

Although management can't dictate membership in a community of practice, it can enable its formation (see Exhibit 3.7). Management can offer meeting places where knowledge workers can have lunch and work together. It can organize activities where knowledge workers can network and share ideas and discuss what other departments are doing. It can publish profiles of project descriptions in the company newsletter to alert other knowledge workers of projects that may have synergies. It can send workers to professional conferences.

Often the greatest contribution that a corporation can make to aid in the formation of communities of practice is to support community of practice coordinators. The coordinator is a leadership position defined by the community, not by management, who takes time from his or her regular duties to coordinate meetings, create flyers, send e-mail reminders, and otherwise coordinate the meetings of communities of practice.

EXHIBIT 3.7

