

Cricket Club Development Network: a peer-to-peer virtual community of practice

To join:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8246341> on **LinkedIn**

or email Network facilitator - john.swannick@staplehurstcricket.com

Context

- Cricket is confronted with growing challenges and a rapidly changing environment where change will only accelerate
- The centre – ECB or County Boards - cannot deliver all that is required with resource limitations and lack of local footprint
- Clubs must be **one** answer to promoting the playing of and watching cricket
- Mutual lack of understanding and appreciation between clubs and centre is impacting negatively on strategic delivery

Clubs as businesses

- Clubs are increasingly like small and even medium-sized businesses
- Growing shift from not-for-profit membership to more pay-per-play and commercial business models
- There is no template for running any sort of sports club, let alone cricket
- Existing resources address a limited number of most commonly perceived issues but are not comprehensive and the inevitable 'lowest common denominator' approach means they are less relevant for most experienced club leaders
- Resources have limited use without supported implementation – '*churches without congregations*' – and that capability does not exist in the centre
- ***The expertise for running clubs is in clubs***

Club management

- Many club leaders are combining professional expertise with personal passion
- But the knowledge is patchy and not in all clubs; quality, capability and commitment is variable
- Cricket needs to develop knowledge, share solutions, and build innovative new approaches harnessing the club knowledge that exists and the myriad professional skills and competences of managers
- The critical mass required to do this may not exist at district or even county level. But it **does** exist across the country and there is appetite to share it for mutual enhancement

A Community of Practice

- A standard business approach to creating a learning business environment – a peer driven and facilitated learning network
- Not just sharing knowledge but identifying solutions, supporting implementation and co-creation of new approaches/solutions
- Building a body of knowledge and resources – both generalist and functionally specific
- Enabled to confront big upcoming challenges around the cricket 'product' and even new or adapted business models
- Harnessing and showcasing available expertise – professional and consultancy (free or for hire) – but not a shop window or a sales forum

Good to go

- Pilot discussions confirm enthusiasm and perceived need within the target market, initially Clubmark and aspirant Clubmark clubs
- Utilising an existing **easy access** platform - LinkedIn - and the time, commitment and energy of a peer group
- Closed group with common bond: a professional learning network with a passion for cricket, expertly facilitated

Where is the capability in clubs?

Competence	Where in Club	Club Leaders Resources	ECB Resources
Leadership & strategy	Chairman?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial	Treasurer?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Governance, legal, risk & compliance	Secretary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change & organisational development	Clubmark Co-ordinator?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HR	?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Property management	Property/House Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Logistics and planning	?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Project management	?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marketing & PR	Marketing/PR Officer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



So who are the Community of Practice targets?

Strategists	senior executives, consultants
Professionals	managers, accountants, lawyers, surveyors, educators, communicators
Functionalists	operations, logistics, HR, risk, products, marketing, PR, change, projects
Intrapreneurs	organisational change and development drivers within or close to club hierarchy e.g. Clubmark champion
Extrapreneurs	change/development catalysers, inspirers, accelerators and even agitators outside club hierarchy e.g. occasional or discrete programme/project leaders and advisers

What is a Community of Practice?

- Groups of people who come together to **share** and to **learn** from one another face-to-face and/or virtually
- Brought and held together by a **common peer interest**
- Driven by a **desire and need** to share problems, experiences, insights, templates, tools, and best practices
- Members deepen their knowledge by **interacting** on an ongoing basis
- This interaction leads to **continuous learning and innovation**

What a Community of Practice does

Create: own and develop knowledge

- develop and manage good practice
- build organisational competence

Organise: develop and manage materials

- develop tools, guidelines, templates
- manage data and resources

Disseminate: connect people across boundaries

- who knows what?
- who is driving or open to organisational change?

Embed: share ideas and insights

- share tacit, complex ideas and insights
- help each other solve problems and find innovations

What individual members do

- Ask & answer questions
- Share resources
- Share case stories
- Contribute to **peer assist** discussions
- Create things together
- Practice new skills

Facilitator responsibilities

- Define **scope**, ideal outcomes, and boundaries
- Ensure participants receive more **value** than they contribute
- Promote, **encourage**, and reward productive behaviours
- Discourage and limit negative behaviours
- Enable **constructive** disagreement and creative conflict
- Advocate for the community and its members
- Monitor, **measure**, and report
- Marshal internal advocates, resources, & support
- Manage tools and member **experience**

Why Communities of Practice fail

1. Weak common bond
2. Inadequately peer driven and facilitated
3. Top down organisational direction
4. Pre-conceived agenda
5. Scope too wide
6. Resource-led processes - **“build and pray they will come”**

Virtual Communities of Practice

depend on a small minority of active users to lead discussions and activity. Experts can be activists but tend to contribute where an issue is directly relevant to their expertise. The vast majority are passive observers and occasional contributors drawn in by the need to 'transact' on a personally salient or very immediate issue. Many will 'lurk' on the periphery, dipping in and out from time to time or when roused by an issue on which they have strong feelings and a propensity to 'agitate' vigorous discussion



Linked

330 million users worldwide

70% of UK professionals

60% of UK managers

50% of Cricket Club Chairmen*

*Sample survey of contacts

1.5 million professional/interest groups

Cricket Business Network - 2,600 members

Cricket Coaches Worldwide - 2,400 members

81% of users belong to at least one group

		Features	Benefits
Phase 1	Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key contacts • Invite to join by personalised email • Set out compelling case for joining • Reinforce by LinkedIn communication • Encourage referral to additional or more appropriate contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of key drivers of change and development in individual clubs
Q1 2015			
Phase 2	Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope common agenda • Identify key current issues/challenges • Frame discussions and stimulate contributions • Demonstrate value of links to additional references/resources • Establish terms of reference/engagement • Collect and collate practice/resource library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define primary development agenda and key current issues • Build resources library
2015			
Phase 3	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish trust and loyalty to community • Develop outreach to less active members • Welcome new members • Guide discussions around common/recurring themes to develop fresh thinking • Promote knowledge and experience sharing • Identify and address the need for new competences/capabilities or resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of club development and management knowledge and expertise • Raising skills and competence/capability thresholds in clubs
2016			
Phase 4	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual engage in bilateral and group engagement to address common issues • Proposals for formal thematic, functional or geographic working sub-groups • The community becomes a primary repository of expertise and 'go to' source of advice/ideas for most members • Community is a platform for sensing and assessing members' organisational environment through rapid opinion 'polling' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding collective knowledge and memory • Co-creating new solutions • Rapid response to and dissemination of change • Build an informed standing focus group or 'citizens' jury' capability
2016+			
Phase 5	Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective advancement of knowledge • Stimulus for innovation and generation of new approaches/solutions • Redefinition of agenda and key challenges • Create need for new or reinvigorated platforms and channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energised district, county or functional physical networks • Refined and focused agenda enabling effective resource management
2017+			