Introduction

In this chapter we will explore and share the practical things you need to do if you have decided that a community way of working is right for you. In Chapter 2 we introduced you to the ‘ways of working questionnaire’ and we hope this will have helped you to make the right decision. We also suggest that you share this book with your friends and colleagues and talk through your ideas with them.

The issue you want to address

By now you should have an issue or some topics that you think a community way of working might help you address. The issue or topics needs to be something that is important to you and that you do not believe you are able to sort out or resolve on your own.

SCENARIO PART 1

To make this chapter as practical as we can, we have developed a case study. This is based on our experience but changed enough so as not to break any confidentiality
agreements we have in place with our clients. As you will have seen for most of the book we have been ‘organization agnostic’ that is we believe that workplace communities are applicable to any organization, regardless of its main focus or type.

Imagine you are part of a team of software architects. Your actual role or level of seniority does not matter. The team is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff in all roles. As a team you have explored all the obvious issues, such as pay and benefits, team culture and ways of working. All of this seems to be OK and comparable with other organizations, but you still have this problem. This issue is increasingly impacting on the ability of the team to produce results and meet its tasks and targets. As you have tried all the traditional ways of addressing the issue you are thinking that a workplace community may be worth a try. Here are a few more details about the team and the wider organization:

- Team size – 150 of which 100 are dedicated software engineers and 50 are in leadership, managerial, coordination and support roles. The organization has been around for 15 years and employs 4,000 people. These people are distributed around the world mostly based in 6 major locations.

We will come back to this scenario as we work through the process of getting started, so this was just an introduction.

Community scope, purpose and name

Before you launch your ideas on the organization you need to spend time defining the theme and scope of your workplace community. By theme we mean the broad area of inquiry and by scope, what you want to focus on within this broad area. Think carefully about what you want to use your community for. However also be aware that as you initiate the community others may shift your thinking and the theme, scope