overall performance of the community to the level of the best.

HOW

The simplest way for a community to develop standards of practice is to compare member performance across situations, teams, sites, business units, or geographical regions. This seemingly obvious activity is not all that common because it requires a lot of trust, a mature community committed to collective learning, and a supportive environment. It is important to view this activity as a learning activity rather than an assessment so that no one is tempted to “play the numbers” or otherwise try to look good.

Variations

Dimensions of practice. One way to help keep the focus on learning is to assess

performance along more than one dimension of the practice. This defines multiple learning areas. Dimensions with a large performance gap between the strongest and the weakest are likely indicators of high learning potential. Multiple dimensions also tend to create more reciprocal learning relationships. Organizations that have adopted multidimensional mutual benchmarking have found that units are almost never good at everything and that most units are good at something. So everyone has something to learn from someone else.

Models of practice. Some communities have taken the process even further. They have established a model of practice that describes what performance looks like in each dimension of the practice on a spectrum from beginner to advanced, to world class. Models of practice can be useful tools for mutual benchmarking because they provide a language for discussing and comparing performance. They also enable self-assessment, which can seem less threatening—with a good sense of what their learning trajectory from there is going to look like. These models of practice include maturity scales and delineate fairly clear developmental paths. They are most suitable to practices that are well established and slow to change because the assumption of stable maturity scales can miss important innovations.