Why

Because there is a lot of experience and knowledge present within the company in all areas.

What

A group of peers regularly meet (e.g. every 6 weeks) for about 3 hours and during that time they tackle one or two real cases (any kind of case can be addressed) using a systematic approach.

How

Below is one of the systematic methods you can use to analyze a case:

Step 1:
Make an inventory of cases that could be discussed during this co-development session. In other words, who has a case they want to tackle? Often you will sense very quickly which of the cases is the most urgent. If not make a choice together. Most of the time you can effectively cover only one or two cases.

Step 2:
The case owner gives as much detail as possible about the ins and outs of their case: what is it about, who is involved, what is the problem, what are the complicating elements, what is the question, what has already been tried, etc. While doing this the other participants remain quiet and write the questions they have on post-its (one question per post-it). They should start writing from the moment the case owner starts telling their story.

Step 3:
All post-its are given to the case owner who places them on a table or a wall, putting every question into one the following three categories (without answering them!): Hot: This question triggers me in one way or another; it touches something. Cold: A clear question I have already answered in the past; it does not really trigger anything at this moment. Lukewarm: In between hot and cold. As stated, the case owner can briefly state why a question is hot, cold or lukewarm but s/he does not yet answer the question.

Step 4:
After classifying all questions the case owner answers the hot and lukewarm questions. Other participants listen and write down any new questions that arise (not on post-its anymore, just on a piece of paper).

Step 5:
The other participants pose their remaining questions and the case owner answers each question immediately.

Step 6:
Now we move from exploring to forming opinions. Every participant has to complete the following sentence (putting themselves in the place of the case owner): my problem is...

Step 7:
Everyone reads their sentence out loud in turn. The case owner listens, take notes and at the end of this step says which sentences trigger something in them and why.

Step 8:
Now the group can have an open discussion leading to some tips and advice.

When

When you want people to learn from each other and use knowledge already present in the company. At the same time you build deeper connections.

Skills and necessary training

One session facilitated by a trained facilitator is advisable (perhaps someone from HR?).
Some knowledge of different techniques for analyzing cases (research co-development on the internet).

Critical success factors

The group should be composed of people of the same hierarchical level.

Possible workshop exercise

Practice the method above on a case.