

COP LIFECYCLE PHASES

As proposed by McDermott (2002, cited in Cambridge et al., 2005) CoPs have lifecycles and they begin, grow, and have life spans. Specific design, facilitation, and support strategies exist to help reach the goals of the CoP during each lifecycle phase and elevate it into the next stage of development. If the CoP is successful, the energy, commitment, and visibility of the CoP will grow until the CoP becomes institutionalised as a core value-added capability of the sponsoring organisation (Cambridge et al., 2005: 2). The different development stages are inquire, design, prototype, launch, grow and sustain. They will be briefly described in turn (see Figure 4).

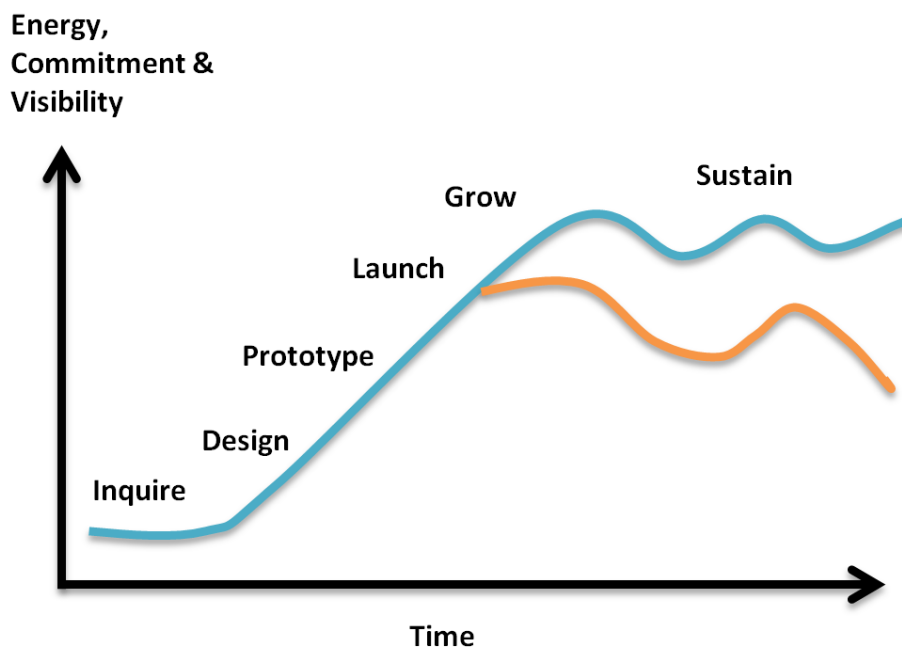


Figure 4. CoP Lifecycle Phases. Adapted from Cambridge et al., 2005.

Inquire is the phase in which through a process of exploration and inquiry the audience, the goals and the vision for the CoP will be determined.

This phase is followed by **design** which implies the definition of activities, processes and different roles that support the goals of the community.

After those aspects are defined the community is ready to take the first step. In the **prototype** phase commitment is gained, strategies are being refined, assumptions are tested, and a success story is established.

The **launch** phase can then happen if everything is set and the community can present itself to a broad audience and engage more actors over a period of time.

Once established the community starts to **grow** by engaging more members, participating in events and reaching the first goals. The main characteristics are learning collaboratively, sharing knowledge, engaging in group projects and networking events, while creating an increasing cycle of participation and contribution.

To make sure that the community survives and keeps on going it is important to strengthen the community by assessing what they achieved. In the **sustain** phase new goals are being set and new strategies developed.

Each CoP lifecycle phase requires a different set of activities and methods, which are suggested in Table 3.

LIFECYCLE PHASE	TOOLS	
Inquire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2-4-All • Argument Mapping • Brainstorming • DAKI • How Now Wow • Fish Bowl • Five-Minute Favour • Focus Groups • Four Quadrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Workshop • Heart, Hand, Mind • Interviews • Lightning Decision Jam • Mature Your Ideas • Nine Whys • Personas • Stinky Fish • SWOT/PESTEL • What I Need From You
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2-4-All • Brainstorming • Critical Uncertainties • DAKI • Five-Minute Favour • Future Workshop • How Now Wow • Lightning Decision Jam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personas • Plan of Change • Reverse Brainstorming • SMART Criteria • Stinky Fish • Storyboards • The World Café • What I Need From You
Prototype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Uncertainties • Five-Minute Favour • Future Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personas • Plan of Change • Stinky Fish • What I Need from You
Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infographics • Mentoring Circles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The World Café
Grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argument Mapping • DAKI • Fish Bowl • Four Quadrants • Infographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightning Decision Jam • Photo Documentation • Mentoring Circles • Storyboards • W3 • The World Café
Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Uncertainties • DAKI • Fish Bowl • Infographics • Mentoring Circles • Nine Whys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Doc. • Stinky Fish • Storyboards • SWOT/ • PESTEL • W3

Table 3. CoP Lifecycle Phases and Available Tools

REFERENCES

Cambridge, Darren, Soren Kaplan, and Vicki Suter. 2005. "Community of Practice Design Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide for Designing & Cultivating Communities of Practice in Higher Education." *EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI)*. Available from: <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2005/1/community-of-practice-design-guide-a-stepbystep-guide-for-designing-cultivating-communities-of-practice-in-higher-education>.