

# Community of Competence: New Resources in the Workplace

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## ABSTRACT

Ways social networks, socialization, self-organizing systems, and systems thinking have influenced the gradual evolution of communities of practice into communities of competence are examined. A community of competence is proposed as a new framework and a methodology to describe, assess, and combine separate strengths and core competencies of individuals, groups, and organizations into a meaningful, goal-oriented whole.

Decisions to assign people to work groups are seldom based on current, valid, reliable assessments of skills, abilities, and knowledge, or overall competence. Productivity, job satisfaction, and work quality can be improved when competencies and job requirements are closely matched to maximize job fit. Individual selection criteria, like self-efficacy, achievement motivation, and emotional intelligence, and group process variables, like workload sharing, can enhance job placement. Members of a flexible, cohesive, goal-driven community of competence will likely make better use of their unique and shared competencies, tacit and explicit knowledge, and experience in more effective and efficient ways than traditional forms of groups.

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