Stronger Together
Anne Bialachowski, Past President, CHICA-Canada
Broadcast from Infection Prevention Society (www.ips.uk.net) annual conference

Objectives
- Describe how we can be stronger together through Communities of Practice (CoP)
- Describe the benefits of CoPs
- Provide tips and tools to work effectively & Renew your enthusiasm for Collaboration

Why Collaborate?
- To build strong infection prevention and control programs and societies
- To learn from each other
- To create a sense of connectedness and relevance

Communities of Practice
- Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better "
  (E. Wenger, 2004)

Where have CoPs been used before?
- International banks
- Car manufacturers
- Government agencies
- Healthcare

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**Why aren't they more prevalent?**
- The primary "output"- knowledge- is intangible
- It is not easy to build and sustain communities of practice
- Organizations need to support and nurture them

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**3 Crucial Characteristics of a CoP**
1. The Domain
2. The Community
3. The Practice

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**The Domain (Passion)**
- An area of interest
- Shared Commitment
- Competence that distinguishes members from other people

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**The Community (Members)**
- Build relationships to learn from each other
- Engage in joint activities and decisions
- Help each other and share information

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**The Practice (Where the Rubber hits the road)**
- Members are practitioners
- They develop a shared repertoire of resources (experience, stories, tool)
- It takes time and shared interaction

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**Typical Activities of a Community of Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Can we work on this issue and brainstorm some ideas; I am stuck.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Information</td>
<td><em>Where can I find.....</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking experience</td>
<td><em>Has anyone dealt with this situation before?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Typical Activities of a Community of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination and synergy</td>
<td>Can we combine our purchasing to get the best discount?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing Developments</td>
<td>“Have you seen the new IP&amp;C best practice document on...?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>Can we come and see your ...? We need to establish this program at our facility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Activity</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-using Assets</td>
<td>I have a business case I wrote last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping Knowledge and Identifying gaps</td>
<td>What are we missing and what other groups should we connect with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documenting Projects</td>
<td>We have faced this problem before. Let us document this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why Belong

- Knowledge is an asset that needs to be managed strategically
- The economy runs on knowledge
- Knowledge of any field is too complex for any individual to cover

Guidelines for a Successful Cop

- Voluntary involvement and self organization
- Problem focused
- Distributed leadership and transparency

Guidelines for a Successful Cop

- Accessibility
- Shared identity
- Sustainability

Communities in Action

Value for Organizations

- Can help drive strategy
- Create new “products” or tools
- Solve problems quickly

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Communities in Action
• Transfer best practices
• Members develop professional skills
• They help companies recruit and retain talent

Engaging Successfully
Connect
Give people what they want and value so they'll tune in
Convey
Use portion control to make your point
Convince
Create Commitment
C. Dieken 2009

Create a Shared Pool of Meaning
“ When people purposefully withhold meaning from one another, individually smart people can do collectively stupid things”
Patterson et al., 2002

Get Involved! Everyone Wins!
Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.
Thomas A. Edison

References
Lasloho, A., Pronovost, P. (2010). Creating a more efficient healthcare knowledge market: using communities of practice to create checklists

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Questions?
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