



SUSTAINABILITY & RENEWAL

Renewal of members and knowledge ensures continued relevance, adapting to changing needs. Ensures that the CoP sustain the rhythm of the community and drive the community knowledge forward and evolving it, keeping it dynamic and sustainable over time.

- Establish core team for future planning, allowing natural departure from the original goals, maintaining the rhythm of the community allowing exit of members and new recruits to join naturally.
- In addition to managing members, renewal of knowledge ensures continued relevance of the community knowledge, adapting to changing needs. This will ensure that the CoP drive the knowledge forward and evolving it, keeping it dynamic and sustainable over time.

Sustaining the Community: Newcomer

WHAT

Make sure that newcomers are welcome, in particular when they question the unquestioned. Encourage interactions with people within and outside the community, including other practices. Mentor newcomers to help them get up to speed quickly.

WHY

One sign of a healthy community is the way that it treats its newcomers while meeting the need of existing members. Newcomers bring fresh perspectives and question taken-for-granted assumptions; but they can also bring the conversation to a lower level.

Old-timers need to find value in the community for themselves. You do not want people who have been there for a long time to feel that they are only revisiting old themes or known issues.

The community must address cutting-edge issues that excite them. If they lose interest, the community will likely lose its legitimacy. Some communities have set minimum “entry levels” for community members, for instance by requiring people to who have, say, completed the basic training course in the domain.

Other communities make a point of calling on members with deep expertise only when there is something of specific interest they can contribute to, without expecting them to participate in everything.

HOW

Different ways to ensure that newcomers find their way into a community without distracting it include:

- Establish a “welcome wagon,” a group of members whose role is to welcome newcomers. They make sure newcomers understand how the community work and how to fully benefit from and contribute to it—and they make sure the community is responsive.
- Create a buddy system pairing newcomers with existing members. This will help newcomers become part of the community and will answer their questions so that the community can focus on cutting-edge issues.
- Hold special sessions before a meeting where newcomers hear the history and defining of the community.
- Generate a “Frequently Asked Questions” section about the issues the community has addressed so far.

All aboard the Welcome Wagon!

Each of our communities are encouraged to hold Welcome Wagon events at least twice a year, either as part of our broader awareness campaign or at any time they choose.

At these exciting events, the community pauses their regular activities and helps new members orient themselves in the community, going “back to basics,” helping people understand what to expect from being involved and ways they can contribute. It’s a powerful way to help people to “find a home,” especially given the remote or hybrid working environment that prevails in the post-COVID world.

The event itself is informal in nature, and we provide a structured community lead training module and guide to follow, to make it easier to understand both the principles and practices of the Welcome Wagon.

The benefits of intentionally opening the doors to welcome new members to the community are not to be underestimated. Often it results in an injection of new momentum, ideas, and volunteerism that sustain its vibrancy.

Twice each year, we issue a call to action for all of our communities to consider hosting a Welcome Wagon, so that we can open the doors to many communities at once!