# Achieving Digital Transformation:
## The Role of Communities of Practice in Building Cloud Skills

*Digital transformation has become central to the success of nearly every major industry. According to a recent IDG report, 93% of surveyed enterprises have a digital-first strategy for their business. These strategies encompass everything from enhanced data availability to the development of new revenue streams.[1]*

Successful digital transformation, however, doesn't just happen in the IT department. It requires all employees to buy in, as well as an organization's commitment to cloud-skills training that goes beyond a single one-day class. Organizations need a comprehensive skills development program that incorporates both formal and informal approaches.

Among these informal approaches, communities of practice have garnered attention from industry leaders. Communities of practice are groups of like-minded professionals who come together to share information and expertise.

**True communities of practice share three crucial traits:**

1. They share a domain of knowledge in a specific area

2. They pursue common objectives and goals

3. They are practitioners, not just hobbyists

## Closing the Cloud Skills Gap with Communities of Practice

Many employees lack the cloud skills and expertise to thrive in today's constantly evolving workplace. To close that gap, training and certification are key. When used to complement training and certification programs, communities of practice can enhance the learning process by bringing people together socially, either virtually or in person. This, in turn, encourages peer mentoring, knowledge sharing, and innovative problem solving. These informal groups have been shown to improve employee performance, help members solve problems quickly, and ease new-hire onboarding.



[1] **2019 Digital Business Survey**, IDG, 2019

## Launching and Nurturing Communities of Practice

How do managers launch communities of practice—or nurture the ones they already have? Bottom line: they should look for talent that's hiding in plain sight and nurture groups with an eye on the needs of the company.

**Here are five key steps:**

1.  Identify potential communities of practice among the mentors and leaders you already have, like certified professionals who are willing to help others get certified.

2.  Focus on issues and problems that are central to the organization.

3.  Give communities projects and goals that are central to the company's objectives, and enable them with training and certification resources like learning paths and ramp-up guides.

4.  Ensure executive support and sponsorship for communities by creating support groups and designating champion go-betweens.

5.  Continuously promote the communities, communicate their achievements, and celebrate their successes.

## Conclusion

Developing cloud fluency across the organization is an essential part of any digital transformation. Cloud fluency depends on continuous learning, and communities of practice have become a vital component of that. Communities of practice create environments where people can learn from each other, supplement formal training programs, study together to pass exams, and encourage each other to tackle the next training goal or certification. To be successful, organizations need to be proactive and work to create, manage, and nurture communities of practice.

Organizations can start with the AWS Training and Certification learning path for the widely applicable role of Cloud Practitioner. This path provides training in foundational cloud skills across technical and nontechnical roles within an organization.

[Read the e-book to learn more](#)