

User Groups

Understanding Effort and Impact

Implementing regular user groups for your team is an essential for success. When looking at the matrix of Center of Excellence best practices, User Groups is the second item to focus on. First your team needs a technical lead, then your team needs to plan to execute on a productive and meaningful User Group Strategy. The real effort depends on the dynamics of the team you work with and the overall corporate culture. For some of you, all work must be billable to a project and that can be a huge hurdle in the implementation of a regular user group. Some of you may already have regular team meetings and it is very simple to weave a LabVIEW centric meeting into the cadence. Often, the hurdle is to identify the technical topics that are relevant for your group and then find content that is relatively easy for you to deliver. Hosting User Groups should not devolve into a near full-time job. One of the goals of the Center of Excellence portal (ni.com/labviewcoe) is to host well-vetted user group content.

Learning

Begin at www.ni.com/labviewcoe >> Engage in Community Learning >> User Groups. There is no specific technical information for you to learn so that you can grow a thriving user group for your team. However, here are some questions for you to consider:

- What do I know that my team needs to better understand?
- Who are the other thought leaders who could lead sessions?
- If I need to study a topic, will my manager allocate the appropriate time?
- Often the real successful user groups focus on a series of topics rather than random sessions. What “series” of topics are most important to our team right now?
- Who are guest speakers whom we can invite? (NI, Alliance Partners, other consultants)

Practicing

There are many things that your team can practice or develop proof-of-concepts as you are embarking on Center of Excellence activities. Hosting your user groups is not something that you practice. Rather you need to have a solid plan in place before your first meeting. However, your first couple of presenters may appreciate the chance to practice their presentation/session/discussion before the first couple of meetings. Hosting good user group meetings at the onset is important to build the needed momentum.

Executing

In addition to reviewing the content mentioned above, ensure you have completed the following:

- Secured the support of your manager.
- Identified themes and general topics that your team will be interested in.
- Planned the content for the first 3 meetings.
- Found 4 peers that you know will attend the first couple of meetings.
- Found a peer that can help with future meetings (Optional).