COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS: A CASE STUDY OF VICTORIAN TAFE INTERNATIONAL AS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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Abstract

Victorian TAFE International (VTI) has been in existence for 10 years as a network of managers of international programs in TAFE Institutes and dual sector universities in Victoria. This paper examines VTI's journey from a loose network of practitioners engaging in professional development meetings to working collaboratively as a genuine Community of Practice. In 2008 VTI made a commitment to collaborative partnerships and embarked on projects which required sharing across organisational boundaries in a manner which could be construed as antithetical to the notion of competition in the education market place and which had the potential to lay members open to charges of disloyalty to their employers and to the competitive model itself.

The paper analyses data from interviews and surveys of VTI members in 2009 to highlight issues arising from the complexity of developing collaborative models of practice across organisational boundaries among competitive entities. Specifically it will explore issues around maintaining loyalty to one's employer whilst also sharing experience, intellectual property rights, gaining agreement to action from all members, facing the fear of sharing with peers and being found wanting, the impact of co-operation at manager level on organisational hierarchies and lessons learned in challenging the primacy of the competitive model. It concludes that it is a difficult path to take and that there is a price to pay for working co-operatively across organisational boundaries. But ultimately, the research findings suggest that outcomes for international students are improved by a collaborative approach and the deepening of personal relationships that occur through collaborative effort, enhances learning within the network.

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Introduction

In this presentation I will share with you, the story of working in a Community of Practice in a competitive world. The Community of Practice I will describe is the Victorian TAFE International Association (VTI) and I have their kind permission to speak of our attempts to build a Community of Practice by sharing knowledge across institutional boundaries.

I will describe what VTI undertook and I will use quotes from a survey and interviews I did with members to help flesh out the complexities of working collaboratively across organisational boundaries in a competitive world.

Victorian TAFE International (VTI) has been in existence for 10 years as a network of managers of international programs across TAFE Institutes and dual sector universities in Victoria. All Victorian TAFEs engaging in international education (except Holmesglen) are members of VTI. VTI was created at the end of 1998 and incorporated as a not for profit association under The Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Victoria) in 2001. It operates as a subscription based organisation with each member institute providing one key member to represent it and paying an annual fee to the Association to undertake its work. Although each member institute provides the name of one voting member to VTI, any staff person working in international education may attend VTI meetings and join in any of

its activities. The key purpose of the VTI is professional development of its members. It auspices 6 full day professional development activities for members each year and provides summarised information (a clearinghouse) of key topics of interest to managers of international vocational education.

VTI is unique in Australia in that it brings together all the key managers of international education across all TAFE Institutes and dual sector universities in Victoria to meet on a regular basis outside their own parent institute. And it is unique in that it is an incorporated body. This means it has status as a legal entity in its own right. One of the benefits of this legal status is that it can operate bank accounts and employ staff, namely myself. I provide secretariat support for the VTI on a contractual basis. Unlike organisational models in some other states of Australia, TAFE Institutes in Victoria are largely independent bodies, with their own governing Boards. TAFE entities have been independent in this way since before the VTI was created. This means that co-operative effort across organisational boundaries, especially in areas where independent income is generated, is unusual these days. Each TAFE member is in effect in competition with its fellows and the stakes are high.

International VET is big business with around 12,000 international students studying at TAFE in Victoria (DIIRD 2008). And this is just one side of the story, because TAFE is also active in providing courses in overseas countries. Victorian TAFE Institutes have around 30,000 students studying their courses in other countries (NCVER 2009). The money earned from international students (across all education sector) represents Victoria's largest export stream by quite a large margin. It brings in close to $5 billion annually to the State (DIIRD 2008).

Community of Practice Literature

When preparing this presentation, I investigated the academic literature on Community of Practice, specifically looking for literature on cross-institutional Communities of Practice and Communities of Practice among competing organisational entities. While literature on Community of Practice abounds and it is commonly very positive about both the benefits of setting one up and of being a member of one (Snyder et al 2003, Nickels 2003, Alaszewski 2006, Mitchell 2003) there is precious little literature that tells the true story, warts and all, from the practitioner's point of view. There is nothing that I could find telling the story of a Community of Practice between competitive entities.

The concept of Community of Practice is based on situated learning theory advanced by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). Proponents of Community of Practice argue that learning may well be improved through embedding it in a social context and in a practical context, ie learning by doing.

Lave and Wenger looked at agency and structure and tried to account for the interaction between them in situations of social learning. They acknowledged the tension that exists between any individual in a group and the structures, rules, norms within the group that influence the learning outcome. They concluded that learning occurs when an individual makes a shift and he or she is socialised into the norms of the group. There is little discussion in Lave and Wenger about power relations within and between groups, except to say that the experienced group members hold legitimate power in the group.

Brown and Duguid (1991) applied the concepts of Lave and Wenger to a work situation. In their study, they noted that front line workers often relied on their own ways of solving problems when the office manual just did not fit the situation they encountered. These

workers used story telling to impart practical knowledge about how to get the job done. There is a sense of subversion in the Brown and Duguid situation, where workers paid lip service to the office manual, but did things their own way in the field. In these two initial works, Communities of Practice are portrayed as an alternative to mainstream wisdom on how learning is transferred. It was claimed that Communities of Practice developed in an informal way, with creativity and innovation their hallmarks, rather than structure and formal organisation.

In being critical of hierarchical, structured cognitive learning models, Wenger suggests Community of Practice as a different model; a better model of learning and in this way he seems to see Communities of Practice as subversive to the dominant learning paradigm (Cox 2005). Within a few short years of his first work with Jean Lave, however, Wenger started to see the value in promoting the concept of Community of Practice as a management tool. In his book with McDermott and Snyder (Wenger et al 2002), Wenger watered down the concept somewhat to suggest that Communities of Practice are… "*groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on going basis.*" (Wenger et al 2002:4).

There is a sense of imperative in Wenger et al (2002) that Communities of Practice are the best organisational form in business and other fields. This is how the literature tends to read today. In the main, the literature does not acknowledge problems with Communities of Practice and where it does note possible limitations, it does not address them in detail, either to understand how issues arise or to indicate how to overcome problems (Cox 2005). Huysman and de Wit (2003:28) agree that one of the problems with research on knowledge sharing mechanisms, such as a Community of Practice is that it is usually of the 'best practice' form, where only good results are highlighted and does not focus on reasons for failure in some cases. The literature is generally also short term in nature: the researchers do not investigate a Community of Practice innovation over say, five years to see how it continues to work.

The concept is now ubiquitous and can be applied with apparent ease to groups that liaise across organisational boundaries and across geographic distances. A new trend is to call just about any *virtual* group a Community of Practice. Indeed the group does not need to be a work-based group, but social networking can now be framed as Communities of Practice. Originally the idea was to privilege the importance of face-to-face communication in groups. It seems this has been downgraded in the era of web 2.0 communication strategies. Ardichvili (2008) lists several high profile companies that use Virtual Communities of Practice (VCOP) as part of their knowledge management strategies. They include, Ford, Xerox, IBM and Shell. Implying by this list that if they are doing it, then it must be worth doing.

These days Communities of Practice are deliberately set up and managed in business. This is contrary to the early idea that a Community of Practice emerged informally over time. It seems to me that in modern capitalist workplaces, many factors can combine to make their implementation and success unlikely. I have found the literature frustrating in that it tends to tell us only about success, but not failure and it tends to focus on success at a given point in time. There are no long-term studies of Community of Practice that I could find (see also Huysman & de Wit 2003).

VTI: A Case Study

In October of 2008, two VTI members approached me and suggested that we start to work on something more collaboratively and use the skills and experience of members to develop a project that would be of use to members. In general, our professional development activities involved hearing a guest speaker on a topic of interest to members. To me, as the new Executive Officer, this idea sounded appealing: the members would actively work together, share their knowledge and deepen their learning and I would facilitate the process.

So it was agreed that for 2009 VTI would make a commitment to work collaboratively in partnership and to embark on a project that required sharing across organisational boundaries. We agreed to share our best practice in relation to quality assurance processes for the courses that members offer in other countries. One member speaking for all, said, "*we can only strengthen our capabilities and maintain quality by developing a group approach to the issues*". We were excited by the prospect of coming up with a best practice guide for all members to use and abide by. We developed aims and methods for the project.

Aims of the Project

1. To assist members in developing and enhancing their own quality assurance mechanisms for TNE [transnational education]
2. To share experience of quality assurance amongst members
3. To provide a benchmark for assessing and measuring quality in off shore programs.

Method

1. Seek existing best practice procedures from member institutes
2. Review IEAA (2008), the AQTF and other relevant literature for guidelines on quality assurance methods that may be applied to off shore projects
3. Prepare a checklist of questions to ask when assessing an off shore project
4. Source and review/update existing simple and practical templates which are AQTF compliant and that demonstrate continuous improvement in off shore projects. If required, create others to produce a comprehensive set.

We determined the outcome would be, at the least, a document which gives members ideas and tips on ensuring quality standards are met in relation to all their off shore programs and activity and at best, a fully endorsed procedure for determining and ensuring quality of off shore programs, for the whole of VTI to use.

We met together face-to-face on six occasions in 2009 and prepared a finished document by November 2009. But it wasn't all smooth sailing. For more than 2 months no members shared their material and for a further 2 months only one person shared her material.

Following our third meeting as a group, when it became clear that sharing was proving difficult, I asked members to fill in an anonymous survey (see appendix) on their experience of the project of sharing best practice in off shore Quality Assurance. Twelve members filled in the survey (of a possible 20). As we proceeded I also interviewed 3 members for their views of our progress.

Theoretically everyone agreed to share his/her best practice ideas. But as we moved from being a more passive group of individuals who listen to guest speakers to increasing the level of co-operation and sharing, the level of disquiet also rose. Sharing was very slow and when I asked members why sharing did not occur so freely, they raised the spectre of competition.

At the third meeting of the Community of Practice, one member told the group that he had checked internally about the legitimacy of sharing his provider's quality assurance material and found that it was not acceptable to share this information with others in the Community of Practice.

This was the first time that such a direct acknowledgment of a stance to withhold was raised in a meeting and it was echoed by another member. She too had a similar experience. She was advised by 'the legal team' that sharing would not be tolerated.

It was noted by the member who raised the issue, that just by stating this position openly in the Community of Practice, he was possibly further in breach of loyalty to his employer, because his employer did not want to be seen within the Community of Practice as deliberately withholding information that may be useful to fellow providers of VET.

So reasons for not sharing were initially put down to the fear of disloyalty to the home employer. There was a clear sense that sharing may be punished. One member said… "*One of the things which tends to block us from sharing is competition. This stops us from sharing any 'secrets'. Before privatisation we used to share more openly. Now we worry about competition, and our competitive advantage*".

Another member said '*[my institution] is looking for the "point of difference" and our clients are looking for the "value equation". Weasel words, I know, but our overseas partners want to know what it is we offer that no one else does, and a sharing philosophy, while improving everyone, would homogenise the product and the perceived risk may be that a client whose loyalty is to Brand TAFE, rather than [my institution] could shift, based on price cutting.*"

The issue of competition was clearly upper-most in the minds of members. Note the reliance on business jargon in the justifications used for not sharing. One member even acknowledges these as 'weasel words'. But the power of weasel words is in the degree of distance they afford us from painful, complex or paradoxical situations that we are describing. It seemed that using the language of the business world would somehow legitimise the withholding of information to the group. When publically defending the decision not to share in the Community of Practice, members used the jargon of the dominant paradigm to lend authority to the decision. They also laid the blame on others within their institutions: The decision was not taken by them, but by others.

The term 'community' is unfortunate in Community of Practice, as it conjures a warm and fuzzy feeling. A place where conflict is banned and the group is known for its convivial social relations (Hoggett 1997). We tend to sees communities as places of safety. The use of the term community lulls members into believing that all will be well inside the group. It suggests fairness, equality and safety. But of course, as we know this is not always the case in work groups. All 12 surveyed VTI members agreed that on Wenger's 2002 definition, VTI is a Community of Practice. VTI members want to feel that warmth when they come to meetings. Korczynski (2003) calls some arrangements 'communities

of coping' where emotional support is given to members in a tightly controlled workplace. Perhaps VTI members felt this way too, as they all valued coming together outside of their own organisation. In a 2008 VTI member survey, 84% of members found our meetings 'very useful' or 'extremely useful'. Members commented that they liked having time for informal networking between members and sharing of strategies. Yet in 2009 as they shared more formally, they felt conflict between being part of the group and yet not, being loyal to employers and to the needs of the group, and their desire to improve the quality of their courses, and also maintain "competitive advantage".

The turning point in our collaborative project came when one intrepid and very experienced member agreed to share her own intellectual work, saying '*I share because I believe having quality assurance in place does improve the outcomes of students and that's my goal. I want the students to get that benefit. So I share.*' Evidently she had a higher goal than loyalty to the competitive model. Presenting her work as a draft to the group meant that sharing and collaboration from other members then followed with another member later saying, '*If I ask at my workplace, 'can I share this?' I know the answer will be no. So I don't ask.*' This quote illustrates that over time the balance shifted from upholding the dominant competitive paradigm and using it as the reason not to share, to subversion of the dominant paradigm.

The two key questions I asked of members in the anonymous survey were '*what helps your capacity to share at the VTI meetings*' and '*what inhibits your capacity to share knowledge at the VTI meetings'.* Members responded that trust, knowing everyone and feeling connected together were what led to sharing (top answer) and lack of confidence in the topic at hand was the key reason given for not sharing.

So while competition was the initial reason given for not sharing, later it emerged (in anonymous survey) that the Community of Practice brought up other fears: There is the fear of exposing oneself as incompetent. As one member said: "*Sometimes I make an assumption that other institutes may be more advanced or have… better documents, systems or procedures*". And another added, "*Feeling inexperienced in a number of areas, compared to the vast experience of some group members*" inhibited sharing.

Members noted in the survey that the key determinants to sharing are trust, knowing everyone and feeling connected to the group. The second most important element to sharing is knowledge and experience of the topic. These responses point to the complexity of knowledge transfer in a Community of Practice. Clearly the perception was that not all members were equal. There was a power differential within the group, largely based on perceived experience in international education. At first the competitive model was blamed, but really there were more fears at play. It was easier to use business jargon to excuse the lack of sharing than to admit openly that a more fundamental fear presented itself: The fear of sharing with peers and being found wanting. At the half-way point and in anonymous survey, members acknowledged these deeper fears. A shared understanding of the knowledge base and the ideological stance within the knowledge area are often assumed to be present in a Community of Practice but may not actually be so in practice (Ormrod et al 2007). The issue of trust simply cannot be under-estimated.

After the initial show start, members did share ideas and experience while not compromising their sense of loyalty to their employer. But it was a tricky balancing act and members had to find ways to discuss Quality Assurance in off shore programs without giving away intellectual property. In a competitive environment we tend to think of everything as a resource that is owned and can be bought and sold. This includes

intellectual resources. Furthermore in capitalism, we tend to see resources as scarce (Smith 2003). This is the way capitalism works. We can't make money from things that are freely available and in abundance. In capitalist workplaces, we are out of practice with sharing and we focus on the fears raised by the model of competition for scarce resources. The complex regulatory system (especially in international education where we deal with federal and state government regulation and legislation) is one of surveillance not relationship, trust, value and loyalty. People are required to 'tick the box' and report on the procedures they have in place to ensure quality, but they don't have a *conversation* with regulatory bodies about what quality means or what it may look like in different situations. This fact made the sharing of the various ways that members enact 'quality' problematic to discuss. There was a sense that there is a 'right' way to demonstrate quality and if this was not done, then all other ways are inferior. There is a difficulty sharing across organisational boundaries in a competitive world, but there is a more fundamental fear associated with sharing and that is exposing your own ignorance to the group.

My reflections on our choice of topic to collaborate include that quality assurance these days is more about compliance and less about improving what we do. The better way to improve quality of our course offerings would be to discuss the many ways we may measure, change and improve our arrangements and collaboration seems an efficient way to bring new ideas into the system. But competition brings a level of fear into the work we do. Overall my experience with VTI is that becoming a Community of Practice is no easy matter and rather than being a solution to a set of organisational problems, it adds dimension to those problems. Communities of Practice do not exist in isolation and members do not un-problematically join in all activities of the Community of Practice.

Discussion: what I have learned

By way of discussion of the efforts of the VTI to collaborate, I will now outline what I have learned from this experience (with acknowledgement to Hodkinson 2005).

1. Learning is not unproblematic in a Community of Practice

People do not share if they feel they may be criticised for what they say; they may fear that they could get it wrong. They may be unclear on the cultural rules in play about how, when and what to share (Ardichvili 2008). The individual and the social situation interact in many and varied ways to produce learning. It is not clear as to how or why learning occurs in a social setting. Learning occurs sometimes and not other times, for some members and not others, in a more formal sense and also an informal sense. People participate at varying levels of involvement and this changes over time. It's more diverse and fluid they you might expect.

There is no simple matching of individual needs with the group ideal: this does not happen in the blink of an eye. Yet many articles suggest this is needed (Van Winkelen and Ramsell 2003). Ardichvili (2003:550) states that Communities of Practice must promote 'conditions for an open, uninhibited exchange of ideas and information' to be successful. How to achieve this is left to the reader to imagine. Notions of connectedness to the wider organisational milieu, power relations within and between the Community of Practice, and issues of the balance between agency and structure over time must be considered. A Community of Practice must be enacted as a protected space (Pemberton et al 2007), ie members must feel safe to speak honestly without fear that their words may get back to people outside the Community of Practice. Bearing all of this in mind, it

seems to me that learning in a social situation is very complex and I suggest is it dialectic in the broad Hegelian sense where simplistic understandings of learning need to be put to the test, found wanting in some aspects and where inherent contradictions are exposed, re-worked and finally a more complex synthesis of concepts about social learning can occur. I have found little in the literature on Community of Practice, which shows this depth of engagement with the concept of social learning.

2. Power relations exist both within and outside the Community of Practice

Unequal power relations are not commonly noted in Communities of Practice. The assumption seems to be that all members are equal. Yet obviously this is not the case - not all members of a learning group are equal in terms of what they bring and what they learn. VTI members were aware of this fact and its impact on the capacity to share. The desire to join in and share is felt differently by individual members, as some hold back and others share more enthusiastically. VTI members were also acutely aware of their responsibilities to the home institution. A learning group or Community of Practice is not immune to power relations.

3. The value of what is learned may be hard to quantify

Success may be defined in many ways and it is hard to calculate the usefulness of connections made, ideas generated in individual members, the capabilities gained by members that can be used in other situations (Dawes et al 2009). We have created a document for use by members. We have a tangible outcome to our project. It is not perfect, but it is the only document of its type in Australia. Yet the process of developing it and deepening our connection to each other was possibly more worthwhile than the finished product itself. Several members told me they were excited by our experience in sharing best practice and had deepened their connection to the TAFE brand by our modest attempts to share across organisational boundaries. This sense of belonging is hard to quantify.

4. The element of trust is essential

Trust and a sense of belonging impact on learning and several authors note its importance to the success of a Community of Practice (Ardichvili 2003; Chiu et al 2006; Hodkinson 2005), but few show how it can be engendered. Ardichvili argues that trust emerges after repeated positive social interactions in his example of Virtual Communities of Practice, but he doesn't say how virtual social connections are made and what social connection might actually mean in the virtual world. My experience is that trust may take many months to grow and that it has a mysterious and ephemeral quality. It can so easily evaporate by one simple comment in the group or by a change in those who attend the Community of Practice meetings. The level and continuity of trust changes with different members over time. In the VTI the simple act of breaking into small groups of four at one of our meetings, seemed to help build up collaboration from that point on.

5. The importance of time

The element of time is crucial if we are to properly study the efficacy of Communities of Practice. As I said earlier, few if any, studies look at the success of a Community of Practice over a long time period. It will be interesting to see over time and with group member changes, if the VTI Community of Practice will become more hierarchical and structured or continue to work collaboratively. Will it continue in its subversive way undermining the dominant paradigm of capitalism – maintaining control over resources – and will further, deeper collaboration occur? My feeling is that with every change in personnel attending, we will have to re-build a sense of safety and trust within the Community of Practice and so the level of collaboration may in reality be re-negotiated at very regular intervals. We need also to be alive to the impact of the past on present initiatives. For some members the memory of days of collaborative work is strong and so they support it in TAFE, but for newer staff, the importance of competitive advantage remains a dominant mantra.

6. The Community of Practice does not exist in isolation

Learning is connected to the social mores of the group. The social mores of the group are linked in turn with social customs/culture of larger groups from which they come. The culture of both the immediate group and its larger 'parent' are built on the past. The Community of Practice is not a group operating in isolation from its parent body or other significant structural entity. The Community of Practice necessarily interacts with and is linked with other bodies.

It follows that individuals in the Community of Practice also have allegiances elsewhere which impact on the success of the learning occurring. Shifting between learning groups can either enhance or shut down learning. Whether it does, will depend on the interaction of the individual with others in the group, the field of learning, the interaction with the parent body and so on.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I will outline key points that may help others in their interactions with Communities of Practice. Firstly it is important to note that they do provide a forum for social learning to occur and for the dominant paradigm of competition to be subverted for the benefit ultimately of both the members of the Community of Practice and for the end user of the learning, in this instance the students who undertake TAFE study. Any success therefore is, in my view, worth pursuing.

However, the potential for learning in dependent on a number of factors that interact in ways which are not easy to understand. It is infinitely more complex than the various reports and research studies on Communities of Practice would have us believe to set up a Community of Practice and to continue to work collaboratively. The learning that occurs is hard to measure, different for each member and different over time. The construction of who we are and how we work together is a continual work in progress. Although rarely mentioned in the literature each member brings assumptions about themselves and others, their prejudices, unconscious motivations for joining and perceptions of relative power. Their understanding of the field of endeavour may each differ too. In addition,

there is always a push and pull motion between joining in and keeping a distance for each member.

Therefore being as clear as possible on a number of fronts may lessen the impact of these complexities on the activities of the Community of Practice.

- Be clear on structure, role and purpose of the group so members know what they are buying into.

- Articulate your structure role and purpose so bodies with which the Community of Practice interacts are also clear.

- Leaders within the Community of Practice do not have to be the most knowledgeable but the most inclusive and supportive of others in the Community of Practice. Mentoring of junior or new members is helpful too to overcome the lack of connection that members told me prevented sharing.

- Rituals that build trust must be practised and maintained for knowledge transfer to occur. Provide opportunities (perhaps with small working groups) to build trust of one another. Also informality does not mean we are not working – have a lunch as well as a meeting.

- Having technology to assist the Community of Practice is helpful, as we did for between meetings; but frankly nothing beats meeting face-to-face. Being in the same room together over a coffee or lunch helps members to gain a rapport that is harder to develop in the virtual world.

- Work on something new together - working on a shared project in a commercial area of activity, inherently makes sharing awkward. It is easier to create something new together where nothing existed than to try to draw on knowledge already built by members.

- Awareness of and articulation of the difficulty of sharing across organisational boundaries helps to give social learning a collective understanding and a way to frame it. Naming our difficulties paradoxically seemed to help free members to share.

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VICTORIAN TAFE INTERNATIONAL INC

Member Survey

Thanks for taking a moment to fill in the survey and return to exec@vti.edu.au or PO Box 2195 Caulfield Junction 3161

This survey seeks your views on VTI as a Community of Practice (C of P).

1.The VTI Off Shore Special Interest Group could be called a community of practice. A Community of Practice is *a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on going basis.*

On this definition, do you feel that VTI acts as a C of P?

❑   yes I agree that VTI is a C of P
❑   no, I don't think we operate as a C of P
❑   I am not really sure

2. Can you tell me why you circled the number you did in Q1?

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3. In general, what helps your capacity to share at the VTI meetings? (suggestions could include: knowledge and experience of the topic, knowing everyone in the room, confidence in your own position, trusting everyone, feeling connected to the group, desire to improve the TAFE brand, direct relevance of the topic)

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4. In general, what inhibits your capacity to share knowledge at the VTI meetings? (suggestions could include: lack of trust of others, fear of reprisals back at the office, lack of confidence in the topic at hand, desire to protect intellectual property, desire to protect market edge)

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5. How useful have you found the past two meetings of the off shore group where workshops on the quality assurance project took place?

       1 = not useful at all
       2 = slightly useful
       3 = neither useful or not
       4 = very useful
       5 = extremely useful

6. Can you tell us why you circled the number you did in Q5?

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7. Is QA in off shore projects a good topic for developing a group approach to? Please say why or why not.

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8. Can you suggest another topic for the Off Shore SIG to engage in sharing of information and approaches?

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9. Any other comments?

Thank you.