

**TABLE 2-2 DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND OTHER STRUCTURES**

	WHAT'S THE PURPOSE?	WHO BELONGS?	HOW CLEAR ARE THE BOUNDARIES?	WHAT HOLDS THEM TOGETHER?	HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?
<b>Communities of Practice</b>	To create, expand, and exchange knowledge, and to develop individual capabilities	Self-selection based on expertise or passion for a topic	Fuzzy	Passion, commitment, and identification with the group and its expertise	Evolve and end organically (last as long as there is relevance to the topic and value and interest in learning together)
<b>Formal Departments</b>	To deliver a product or service	Everyone who reports to the group's manager	Clear	Job requirements and common goals	Intended to be permanent (but last until the next reorganization)
<b>Operational Teams</b>	To take care of an ongoing operation or process	Membership assigned by management	Clear	Shared responsibility for the operation	Intended to be ongoing (but last as long as the operation is needed)
<b>Project Teams</b>	To accomplish a specified task	People who have a direct role in accomplishing the task	Clear	The project's goals and milestones	Predetermined ending (when the project has been completed)
<b>Communities of Interest</b>	To be informed	Whoever is interested	Fuzzy	Access to information and sense of likemindedness	Evolve and end organically
<b>Informal Networks</b>	To receive and pass on information, to know who is who	Friends and business acquaintances, friends of friends	Undefined	Mutual need and relationships	Never really start or end (exist as long as people keep in touch or remember each other)

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W.M. (2002). *A guide to managing knowledge: Cultivating communities of practice*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.