



Building Effective Communities of Practice with Novell® Teaming

Communities of Practice use social learning tools to share lessons and ideas, solicit advice from experts and tap into your organization's collective wisdom. By using Novell® Teaming to create and manage these specialized communities, you can accelerate on-the-job training, improve decisions and make practical, applicable knowledge available to everyone who needs it.

Using Communities of Practice to Gain Competitive Advantage

Effective Communities of Practice bring mentors, practitioners and novices together in a rich social networking environment where they can collect and share knowledge, develop new ideas and solve difficult problems. This environment includes workspaces for organizing communities, threaded discussions, live chat, surveys and a powerful search function. The following scenario shows how these tools can be used together to produce tangible business results.

Introducing Tenth Mountain Ski Company

Brett Franklin is a product manager for Tenth Mountain Ski Company, an outfitter with a broad portfolio of ski and snowboard equipment for men, women and children. Brett has been asked to find a new growth segment for the company's alpine ski group, and he'll need to tap into the collective

knowledge and creativity of sales, marketing and product development people around the world to be successful.

Working Together to Find the Right Idea

To begin the process, Brett logs into Tenth Mountain's "Market Watch" Community of Practice, which includes members of the company's sales and marketing teams from around the world. He initiates a discussion by posting a new entry on the community's "New Ideas" wiki:

"I need to identify a new customer segment for the alpine ski group. I keep thinking about those 'gear guys' we're all familiar with—men who love new equipment and who already have four different pairs of skis in their garage for different conditions. What are you hearing from these guys? Do they have room for one more pair of skis?"

■ Solutions:

Collaboration

■ Products:

Novell Teaming



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Brett Franklin

Product Manager
Tenth Mountain Ski Company

Novell Teaming helps teams be more productive by bringing people together to create, share, discuss and manage information. Through document management, social networking and other next-generation collaboration tools, individuals are able to form high-performance teams and deliver better business results.

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Within a few days, Brett's wiki post is full of ideas from experienced sales and marketing people. A sales representative from France suggests targeting 40-something men who are looking to rediscover their youth—perhaps with a pair of fast but forgiving parabolic racing skis. Another employee from Germany adds that her 42-year-old husband definitely qualifies as a “gear guy,” but he ends up spending most of his time on the slopes with their young son. She mentions that her husband obviously enjoys the family time, but he also gets bored making slow turns behind a six-year-old on beginner runs. Others jump in to confirm that the “bored dad” syndrome seems to be common.

As part of his research, Brett also searches the “Market Watch” Community of Practice for other documents, comments and discussions that might be relevant. When he searches on the word “fun,” the top five results all revolve around the launch of the twin-tip Snow Blades—short skis marketed to teenagers that make it easy to ski backward and perform tricks that would be difficult on traditional skis. This gives Brett an idea. Could these popular skis, if they were repackaged and marketed correctly, appeal to “gear guy” dads looking for a little excitement while skiing with their children? He poses his idea to the community, and everyone agrees it's a winner.

From Revelation to Revenue

Three months later, marketing manager Gretta Berg has completed the go-to-market

plan for the new Snow Blades, and Tenth Mountain is counting on the upcoming product launch to generate significant first quarter revenue. It's time to start building excitement for the new product, and Gretta knows that direct mail and other traditional marketing activities won't be enough. She wants to tap into blogs and social networking sites to generate buzz, but she simply doesn't know how to take advantage of the new social media.

To correct this lack of knowledge, she starts a new discussion thread on the company's “Market Watch” Community of Practice asking for advice. She also searches the Novell Teaming system for Tenth Mountain employees with social media expertise and sends them an alert asking them to join the discussion. In a few days, Gretta has all the information she needs to create and execute an effective social marketing campaign. This includes identifying ski blogs and discussion forums that target older “gear guys” and asking employees to begin authentic discussions about the new Snow Blade on these sites and their own personal social networking pages. Before long, men in their forties start asking where they can buy Snow Blades and orders begin to roll in from major sporting goods retailers.

In the end, Tenth Mountain's Community of Practice program—powered by Novell Teaming—plays a central role in a wildly successful product launch that exceeds all projections and expectations.



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