

Communities of Passion



*KM Roundtable
SAIC Towers
March 8, 2005
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Agenda

- **Context**
- **Value Proposition**
- **The CoP Engine**
- **What it Really Takes**
- **Knowledge & Best Practice Transfer**
- **CoP Evolution & Effort**
- **Some Insights**





The Ultimate Community

- The Borg are a collective intelligence.
- Borg units are connected to a collective consciousness through a Community of subspace links. This gives them the ability to learn and adapt instantly.
- The Borg Objective
 - Facilitate all to improve and service Borg.
 - Assimilate all technology and raw materials.

Resistance is Futile!

My Context for Communities

- **When left alone to adapt as they need, communities of people will evolve to one of the most effective channels for leveraging knowledge inside and outside an organization. They naturally form around specific tasks or activities where the power of collective know-how provides significant advantage or survival.**

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

Turning to One Another, Margaret J. Wheatley

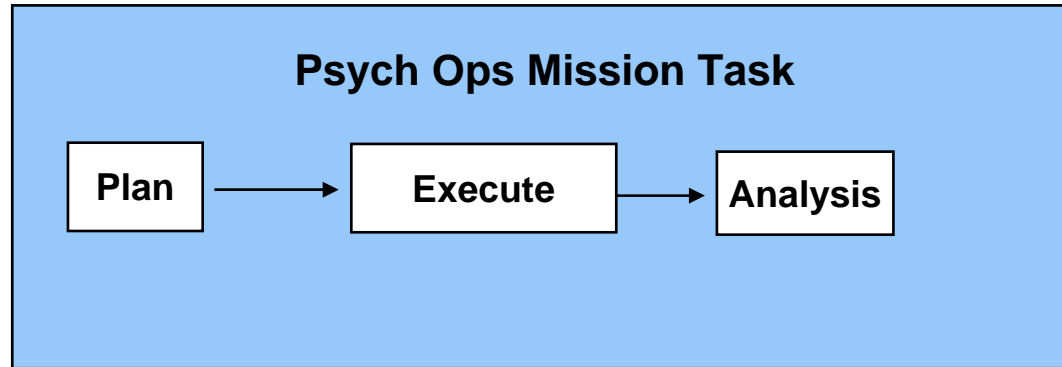
Communities of Practice: *What they need to thrive*

- **Informal** networks dedicated to sharing knowledge among practitioners or operators
- Common sense of purpose, **desire** to share knowledge and experience to meet a real need
- **Relevancy** to members' needs
- Operate through trust, **reciprocity & recognition**
- **Respected & passionate** leaders
- A **virtual** meeting place, anytime
- Meet **face-to-face** once in a while

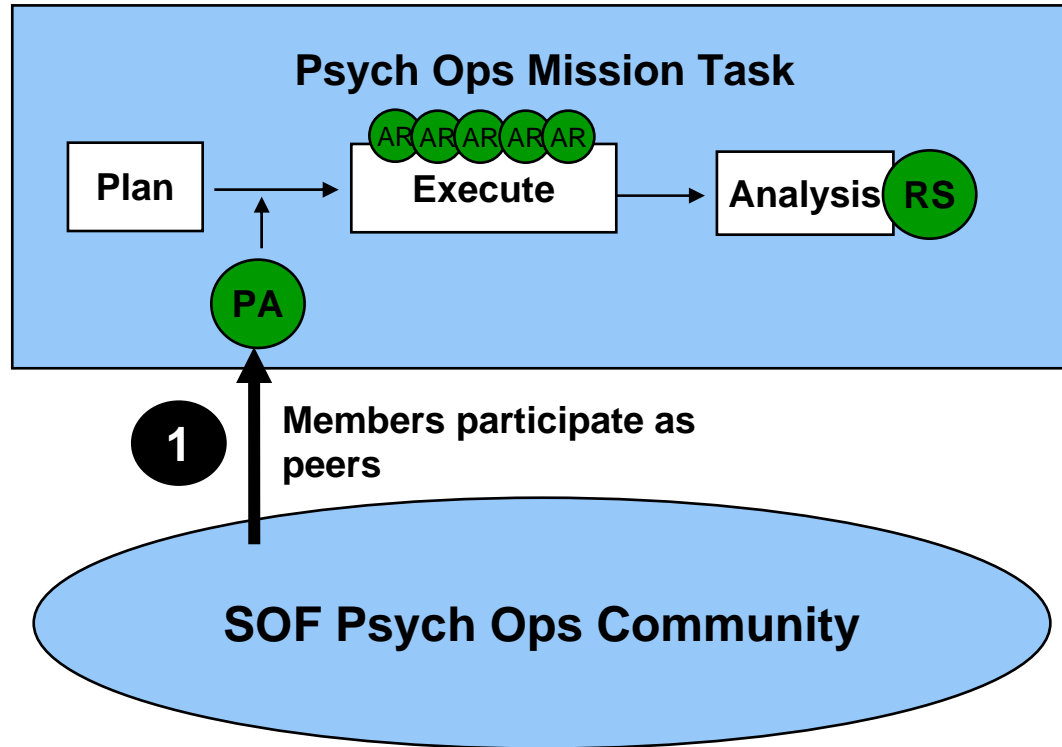


What's missing?

How It *Could* Work



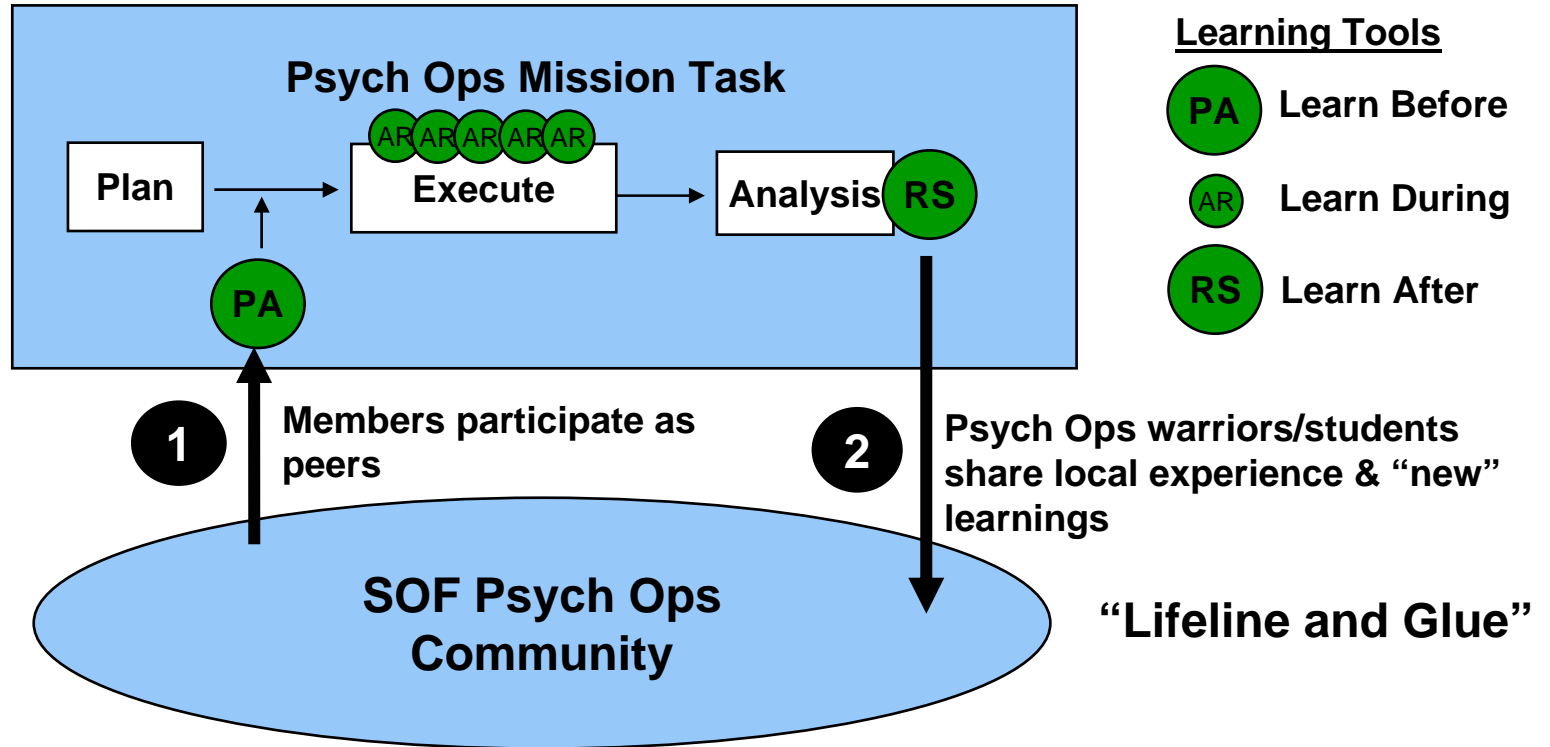
How It Could Work



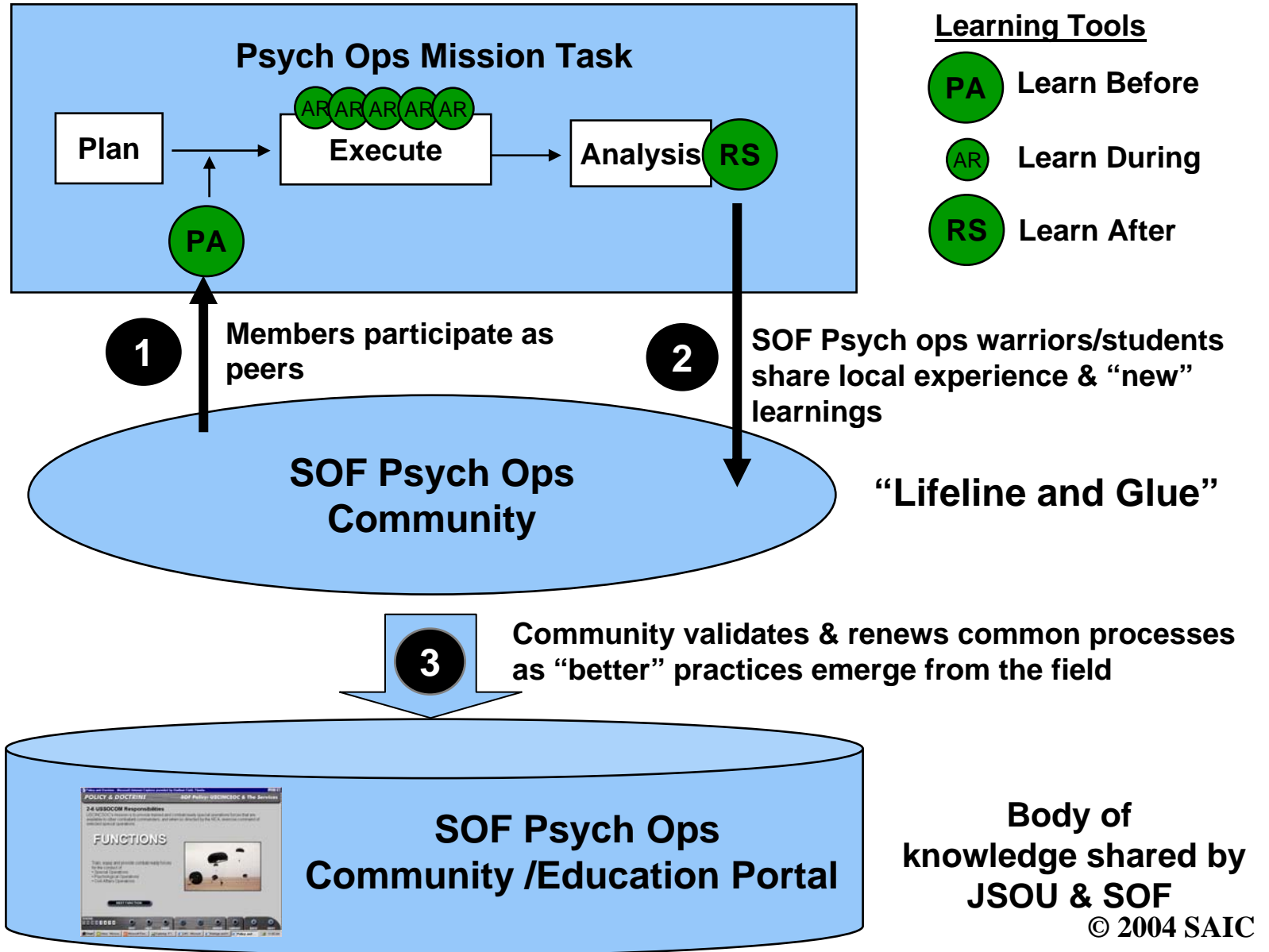
Learning Tools

- PA** Learn Before
- AR** Learn During
- RS** Learn After

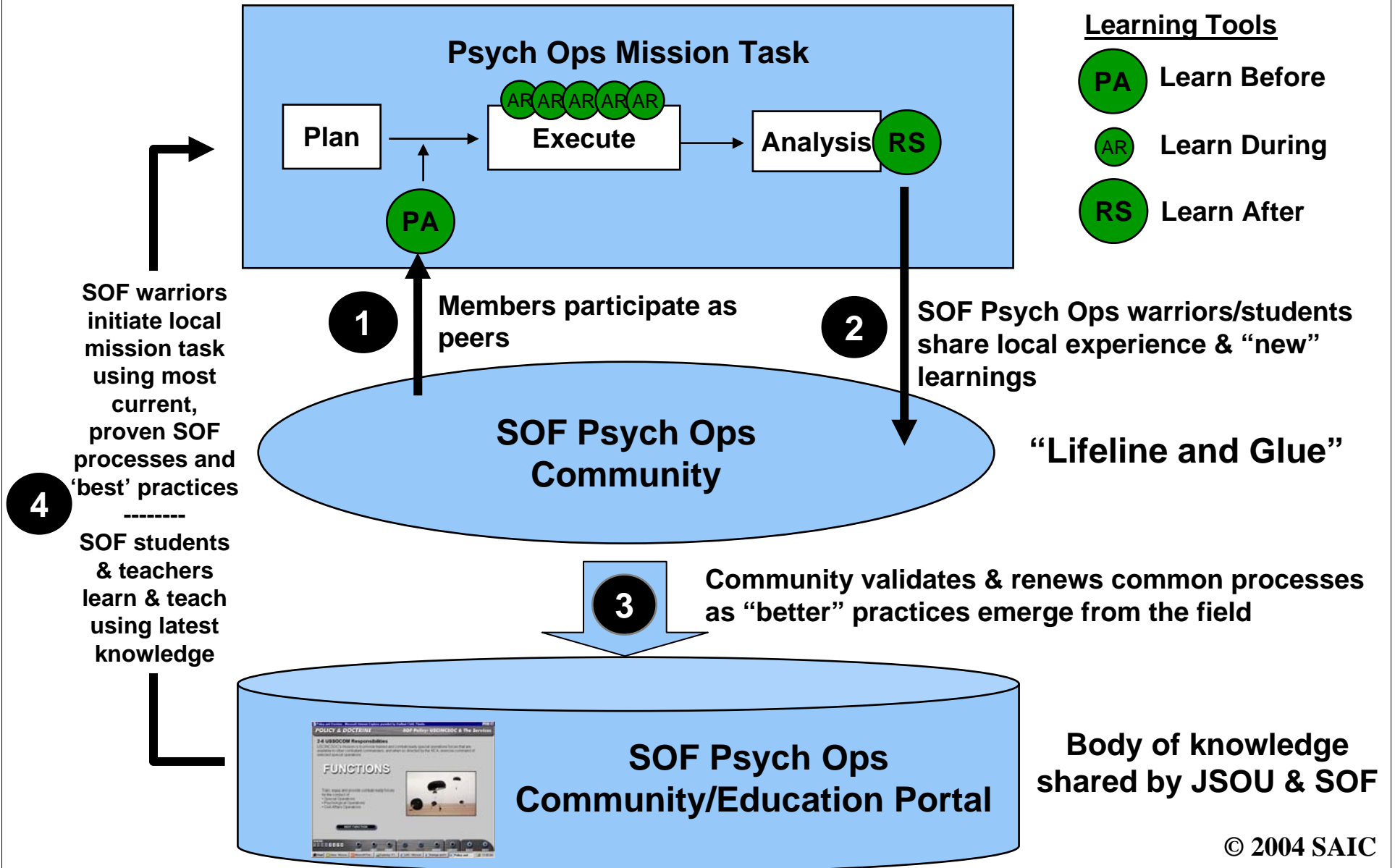
How It *Could* Work



How It Could Work



How It Could Work

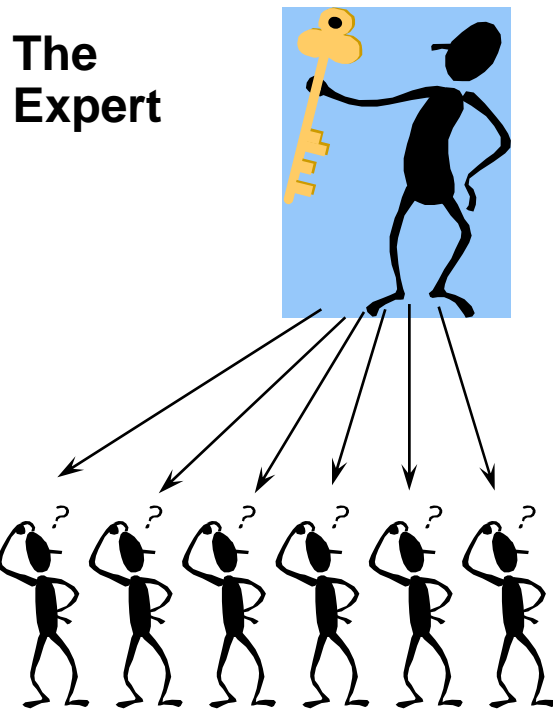


It's A Great Idea, *But...*

- The challenge in promoting a *distributed* CoP is to gain the involvement of practitioners that do not work together on a day to day basis, but whose common tasks and challenges would make a CoP viable, and valuable for the organization that hosts them

***The successful ones work really hard at it,
and have amazing results to show for it***

It's A Great Idea, *But...*



If knowledge is still power for individuals in your organization, you've got a tough sell!

CoP Value Proposition

- **Visibility and Reuse**

- What has been developed in one place can be useful in many others, if it were known and available

- **Mutual Support**

- If somebody encounters a problem, they can count on the best knowledge of their peers, anywhere they may be in the corporation
- The CoP may be one of the few sources of knowledge, mentorship and advice for and individual's personal development

*Taking full advantage of what we already know
Learning and innovating at the speed of change*

- **Company-Wide Learning**

- We all learn from our experiences everywhere, just as each of us now learn from our own local experiences somewhere.

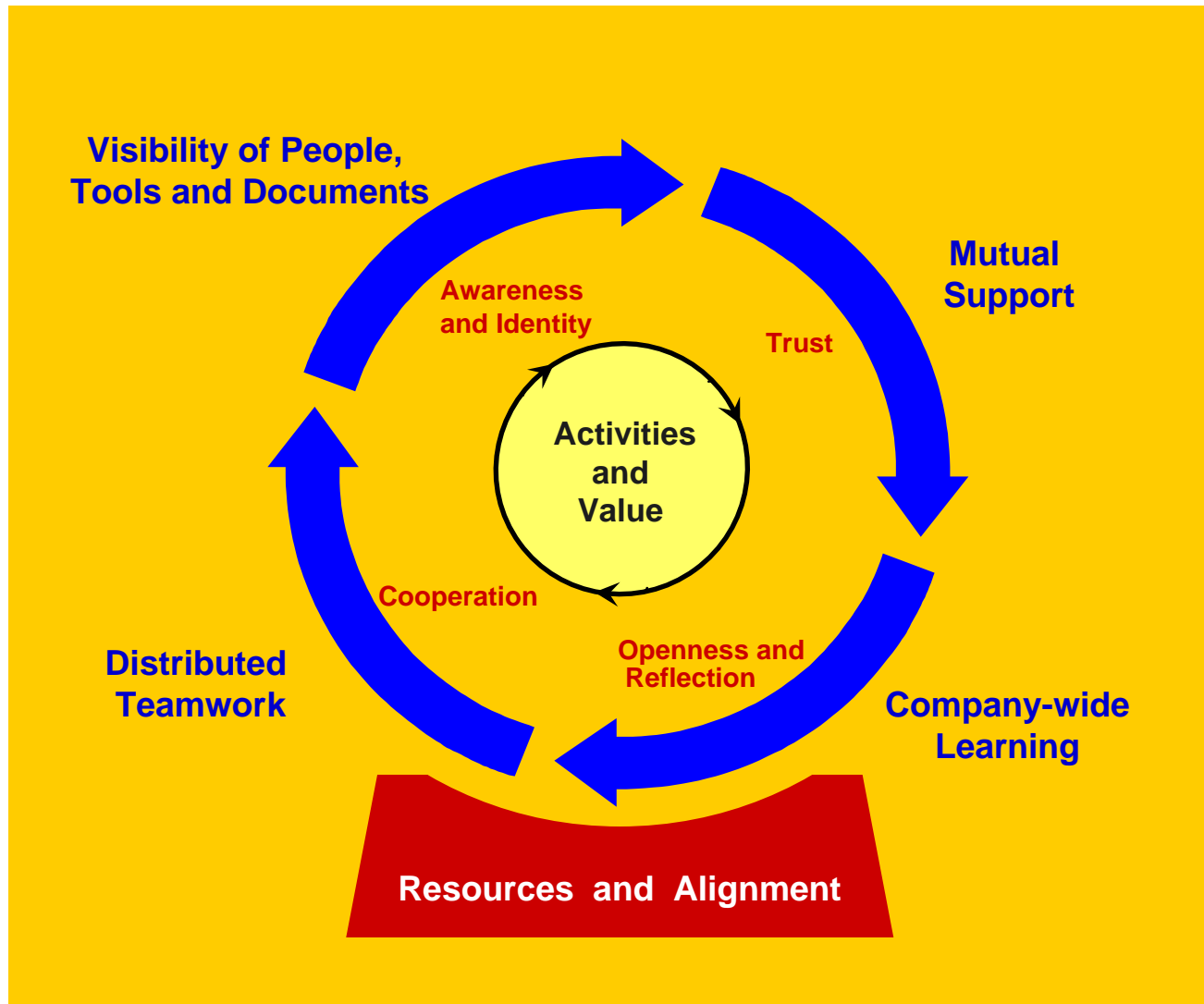
- **Collaborative Work**

- If a problem is too complex for a single person, team and location, we can all put our heads together in tackling it

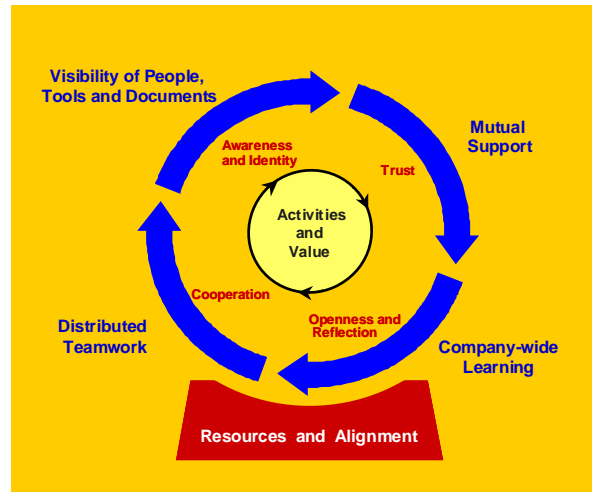
Have any of these motivated your own CoP efforts?

What would excite you enough to invest your 'spare time' & energy to be part of a Community?

The CoP Engine

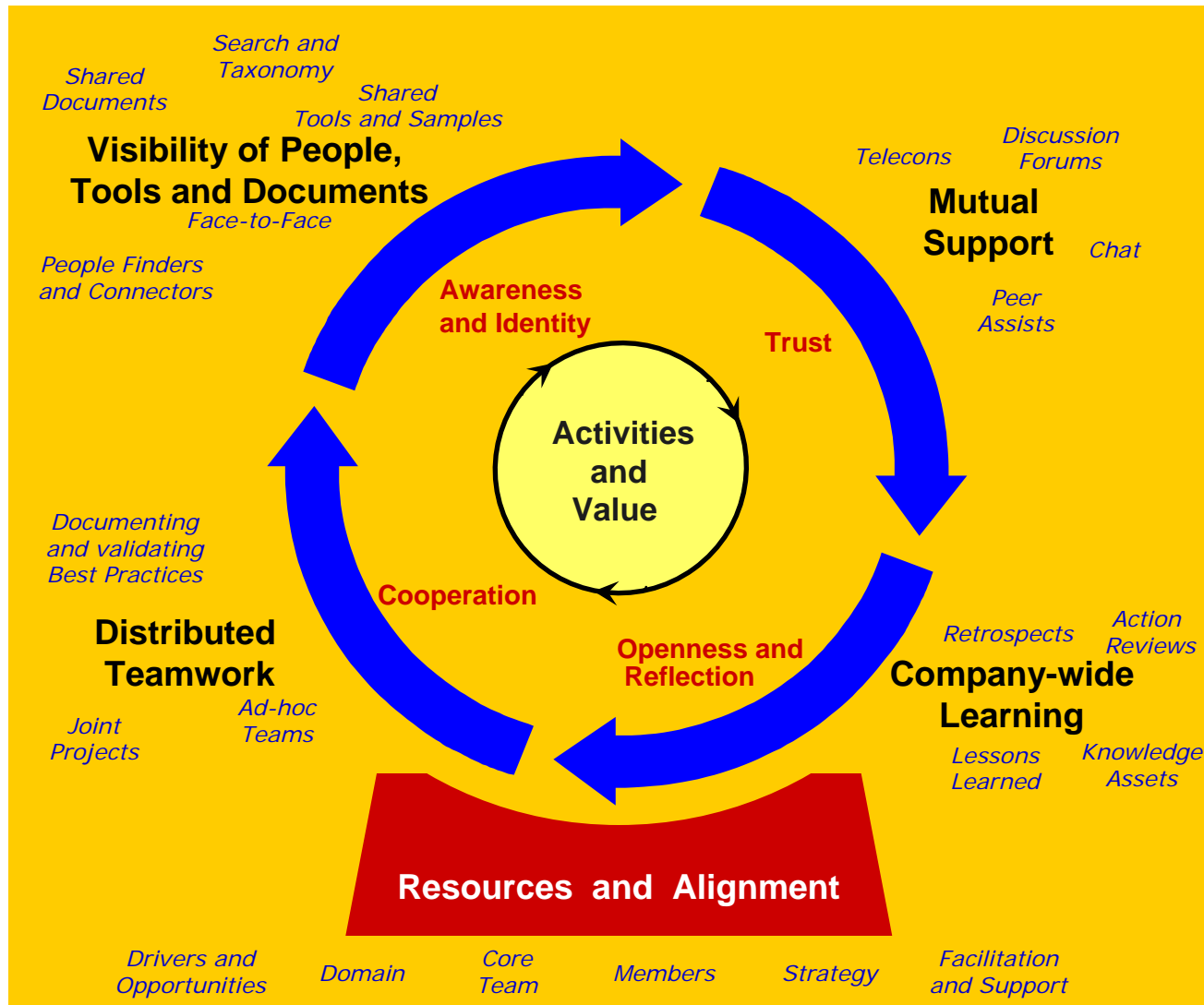


Starting the Engine

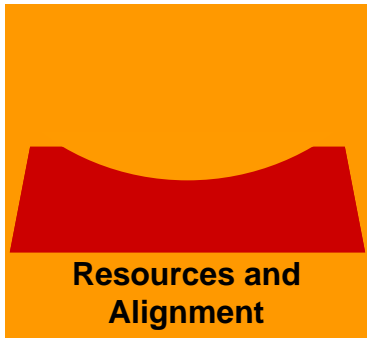


- **“It’s a journey”**
 - The different pieces of the engine will always be in development, being revisited, renewed
- **It takes time**
 - What works best for each CoP has to be learned, practiced and internalized, relationships have to be built
- **Start by going where the energy is**
 - If driven towards Mutual Support, start by providing some basic People visibility and document capability and then move to facilitate teleconferences or Peer Assists to address specific challenges.
 - If membership is very distributed and ill-defined, start with an emphasis on Visibility, and build a strong Core Team to tie the regions together.
- **Maintain CoP activity and presence**
 - Maintain a rhythm and a presence in time, through on-line and face-to-face events, and a presence across space, with local brokers and specific activities. Actively fight the “out of sight, out of mind” syndrome.

CoP Engine Implementation



Running the Engine



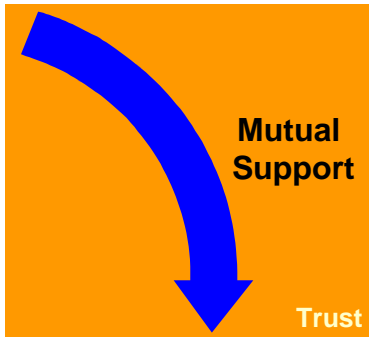
- ⇒ **Identify the business opportunities to be addressed and define the general strategy and the resources needed**
- ⇒ **CoP's thrive where there are strong corporate and individual performance drivers, such as:**
 - ⇒ **Define realistic human and material resources to support the CoP**
 - ⇒ **Make clear what the domain area is for this CoP**
 - ⇒ **Identify the profile of the potential members, and define how to reach them all**

Running the Engine



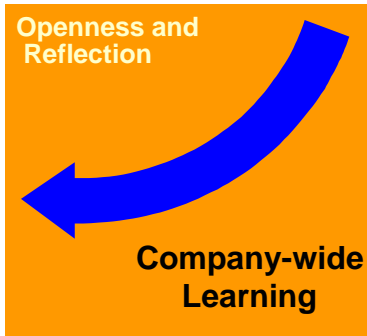
- ⇒ **Visibility of People, of all the CoP members, is key to building relationships and initiating conversations**
- ⇒ **Visibility of Content (tools and documents) is a prerequisite for reuse, and it also gives a perspective on what the CoP is and can achieve**
- ⇒ **Set up the means, and the resources, to organize the materials and keep them visible and attractive**
- ⇒ **Monitor for evidence of added value**

Running the Engine



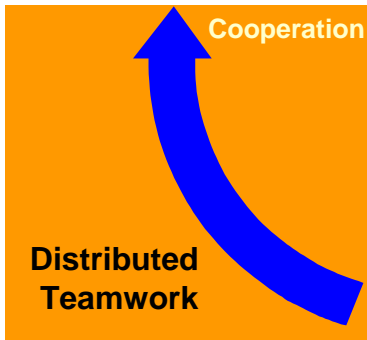
- ⇒ **Discussion Forums are great means for publicizing needs and for gathering contributions to meet those needs**
- ⇒ **Use multiple media to promote participation by people of all communication styles**
- ⇒ **Support people in presenting their doubts and suggestions**

Running the Engine



- ⇒ **Promote reflection, so as to be able to better share what is being learned**
- ⇒ **Support the CoP members in sharing and transferring what they have learned**
- ⇒ **Lessons Learned have to be organized so they can later be found and reused. This is a task in itself.**

Running the Engine



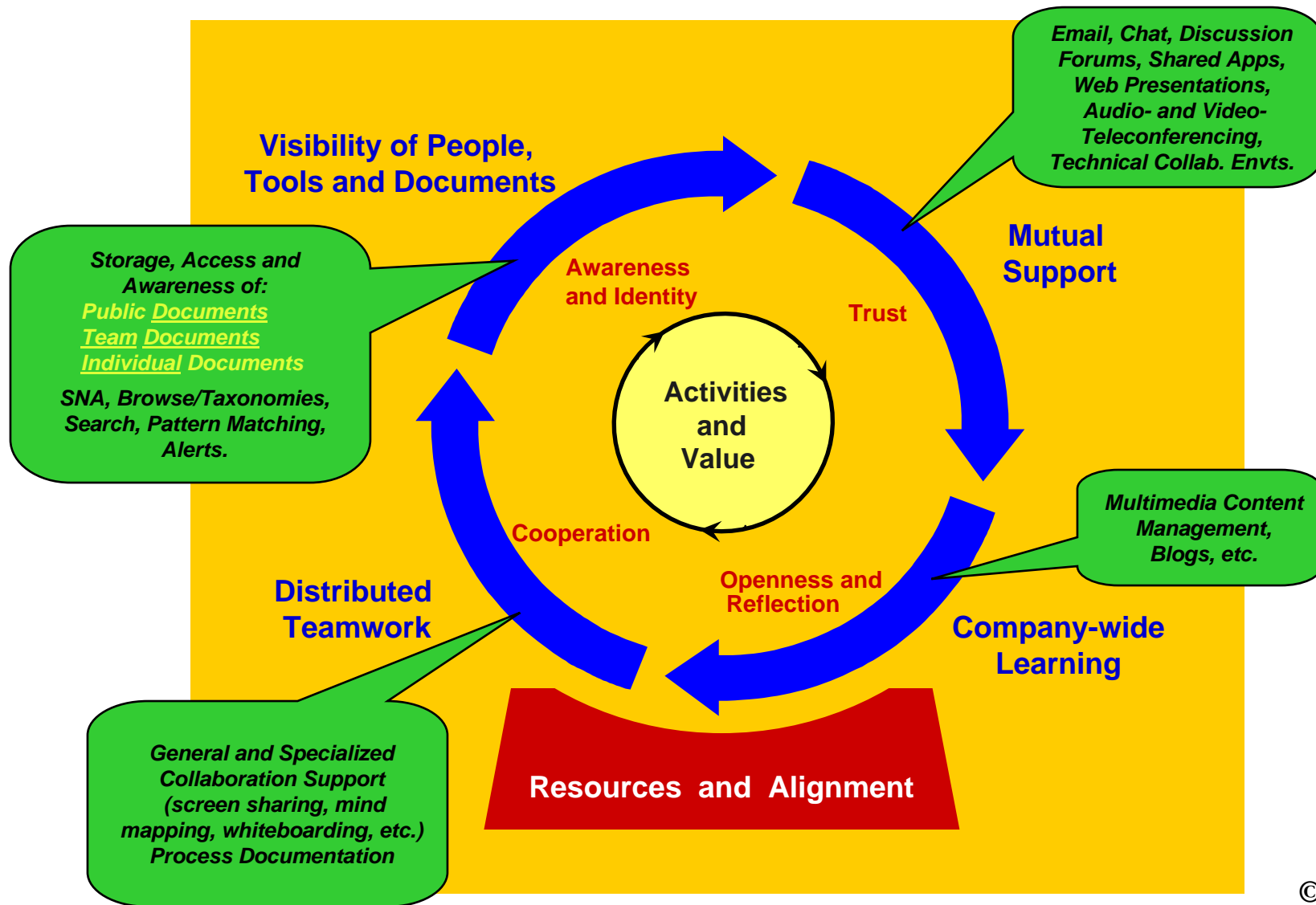
⇒ Different ways of working together at a distance:

- ✓ Brainstorming, divergent thinking
- ✓ Farming out work and collecting deliverables
- ✓ **Collaborative Work:** Coming to consensus on actions or recommendations

⇒ Tools and practices need to be tailored for each case

- ✓ Most communication tools are good for divergent thinking and distributed work, but not as good for coming to consensus (convergent thinking).
- ✓ For many jobs a mix of communication media may be needed
- ✓ Start with easy, non-controversial tasks, to gain the familiarity
- ✓ Complex collaboration is best suited for mature teams and CoP's
- ✓ Developing the capability enables quick creation of ad-hoc teams to address urgent issues
- ✓ Monitor for evidence of success and added value © 2004 SAIC

How Technology can support Processes, and People



The Cast of Characters

(some actors often play more than one role!)

- **Sponsor**

Represents and demands accountability. Provides legitimacy and resources

- **Leader**

Leads discussions about CoP focus, strategy and health. Represents and liaises. Leads Core Team

- **Core Team,
Local Advocates**

Encourage and support local members' participation, and local discussion of CoP issues. Contribute to provide direction for the CoP

- **Core Team,
Subject Matter Experts**

Provide answers of last resort, validate wide ranging recommendations, identify basic content and tools, contribute to provide direction for the CoP

- **Members**

Leverage the CoP to support their day job. Contribute with their experience and advice. Participate in CoP activities and direction-setting.

- **Editor and Content Manager**

Supports the documentation of discussions, lessons learned, etc. Organizes content so it can be easily found when needed. Collects relevant content from members, third parties, etc.

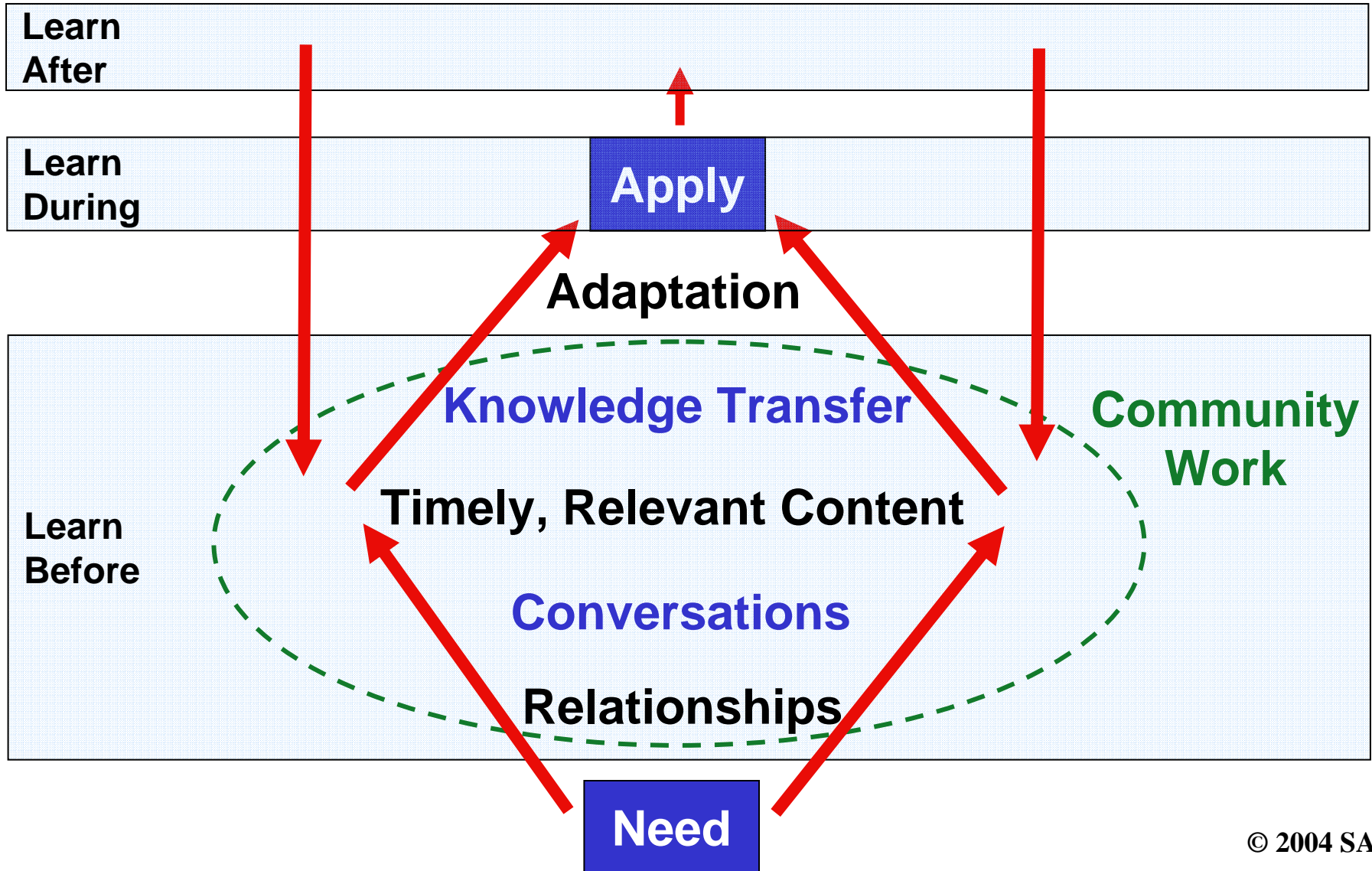
- **Facilitator**

Supports the Champion and the Core Team in defining and implementing the CoP strategy. Facilitates interactions on all media formats and trains others to do it

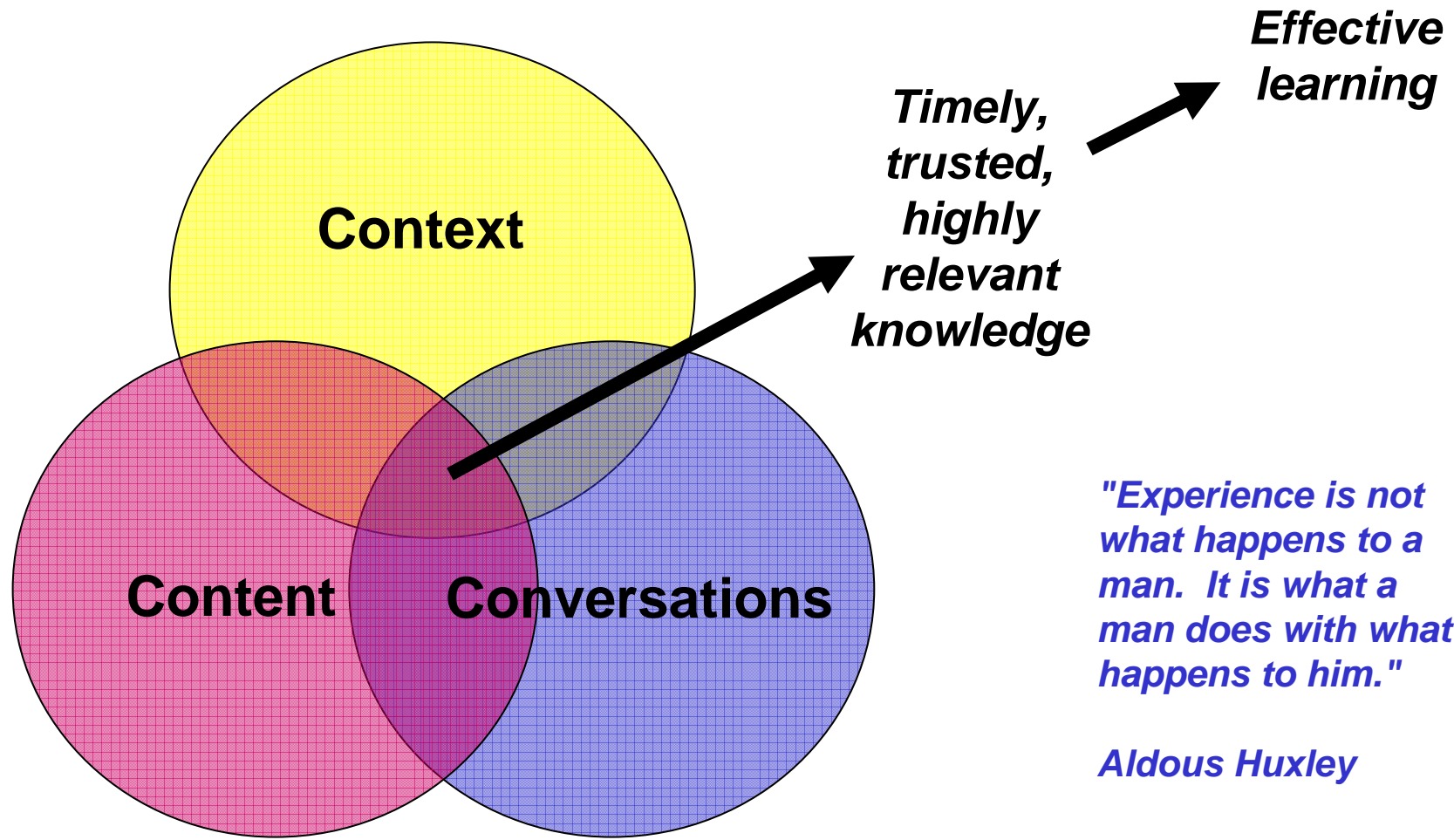
- **Tool Support**

Train and support in the utilization of the technical and communication tools available to the CoP members

What It Really Takes



Community Work: *Effective Knowledge Transfer*





8 April 2004

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Afghanistan veterans voluntarily prepare next leaders

By Maj. Pete Kilner

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 2, 2004) -- The Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light) will deploy this month to Afghanistan armed with the knowledge of their predecessors.

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They are the beneficiaries of a program that shares the experiences of company-level commanders from previous and current deployments to Operation Enduring Freedom with leaders of their upcoming deployment.

"There is no substitute for actual experience," said Maj. Nate Allen, a leader of the CompanyCommand Team that developed the program. "However, we can more effectively prepare for an upcoming experience by learning all we can from those who have already had the experience."

On March 11-13, the CompanyCommand Team delivered the Afghan Commander After Action Review Booklet to every company-level commander in the brigade combat team. The book details the experiences of 41 company commanders who have served in Afghanistan.



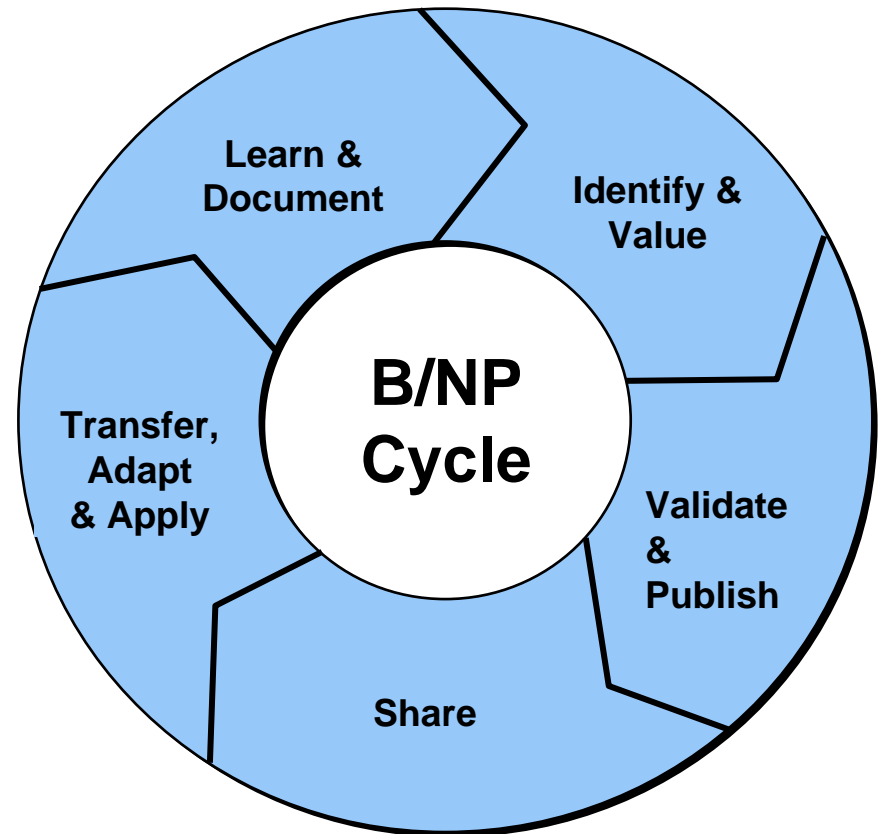
Role of Communities in Knowledge Dissemination & Transfer

WHO	WHAT	VOLUME	TIMING	TOOLS
PEER TO PEER	REAL TIME LEARNING	MANY	REAL TIME USE	PEER ASSIST ACTION REVIEW RETROSPECT 
PEER TO FUNCTIONS	BETTER PRACTICES	FEWER	NEXT TIME USE	COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE 
FUNCTION TO ENTERPRISE	DOCTRINE	FEWEST	ANY TIME USE	KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORIES

Best/Next Practice Transfer

It takes a lot of work and help!

- **Someone to market and encourage it's use by others**
- **Someone who needs it**
- **People with experience using it to help in its application and adaptation**
- **Rich content in the form of a guide & stories (highly visible and easily accessible) in it's use**
 - *You often don't know what you need until you're deep in something, and then the experts probably aren't available to help you 'in the moment'*

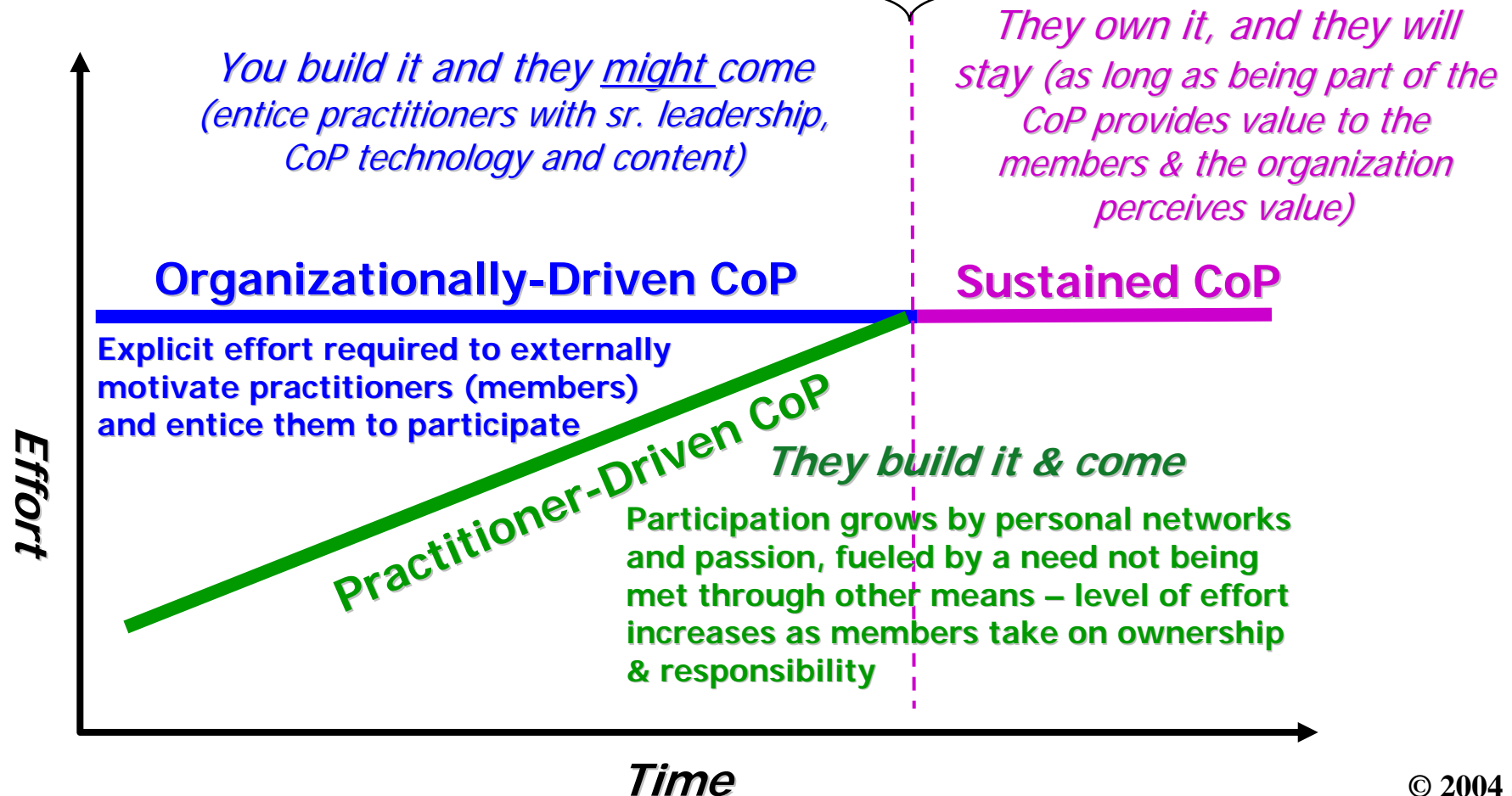


Communities: Owning and Evolving Best/Next Practices

- **Owners: Those who know the most about it and have a vested interest in it's continued use. Those who have direct experience using it**
- **One of a Community's primary responsibilities**
 - There's usually a sub-group that takes ownership for a specific practice
 - The lead for the sub-group is often a (recognized) subject matter expert (SME)
 - Other members are practitioners who use it a lot and want to be part of the validation and sustaining processes
 - This is the same group that scrubs the updates and makes recommendations for improvements to the best practice that arise through it's use. It then vets and validates the updated best practice and notifies the Community of the changes.
 - Encourage others, especially novices, to challenge the 'best' practice and push against the boundaries to create the 'next' practice

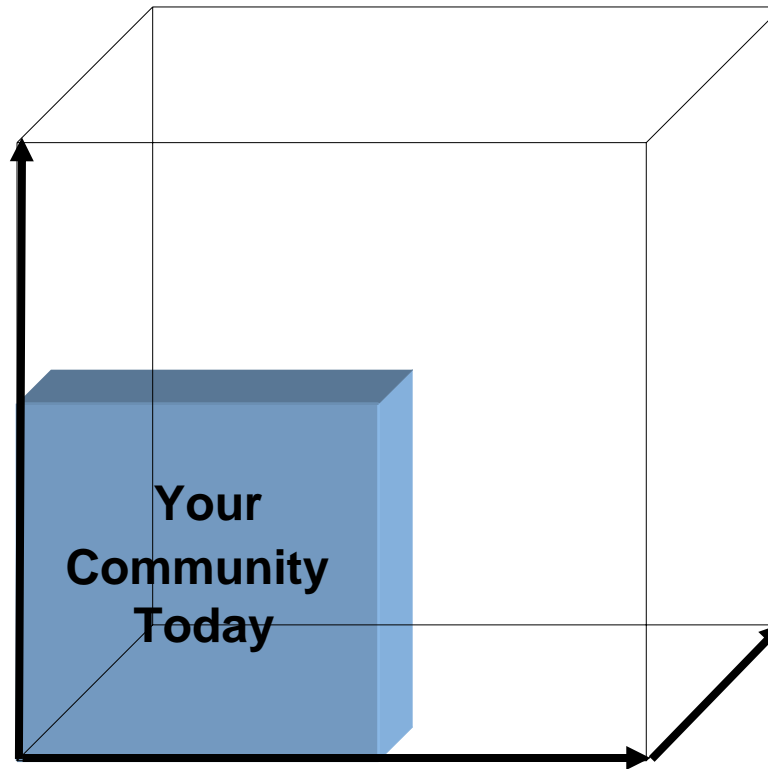
CoP Evolution & Effort

No longer just a simple gathering of fellow travelers - volume and activity reaches a level where members have to take on the responsibility for support and maintenance



CoP Renewal

**Timely
and
Relevant
Knowledge**



**Member
Ownership**

Inclusive

Communities of Passion

Some Insights

- **Unconditional support**
- **Treat members like customers**
- **A powerful value driver for members is personal / career development**
- **Don't expect everyone to participate all the time**
- **It's not about KM or 'CoPs'**
- **They take a lot of effort, but it's amazing how fast knowledge can spread**