COMMUNITY LEADERS

MAGAZINE

COMMUNITY LEADERS INSTITUTE

COMMUNITY GROWTH TACTICS

MANAGING A BLOCKCHAIN COMMUNITY

OPTIMIZING COMMUNITY OPERATIONS

MEASURING COMMUNITY-ATTRIBUTED REVENUE

DAVID SPINKS, CMX, KEYNOTES AT CLIX MEMPHIS

4-5 APRIL

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WELCOME

I am excited that some of you will be holding this magazine in your ACTUAL hands as we open our inaugural event, CLIX Memphis, at The Renasant Convention Centre on April 4 & 5.

It's been such a long time since we've been able to come together in person and we're so excited to finally get to meet some of you in real life - to get to know each other, exchange ideas, discuss best practice and share stories – and hopefully a beer or two this evening too! It's a real privilege to bring you together and we hope that this event is the first of many opportunities to connect you both in real life and online.

"WE'RE SO EXCITED TO FINALLY GET TO MEET SOME OF YOU IN REAL LIFE - TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, EXCHANGE IDEAS, DISCUSS BEST PRACTICE AND SHARE STORIES."

Now, I think you'll agree we've outdone ourselves again this issue with contributions on everything from optimizing community operations to quantifying impact from a revenue perspective and from audience data to blockchain communities. We've compiled a list of some of the industry's finest community coaches and consultants, shared The Periodic Table of Community Strategy and taken a deep dive into community growth tactics. Enjoy!

We created this magazine as a way to curate the most insightful thought-leadership in community, to discuss best practice, share case studies, to educate, guide and inform, to bring you the latest technology news and to reflect on the developments impacting community building and community management. We love to hear from you and we'd love to include YOUR stories, insights and news – so do reach out and let us know if there's anything you'd like to contribute or anything you'd like to see us cover. You can email me on heidi@365media.com or you can connect with me and other community builders and community managers in our facebook group below.

Heidi

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This is YOUR magazine – let us know what you'd like to see more of. Send your feedback to amy@communityleadersinstitute.com. Or, if you have an idea for an article, would like your community to be featured, or would like to submit content – we'd love to hear from you.

Welcome to
THE CLI COMMUNITY
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Optimization

With Andrew Claremont
& Community OPServations

OPTIMIZING YOUR COMMUNITY OPERATIONS

Andrew Claremont, Founder of Community Stacks, talks about the importance of making better use of the time we have as Community Managers and creating efficient routines for success.

E arly in my career, at the recommendation of bosses and colleagues, I went deep on productivity methods. Getting Things Done was the first I was introduced to. Then there was the *Pomodoro technique*, where you set a timer to do work in 25 minute increments. If that didn't work, there were apps that monitored your browsing habits so you could police yourself.

And, yes, timeboxing — something I've done aggressively for the last six years – where we play Tetris with our calendars, shuffling around blocks of time assigned to specific tasks, in an attempt to create that "focus" time for finding our flow.

Years later, I read that what we actually needed was to be in a state of flow, with largely unstructured time, doing one thing.

Still, none of these productivity methods solve the problem of having a finite number of hours in the day. Hell, I'd say productivity isn't even the thing that we should be thinking about.

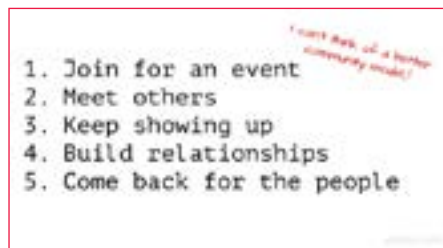## FORGET PRODUCTIVITY. LET'S TALK ABOUT OPTIMIZATION.

What do I mean by optimization? I mean making better use of the time we have.

In his book *Atomic Habits*, James Clear talks about systemic-level changes: small, positive adjustments that lead to successful results.

In the context of optimization, especially within Community Operations, I see that as small tasks that add up to big activities.

What we spend time on matters as much, if not more, than how we measure that time, and the things we do should have a compounding effect,

```
1. Join for an event
2. Meet others
3. Keep showing up
4. Build relationships
5. Come back for the people
```

creating something greater.

LET'S USE MEETUPS AS AN EXAMPLE.

At a high level, a meetup is a group of people who get together on a regular basis, stay in touch between events, and build strong relationships through those shared experiences.
People will often join a meetup for a single event, but over time, as they get to know others in the group, they'll come back because of the connections made with acquaintances and friends.

I can't think of a better representation of a community!

But *meetups are a lot of work*. Handling venues, activities, presenters, promotions, communication, sponsors. There's so much to deal with. If you have an organizing team, add on the issues of team coordination, governance, settling disputes, etc.

How do you manage it all? By creating efficient routines.

While every meetup is different, every meetup follows a pattern. There are activities done before, during, and after the event.

I started organizing meetups in 2008 and conferences in 2011. Over the years I've developed my own routines. They're not perfect. I keep iterating on them, stealing inspiration from other organizers and events. But they work as a starting point.

Here's how I approach it.

THE DRUMBEAT OF YOUR COMMUNITY - What are we doing every year? Every quarter? Every month? Every week? Every day?

This is our starting point.

Let's say you're working on a customer community.

Every year, you have a flagship customer event. Every quarter, or season, you have a new campaign. Every month you have a newsletter with product updates, or a special theme to plan your activities around.

You have weekly office hours or livestreams with customers. Every day you're on social media, or in the forums, welcoming new members, answering questions, settling disputes, moderating content, and so on.

Those are just a few of the public-facing things you look after. On the back-end, you have annual team summits, quar-

terly planning sessions, monthly stakeholder updates, weekly KPI reviews, and daily stand-ups.

This can seem like a daunting, never-ending list of projects. But we can optimize! We can build efficient routines for each one of these recurring activities. In doing so, we'll make it easier on ourselves, but we'll also make it easier to delegate and scale.

DEFINE & DOCUMENT YOUR ROUTINES.

Creating manuals for your work will help with your own accountability, make it easier to delegate tasks when needed, and help you onboard new team members faster.

So, step one: write down all the types of activities you're responsible for.

What do you do every year? Quarter? Month? Week? Day? List those out.

Then, for each type of activity, create a set of corresponding checklists.

What do you need to do before the activity? During the activity? After the activity?

For a meetup, my checklists look something like this:

1 BEFORE THE MEETUP

☐ Schedule
☐ Book venue (in-person or virtual)
☐ Publish event page
☐ Announce on site
☐ Email members
☐ Announce on social

2 DURING THE MEETUP

☐ Set up recording
☐ Welcome members
☐ Announcements
☐ Presenter 1, capture takeaways
☐ Presenter 2, capture takeaways
☐ Presenter 3, capture takeaways
☐ Q&A, take notes
☐ End recordings
☐ Host social event (in-person or virtual)

3 AFTER THE MEETUP

☐ Notes compiled
☐ Write recap, review recording
☐ Edit & upload the recording
☐ Update site post w/ recap, recording
☐ Update event page w/ link to post
☐ Share post on social

NEXT, YOU'RE GOING TO CREATE TEMPLATES.

These are assets that prompt you to fill in the blanks, or can be shared with others for collaboration. I like having an outline, or brief, for each activity.

For example, when planning meetups, my brief looked like this:
▪ Meetup title
▪ Meetup date
▪ Meetup location (in-person or virtual)
▪ Event page URL
▪ Site post URL
▪ Recording URL
▪ Featured image/thumbnail
▪ Meetup description
▪ Meetup agenda
▪ Presenter bios x3
  o Name
  o Title

  o Short description
  o Photo
  o Social/site links
▪ Sponsor details (if applicable)
  o Sponsor name
  o Sponsor blurb
  o Sponsor logo
  o Sponsor links
▪ Notes/takeaways
  o Written during the meetup

Here's the template on Google Docs. Feel free to use it.

Each section would have placeholder text describing what information needed to be included, or an example to use as inspiration/reference.

That brief would become the working document for the event. We'd make updates as details came in, and refer back to the document when writing the recap post.

MAKE EVERYTHING FINDABLE.

Your documents and files should all live in the same spot, or be easily found by cross-linking between locations.

For example, we use Microsoft 365 at work, so I have all of our docs and files saved to a OneDrive team folder. (I do the same thing with my personal projects on Google Drive.)

We create playbooks to provide guidance for our checklists.

These playbooks are references for best practices, and serve as the hub/single source of truth for finding everything else. The playbooks need to be living documents, searchable and shareable, so we build them on platforms like Confluence, SharePoint, Coda, or Notion.

Your checklists can also plug into apps like ClickUp, Asana, or Airtable.

Or, if you're already building your playbooks in Notion, you could just centralize everything there.

Point is, the nature of a recurring project translates wonderfully into these solutions. If you have a lot of things on the go, they'll be able to give you the high-level, at-a-glance summary you need.

Last but not least, we have dedicated communication channels for our work, and link out to the files, playbooks, and project management apps from those channels.

If you use Slack, you can drop these into pinned messages or channel links. If you use Microsoft Teams, you could connect directly to SharePoint.

CREATE ONCE. ITERATE OFTEN.

A community is a connected group of people with something in common. They connect through shared experiences. As community managers, it's our job to facilitate those experiences through activities.

On their own, the to-do list can feel overwhelming. But if we adjust our thinking, and focus on building efficient routines, each activity becomes an experiment, an opportunity to refine our approach.

Turn the big things into small things. Create once. Iterate often.

"Doing the small things well for a period of time means you begin doing the larger things better, which leads to doing the big things best – your success compounds. This practice is an absolute competitive advantage." – Josh Strebel via Indie Hackers

Andrew helps organizations build, manage, and grow their community programs, with a particular focus on community platforms and operations.

8 PRACTICAL BENEFITS OF USING AN EVENT COMMUNITY PLATFORM

The ability for community managers to grow and maintain their online communities is largely affected by the technology they use.

You've likely used social media platforms like Facebook or learning management systems (LMS) as a home for your online community.

However, LMS lack networking and engagement features, while social media platforms blur the lines between community members' personal and professional lives.

So, what is the best platform for your online community?

Some event platforms can be used to host your community events and serve as your year-round community platform. These all-in-one event platforms provide many benefits for community managers and have all the features you need to keep member engagement high throughout the year.

To help inspire your community-building strategy, read on to see the eight key benefits of using event technology to keep your members engaged year-round.

1 BUILD CONNECTIONS WITH EVENTS & MEETINGS

Event platforms offer you the ability to keep members engaged in between your in-person events with virtual meetings, webinars, and networking sessions. Organize meetups and training sessions on an ongoing basis with the help of invitations for select member groups, built-in networking and engagement tools, DIY live streaming, and offer an on-demand content library for members to access in their own time.

2 KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN FOR ATTENDEES

The best event community platforms function as your own private social network. They allow community members to make new connections while you maintain complete control of your branding and community standards. In between events, members can use the event platform to engage in conversations using group discussions, private chat, 1:1 video meetings and interactive breakout rooms.

3 INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS WITH PLATFORM CUSTOMIZATION

For recurring community events, it's crucial to drive brand awareness wherever possible. A strong brand will keep attendees coming back to a tight-knit community of supporters, who in turn become brand ambassadors. In contrast to platforms like Facebook or LinkedIn, the best event platforms let you customize your entire online space, from the color theme to background images. This helps build loyalty for your association, corporation, or not-for-profit organization.

4 GROW YOUR SPONSORSHIP REVENUE

In a year-round event community, you can offer sponsors ongoing access to your members. In addition to sponsored ads, notifications, and virtual exhibitor booths, create an evergreen video content library to offer sponsors additional opportunities to share their brand messaging. Do sponsors need inspiration on what's possible? Let them browse your event community platform, and they'll have firsthand evidence of how effective it can be for driving brand awareness.

5 TRACK ENGAGEMENT FOR BETTER ROI REPORTING AND MARKET SEGMENTATION

EventMobi's event platform has a robust analytics dashboard that allows you track your members' interests, engagement, and actions. As you extend access to your event platform, you will be able to learn more and more about your audience's interests and behaviors over time. This data will demonstrate the success of your event community to sponsors and internal stakeholders, and help you define member preferences for future sponsorships.

6 STRENGTHENING YOUR MESSAGING & MARKETING STRATEGY

Your event community platform can double as a marketing channel. Regular updates and reminders will not only build buzz around your

events program, but will also strengthen your organization's overall marketing strategy. Leading up to a flagship event, try producing and promoting live stream and video content that helps to create excitement and build anticipation for the main attraction. Run webinars featuring upcoming speakers, or offer members a series of pre-recorded interviews with high-profile attendees.

7 PROVIDE EASY ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES & RESEARCH

Event communities connect like-minded people, providing opportunities for moments of inspiration that encourage members to engage and commit. In the process, event community members deliver added value back to fellow attendees, event sponsors and partners, and the event organizers. Centered around a library of evergreen video content, your event community platform can become a hub for community resources, knowledge sharing, and collaboration.

8 OFFER MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your event platform can incorporate many of the benefits that come with a learning management system. It can be used to host webinars, interactive workshops and training modules. With the help of analytics, you can even track how long each attendee watched live stream and video sessions. This kind of hard data is invaluable when it comes time to award CE credits to your community members.

The technology you use can either enhance or hinder your community engagement efforts. Therefore it is critical to use a technology that is well built to serve your goals. The EventMobi Event Platform offers a complete range of networking, engagement, live stream and video features, making it the perfect environment for your online event community. Interested in learning more?

Discover the secret to successful year-round engagement in this free guide.

ABOUT EVENTMOBI

EventMobi makes it easy for event organizers to plan, promote, monetize and deliver engaging in-person, virtual & hybrid event experiences. From Event Websites and Registration, to an award-winning mobile Event App, Virtual & Hybrid Event Platform, and a complete range of support and production services, EventMobi's Event Management Platform has been trusted by planners since 2009 at 27,000+ global events.
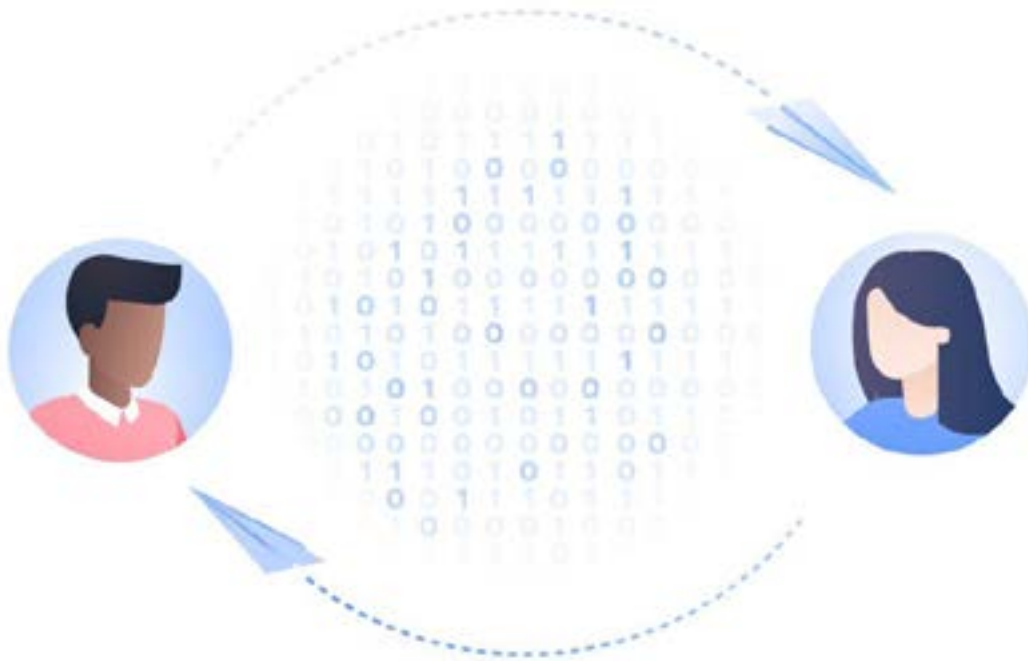
END-TO-END COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTION:
Quantifying impact from a revenue perspective

By Steven Yum, Community Team Lead, Common Room

As a community manager, you want greater collaboration with your internal teams and support in advocating for additional investment. To do that, you need ways to show them how community work also helps them achieve their goals. It's the essence of community building—bringing people **with** you and connecting on what matters to them—and it applies to internal teams as well.

It's important to take the time to understand what matters to each of the teams you talk to. Joshua Zerkel at Asana makes this the basis of his internal roadshows—understanding what matters to his audience based on what goals they're trying to achieve. For marketing teams, it might be expanding the reach of relevant content and raising brand awareness. For product teams, it might be addressing product feedback and understanding feature requests. For stakeholders who need to deliver business metrics, revenue is often a compelling data point. That being said, only 10% of community professionals cite an ability to financially quantify the value of their community (see the 2022 Community Industry Report).

"BY INVESTING IN THE TOOLS AND PROCESSES TO CALCULATE COMMUNITY-ATTRIBUTED REVENUE, YOU'RE PIONEERING AN END-TO-END CUSTOMER COMMUNITY JOURNEY."

We've previously covered the technical considerations for evaluating tools and shared a roadmap to build your tech stack to support your community through its stages of growth. In this article, we're going to dive deeper into what community-attributed revenue is and how to measure it, so you can concretely demonstrate the impact of your programs in terms more easily understood by your cross-functional stakeholders and executive leaders.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-ATTRIBUTED REVENUE (CAR)?

At Common Room, we define community-attributed revenue (CAR) as revenue from an organization whose member(s)

engaged in the community **before** they appeared in your CRM or Marketing Automation systems (like Salesforce, HubSpot, or Marketo. For ease we'll call it CRM below). By "community engagement," we mean interactions with your community through any of your platforms. For example:

- Posting or responding to messages on a chat platform like Slack or Discord or a forum like Discourse or Stack Overflow

- Creating an issue in a code repo like GitHub

- Tweeting or posting comments on social media like Twitter or YouTube

- Attending your events or webinars

We call organizations who meet this qualification criteria as **community-first organizations**. Now we have a working definition of CAR, but how do we measure it?

HOW TO MEASURE COMMUNITY -ATTRIBUTED REVENUE

We've distilled the process of measuring and reporting on CAR down to three steps:

1) Identify your community -first organizations

2) Calculate revenue metrics from those organizations

3) Analyze data trends over time.

We'll explore each step in further detail below.

Identify community-first organizations

The first step in this process is to identify the organizations whose revenue qualifies for community attribution. Start by pulling one list of all the organizations represented in your community **and** one of all the organizations recorded in your CRM. Then, compare the two lists to identify those organizations who exist on both lists **and** were first seen in the community before your CRM. Those organizations are the ones who qualify for community-attributed revenue—they are your community-first organizations.

Calculate revenue metrics

It's time to calculate revenue metrics associated with your list of qualified organizations. Here you want to highlight data points illustrating the **size** and **value** of the business impact these organizations are having. To start, consider the following stats on an annual basis:

- **REVENUE:** Total recurring revenue

- **OPPORTUNITY:** Total opportunity size

- **CAR ORGS:** Total number of organizations who qualified for community-attributed revenue (and what percent of all customers they represent)

- **PAYING ORGS:** Total number of paid licenses / seats used by these organizations (and what percent of all licenses / seats they comprise)

You're on your way! With these metrics calculated, you've begun to quantify the business impact of your community programs. But to really understand if this impact is trending in the right direction or if it's an exception, it's helpful to look at the data over time and filter by specific attributes to determine the underlying drivers of success.

Analyze data trends over time

Now it's time to dive deeper into the revenue metrics to see what kind of trends you can identify and what the key success drivers may be. To uncover these types of insights, consider answering the following strategic questions and see how it changes over time:

- Is **revenue** from community-first organizations increasing?

- Is the **opportunity** size of community-first organizations growing?

- Does it take less time to convert opportunities from community-first organizations?

- How does the share of revenue and opportunity size of community-first organizations compare to that of CRM-first organizations?

- Are there certain organization-specific attributes to community-first success, such as:
  - **Firmographic,** meaning the characteristics of a firm or company, such as annual revenue, employee size, or industry?
  - **Geographic,** for example, are there certain cities / states / countries where revenue is more attributable to community-first organizations?
  - **Product usage,** for example, are certain types of product behaviors or interactions performed more frequently by community-first organizations?
  - **Team functions,** for example, are specific functions (Marketing, Product, Sales, Customer Success, etc.) more likely to see the value in your product and pay for licenses?

With this analysis in place, you can see if there are positive or negative trends as it relates to CAR and then use those insights to determine the business impact of your programs. For example, revenue and / or the opportunity size of community-first organizations trending upwards over the past few years is clear evidence that your community programs are having a positive impact. If the share of revenue attributable to community-first organizations is greater than the share attributable to CRM-first organizations, that's another positive indication.

As it relates to understanding what is driving the success behind CAR, organization-specific attributes can help identify key levers. Look for any commonalities from a firmographic, geographic, product usage, or team function perspective from your community-first organizations. For example, it could be that CAR tends to come from organizations with 51-100 employees or from certain product usage patterns. You can dive into why these attributes are contributing to success and share these learnings with your cross-functional colleagues so they understand the impact of your community programs and can grow practices that help replicate that success with other customers.

END-TO-END COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTION
By investing in the tools and processes to calculate community-attributed revenue, you're pioneering an end-to-end customer community journey—one where you'll be able to understand a member's experience engaging with your community and track their journey from when they start using your product through to how much revenue they're responsible for. **We built Common Room to empower you to measure this end-to-end attribution to earn buy-in from key stakeholders so that you can set up your community programs for long-term success.**

Common Room is a community intelligence platform that brings together community engagement, product usage, and customer data into a single place. We built it to surface insights from across your entire community and provide ways to act on those insights directly from the app. This allows you to discover what's most important, nurture key personas, measure the impact of your programs, and collaborate across your organization. Ultimately, we want you to build better products, deepen relationships, and grow faster, and your ability to do that accelerates when you can earn executive buy-in for community investment.

Request access to Common Room today and join Common Room's Uncommon community to be the first to hear about upcoming pilots.

GROWING YOUR COMMUNITY:
THE BEST CHANNELS AND TACTICS

If you're focusing on doing fun, engaging activities in your community and hoping growth takes care of itself, you're making a big mistake. If you want to radically grow a community, you need to match your engagement efforts with a targeted promotional push. Richard Millington, Founder of Feverbee shares how.

THE BEST CHANNELS TO GROW YOUR COMMUNITY

If you want to grow a community, you need to be deliberate about how. Simply '*doing a good job*' doesn't cut it.

In our community strategies, we develop a clear plan of growth by identifying the main channels to use and the specific actions we will take on each of them.

This isn't a comprehensive list, but the main tools of community growth are usually:

- **SEARCH VISITORS**
- **CUSTOMER SUPPORT FLOW**
- **HOMEPAGE PLACEMENT**
- **PRODUCT INTEGRATION**
- **RELATED ARTICLES**
- **NEWSLETTER PROMOTION**
- **PAID SOCIAL ADS**
- **SOCIAL MEDIA**
- **MEMBER REFERRALS**
- **PARTNERSHIPS AND INFLUENCERS**
- **DIRECT INVITATIONS**

You can take very deliberate and specific actions to use each of these tools to grow a community.

WHICH CHANNEL OF GROWTH IS BEST FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Not every tool is suitable for growing every type of community. It doesn't make sense to individually invite people to a support community.

One additional member isn't worth the effort. Nor does it make sense to promote small peer groups on the community homepage. A flood of traffic will do more harm than good.

You can see a breakdown of the right tool for each type of community here.

For support communities that are usually high-traffic volume, you need tools that can also deliver a high volume of traffic. For smaller communities, you're working at the micro-level and need the right tools to match.

If you want to grow a community, the first step is to identify which are the right tools for your community.

THE SMALLER THE COMMUNITY, THE MORE INFLUENCE YOU HAVE OVER GROWTH

If you're building a support community, your influence is usually somewhat limited. This is because the number of visitors depends upon how many people have the kind of questions support communities are best placed to solve. There are some things you can do to optimize traffic flows, but you're fundamentally playing within a given set of constraints.

However, if you're building a small community of peers, your influence is much greater. You often individually invite people to join and you're responsible for keeping them active.

The bigger the audience you're dealing with, the more growth depends upon sources of traffic you have less direct

influence over. Be mindful of this when you're given engagement targets.

p.s. The level of influence over direct growth is also the level of influence you have over member retention.

HOW TO GET MORE VISITORS TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Once you know which tools are best suited to your community, you can start to figure out how to optimize each of them.

This shows some of the steps which have given us the most mileage in the past.

1 COMMUNITY SEARCH TRAFFIC

Search is a black box of conflicting advice, but some general principles seem to work well.

There are several ways to improve your search results. The most common are:

- **Removing/archiving old content.** Use tools like ScreamingFrog to pull a list of articles/discussions and combine this with criteria to highlight discussions that haven't received any traffic in the past year. Then remove them from the search index (or the discussion entirely with redirects to category-level topics).

- **Match categories/tags to terms that are searched for.** Use tools like Ahrefs and customer research to identify what people are searching for and ensure categories/tags are named accordingly (i.e. so they appear in every URL/page for that topic). Also ensure the site configuration is set up to properly complete the title tags, meta descriptions, alt-images text, and h1/h2 tags etc...

- **Target specific keywords with resources.** Communities are fantastic tools for compiling the best expertise from members into a definitive resource for a particular topic. Once published, you can also help members to share and promote the resources (aside – a definitive guide to tools/settings often seem popular).

- **Improve the navigation/content architecture.** This helps limit orphan pages that aren't linked to within the site but exist on the site. These should be removed or included within a rebuilt navigation structure. Too many community sites have awful navigation/content architecture.

- **Hosting the community on the domain rather than a subdomain.** If you can, host the community in a folder (or seemingly in a folder) rather than a subdomain, i.e. it's better to have brand.com/brand/community than community.brandname.com. This

is hard to do without hosting the community yourself.

- **Improving the site load speed.** Be aware some platforms are remarkably slow to load compared to others. In my experiments, Flarum seems to have the best load speeds (and Salesforce the slowest). If you can't switch platforms, at least remove every non-essential script/video/image you don't need on the site (remove annoying pop-ups if you can too).

- **Rewrite posts and merge duplicate posts.** Make a habit of rewriting post discussion titles for things people actually search for. Also be mindful to merge discussions with duplicate titles (or very similar titles) to create single-comprehensive discussions.

If you need more help with search, contact us and we can undertake an audit with follow-up recommendations.

2 CUSTOMER ONBOARDING AND SUPPORT FLOW

The onboarding flow is how and if a customer learns about the community. Our surveys often reveal many customers don't know a community exists (aside, I've also been in senior exec meetings where participants made the same startling discovery). The support flow is how members go about resolving questions. A change in the positioning or prominence of the community in the support flow can have a big impact upon participation.

The best ways to optimize this include:

- **Introduce newcomers into the community (and setting up a place for them).** For success and support communities, making newcomers aware of the community in the early documentation and training, and having customer support/success reps telling audiences about the community is key.

- **Place the community above the support center (Okta example).** Make 'ask the community' the default option for people looking for support answers. Position it above the 'contact us' option.

- **Federated search to retrieve community discussions.** Ideally, you want a search tool (Coveo/SearchUnify) that can retrieve information from throughout the support center (both discussions and help articles). This can greatly increase the number of people arriving at the community.

- **Reminding callers about community while on hold.** I've only seen this done once, but a message advising people on hold they can ask questions in the community can add a (small) number of active members.

- **Create and communicate the right positioning messages for community vs. support.** Make it clear when and how people should use the community. This should appear on your community homepage and be consistent in every other message.

3 HOMEPAGE PLACEMENT

A lot more people are going to find your community if it's featured on the main navigation tab than if it's buried several levels deep. Sometimes this tweak alone can double the amount of traffic a community receives.

At the top level, you want the community in the main navigation tab. If not, you want it featured first in the support tab/help center. If not there, then you're not going to get much referral traffic.

The SAP Community (below) is a best in class example here:

4 PRODUCT INTEGRATION

This is more relevant to some products than others. The more integrated the community is with the product itself, the more traffic you're likely to get. There are some wins here:

- **Prominent inclusion in the product.** If you can include the community as a simple click from the product itself, this can help. Quickbooks (below) is a good example of this.
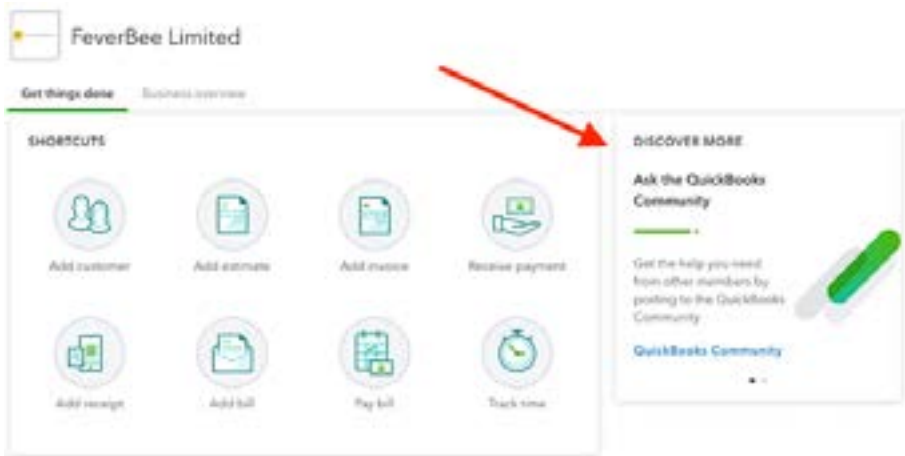
- **Packaging.** It's relatively rare, but I've seen the community featured on packaging for products. "For support, visit community.brand.com". It's probably not a big win, but can help.

- **In-app community.** Some organizations have an in-app community which can be directly integrated with the product so customers/audiences can directly ask questions without having to leave the app. Other times I've seen software error messages link to the community where people can get support/ask questions.

5 RELATED ARTICLES

A major way to drive traffic to a community is to ensure it shows up in more places 'in the flow' of where people visit today. A common missed opportunity is connecting the metadata from knowledge articles to community discussions and using it to show related community discussions alongside knowledge articles.

For example, for any knowledge article, you could show related community discussions in the sidebar that members might find useful.

Another option is to include an option to ask a question about any article at the bottom of the article itself. Apple does this well.

6 NEWSLETTER PROMOTION

You can get *bumps* in traffic from properly promoting the community within a newsletter which goes out to a majority of customers (or your audience). The newsletter isn't a suitable option for customer support communities, but it can be useful for success communities (promoting individual items of great community content) and using it to help get user groups and new peer groups quickly to a critical mass of activity.

7 PAID SOCIAL ADS

It's not common for organizations to launch paid social media to promote a community, but it can be useful when an organization doesn't have a newsletter audience to promote a new community initiative (and has limited time to build an audience).

It's best used for a small number of success and exclusive peer group communities (the kind that charges a membership fee to make a budget worthwhile). I've seen the cost of acquiring a new member range between $4 to $120.

8 SOCIAL MEDIA

If you have an existing audience, social media can help you amplify discussions to a broader audience. This works well in success, advocacy, and peer groups. If you don't have a big audience, social media can be the best place to look for the first trickle of discussions.

- **Promoting good discussions on social media channels.** When you have discussions (or content) that are becoming popular in the community, you can boost traffic by also promoting them on social media too. MoneySavingExpert (below) is a good example.

- **Finding new members on LinkedIn.** Another tactic is to recruit new members directly from social media. LinkedIn and Twitter, for example, provide a great channel to promote the community to new audiences. You can search specifically for the people you want to join and invite them. This works especially well for smaller peer groups. This is where knowing tools like Canva can really help.

- **Platform referrals.** Sometimes the platform will automatically promote your group/community/content to others on the same platform. Facebook groups are a good example. There might be a way to optimize this with the right name/description, but I haven't yet worked out how. Reddit is another one where the community facilitates mass cross-promotion of related groups from one to another.

9 MEMBER REFERRALS

In theory, as a community grows more people talk about it and it grows. In practice, that doesn't happen as much as you might think. Most people don't

go around recommending communities to each other. However, there are a couple of things you can do to help facilitate referrals.

- **Engage members in creating a shared project.** If you engage members in creating a shared project, they're quite likely to share it with others. This works especially well with eBooks, events, and similar activities where members will promote the community to others (aside this post is 13 years old and still relevant).

- **Lists or rankings of top members.** I hate that this still works in 2022, but creating a list of top community members (or industry influencers) tends to attract a lot of promotion and people on the list sharing it with others. If members can even vote and rank the list, even better.

- **Enable member sharing/referrals.** Increasing the prominence of shared options (all the usual social channels) can provide a small boost. But most people don't share community discussions unless something remarkable is happening. For peer groups and user groups, inviting members to invite others (or giving members a fixed number of invites they can use per month) can really help grow a community.

- **Create content worth sharing.** A final option is perhaps the most obvious, create things worth sharing. As mentioned before, definitive guides to specific topics can attract a lot of attention. Especially when members have played a part in creating it.

10 PARTNERSHIPS

- **Influencers.** The common myth is you need influencers to launch a community. You don't. But they can be great people to help promote a community once it's launched. The most common are hosting events featuring influencers, letting influencers curate discussions/have their own ask me anything category for a short-time, hosting panels with influencers or simply paying influencers to answer questions. The more influencers know a community exists, the more likely they will mention it at some point to their audience. This isn't a big win, but it can help.

- **Existing organizations/communities.** You should have a clear ecosystem map of related organizations/similar events in your space. You can offer a partnership where you promote them if they promote you. This works especially well for events which don't have their own community. You can be the community for events. Likewise, you can reach out to large organizations and suggest your community be added as a resource for new/existing employees etc.

11 DIRECT INVITATIONS

Direct invitations are primarily used to get people to join small groups. At the larger side, it doesn't make sense to send out invitations directly to members. An additional member doesn't move the needle. Therefore direct invites work best for attracting advocates, launching small groups of peers, and creating a program of superusers (one client fantastically referred to the superuser invites as the 'Hogwarts letters').

There are plenty of useful scripts you can use here. However, fundamentally, the name of this game is about customizing the approach to make each recipient feel like they're being invited to something special based upon their skills, knowledge, or personal attributes. In short, it's about making the recipient feel as special as possible.

If you're launching a new group, you can easily find and send messages to numerous people on LinkedIn, Twitter, and other channels who might want to join.

CREATE A 12-WEEK GROWTH PLAN

I've found it works best to create a '12-week sprint' when it comes to growth. 12 weeks is arbitrary, but the key is to figure out which options make sense to you and then put this into a specific plan for growth.

You can see an example below:

This growth plan is probably too ambitious for 12 weeks, but it shows the full range of activities available. If you're going to deliberately grow a community, you need a specific plan to do it that everyone can rally around.

DON'T LEAVE GROWTH TO CHANCE!

We teach our clients not to let growth happen by chance. Sure, you might get a surge of new members who happen to stumble upon your community. But you're going to be far more successful if you deliberately drive a group of new visitors to your community.

You can (and should) develop a deliberate plan of growth (i.e. a 12-week plan), target a couple of channels, and then work hard to optimize each of them.

You have more influence over some of these channels than others. The trick is to figure out which are the best channels for your community and how you can best optimize them.

Visit www.feverbee.com for help growing your community.

DESIGNING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Mark Otter, CEO of Participate talks to Heidi Williams about the power of social learning within communities and how baked-in recognition incentivizes shared learning and creates a truly participatory experience

Heid Williams: What's your definition of a Community of Practice and what's their purpose?

Mark Otter: The ultimate aim of a Community of Practice is to help people do what they do better; in other words, to impact practice. In CoPs the reason they come together as a community is the practice itself, so they're sharing what works and what doesn't and figuring out how best to incorporate what they've learnt into their own practices. They specifically want to improve, make more impact, learn from each other and in doing so they're actually creating incredibly valuable knowledge.

What's fascinating and unique about a Community of Practice is that the community is creating knowledge through their practice and in creating and sharing that knowledge they're positively impacting the practice, so it's truly of and for the community.

HW: Why are you leaning in to Communities of Practice specifically?

MO: Learning is social. It's always been social. From the days of sitting round a campfire sharing how to kill a lion or weave a rug - but in the last few decades we've made a concerted effort to create this top-down learning style where learners are increasingly isolated from each other, sitting in front of a PC and following along with a course. Online course completion rates are abysmally low – less than 10%. They don't work; they leave the majority behind, so we know this is not how people like to learn, they like to learn socially and yet the majority of platforms and solutions aren't set up to facilitate social learning.

In a top-down learning model, knowledge is owned by the select few and pushed down to the "unwashed masses". In a Community of Practice model we approach learning knowing

that the people best positioned to solve a problem are the people closest to that problem, and when they solve it and they document it, they're creating knowledge.

That documentation about how they went about making that difference, how they solved that problem, is knowledge creation. We passionately believe this kind of knowledge creation has the power to effect real change, to create real impact and that facilitating the creation of Communities of Practice and unleashing the power of social learning within communities is transformative. It's an incredibly exciting time to be working in this space.

HW: How do you "build" a successful Community of Practice?

MO: Communities of Practice are emergent; you can bring people together, you can start the community building process but to have a true community of practice you have to design for it, facilitate for it as opposed to build it from the top down.

You need to design for communities to emerge, rather than be built. You need to provide opportunities for people to come together, give them the space to connect and work together. You need a really good Facilitator that provides opportunities to share, learn and collaborate but ultimately also lets the community emerge. Emily Webber's Community Growth Model provides real insight into the role of Facilitator and where their input is needed - check it out here www.infoq.com/articles/communities-of-practice-agile-organisation

"YOU NEED TO DESIGN FOR COMMUNITIES TO EMERGE, RATHER THAN BE BUILT."

HW: With so much contribution coming from the community itself, where do you see the role of Community Manager?

MO: When individuals work together, their understandings are deeper and more developed. Strategic consultant, Simon Terry, talks about this as there needs to be an Inner and Outer Loop of learning - that you need a fluid environment that provides both unstructured and structured learning opportunities.

The outer loop has people exploring, connecting, sharing. Twitter is a great example of this. In twitter chats, there's no real collaboration going on, just lots of introductions and sharing of resources. It's exciting, there's energy but it usually lacks impact. But you can take that outer loop excitement across to an inner loop and begin to build collaborative relationships between these folks.

In the inner loop, you can say; "we were talking about X on twitter chat, why don't we do something about it." You can dig into the difference that people want to make. "I would love to be able to do X more efficiently" will get you "well hey, we did X like this". So you can facilitate collaboration and you're building knowledge, and sharing knowledge because you're doing it in a Community of Practice. Then you can push that knowledge back out to a social space where the outer loop is, so other people can discover it, get excited about it, come in and see your work and build upon it, so it builds this really nice cycle.

So the Community Manager's role is really to act as a facilitator, greasing the wheels between the outer loop and the inner loop. They're like a traffic director, making sure people can move from inner loop to outer loop, that learning is getting shared and when they come in, they can find the learning that occurred and are empowered to build upon it, better it, share it.

HW: How does Participate serve Communities of Practice?

MO: What's held CoPs back in the past is, when you're co-creating something, and you go back to get it a month later, it's gone – or buried so deep in a chat stream you can't find it. We wanted to create a space where people can find each other, come together, connect, find the difference they want to make, create something together, put that creation into practice then come back and share the results and get recognition for it.

Until we built Participate, a real challenge for CoPs was that community knowledge creation is not the same as getting a certification. Even though it's incredibly powerful, it's more nebulous and harder to recognise. So we baked-in a recognition system using digital credentials because digital credentials allow documentation of learning to be anything from anywhere learning happens. For example, if we created a really powerful project management gantt chart which worked incredibly well, we could put the whole chart into the digital credential and when you click on the credential to see why I earnt it you can see how useful and powerful it is, and you could take that and put it into your own practice. So you get the power of the recognition itself but it's also embedded with the learning so that others can take it, build on it, create further value. It makes learning more open-source, it's no longer trapped inside, it's collaborative whilst also being rewarded.

HW: Give us an example of how your clients use Participate

MO: One of our clients is a metaverse company, The Sandbox. They've created a virtual world in which members can buy virtual land using a virtual currency and build characters they put up for sale for their community. Others can buy those characters, as NFTs, and put them in their games.

So, as you can imagine, there's a real complexity to learning how to set up shop and how to navigate and sell on their platform. We helped them design a Community of Practice in which Game Creators and Developers can come and connect, learn and share. They can go through a hands-on bootcamp where they're assigned tasks and at the end of it they get a certification (in the form of an NFT) which enables them to build in the sandbox. They also run ongoing competitions on their Participate platform, that enable users to create and build new characters, and they use the platform to learn from each other - how do I do this, how do I make that change. What's really powerful is that they'll share their creations, their characters and NFTs on twitter and people see them and sign themselves up for the next challenge, so it's an incredibly collaborative and self-perpetuating process.

HW: What does a Participate community look like?

MO: Before we built Participate, like everyone else we used to frankenstein together multiple platforms; slack, discourse, wordpress, a learning system. Our North star in creating the platform was the triumvirate of participation, creation and recognition and so we looked at the key things we needed and bought them all together in one place.

So in our platform you'll find a customisable community space where you can connect with other participants – that's the first stage of facilitating connection – creating a designated community space where you can find people, DM people, create group messages or engage on discussion forums. Then you have the ability to create learning, but not just top-down, the whole community is able to create or apply for digital credentials – you can submit your work and have mentors or assessors review whether it meets the criteria and earn a digital badge which is baked into the platform, so you get recognition for it. Then the community facilitator might recognise the group learning potential from something that's been created, so there's a lightweight learning management system (LMS) so you can take the knowledge that's been created and turn it into a course so the next group of people don't have to reinvent the wheel. It's the only platform to bake-in recognition, to incentivize shared learning in this way and to make learning a truly participatory experience.
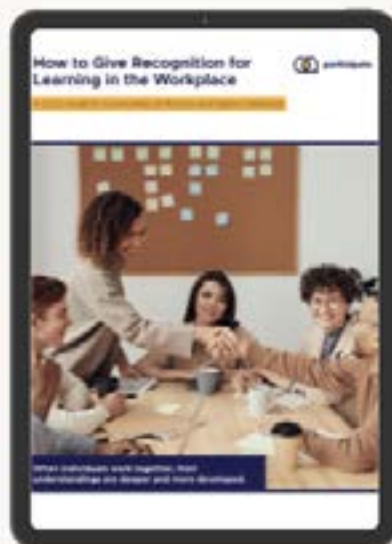
COMMUNITY-LED
THE FUTURE FOR PUBLISHING?

Is Community the new model for publishers? We asked FinTech Alliance's Editor Olivia Minnock and Louis Williams, Community Manager, to share some insights on their growth and development and why they launched as a Community, not a Publishing company

WHO DOES FINTECH ALLIANCE SERVE?

We're a digital platform built to bring together the various facets of UK FinTech from small startups to large FinTech players, from banks and Big Tech companies to the consultancies and legal partners that serve them. We were founded in 2019, backed by UK Government, as an independent not-for-profit organisation. We have over 250 members and an audience of thousands of individuals. We're independent and agnostic so anyone in UK FinTech is welcome to join and we try to maintain a balance between all these different players.

IN THE OLDEN DAYS, FINTECH ALLIANCE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A PUBLISHER, BUT YOU'RE VERY MUCH COMMUNITY-LED – WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THAT?

Yes, we come at community and content from a slightly different angle. While many businesses in the publishing world begin as a magazine or other content platform and build a community or membership proposition around that, we're definitely community first.

When it comes to B2B platforms, "build it and they will come" doesn't work. We use content to spark conversations and bring people together, to explain on both broad and granular levels what companies do, and support the businesses in our community to grow.

But the important thing for us is to think about how best to serve our community – and we have to balance that with where our revenue actually comes from. Some of that does come from the readers of the content and the attendees of our virtual and physical events, but for the most part it's the community themselves. We have to focus on two sides: what the community wants to consume, and what it wants to participate in.

We've found the FinTech sector much prefers the community model to traditional publishing "output" because things are changing so quickly that there's no such thing as a FinTech expert and actually everyone has something to add. FinTech professionals don't want to just take in info – they want to be part of the conversation and give their view… and most importantly, to be seen to be doing that!

This also means that people don't just want to be featured as part of the community on our website, they want to have conversations with us as a team about what we can do with their content, what they can contribute and how we can place things, as well as who they should be collaborating with on content. This is very different from traditional publishing in that the editorial team is very open to engaging with the community and discussing ideas, and in fact that's where we spend most of our time. Editorial is now an enabler, rather than a gatekeeper with the final say on what makes it onto the site.

WHO "OWNS" THE COMMUNITY AND HOW DO YOU ENGAGE THE RIGHT PEOPLE?

Our community is owned by everyone who makes it – the individuals and small companies we can inform and support, large companies we highlight as thought leaders, and more. We are a facilitator and since it's an agnostic platform, businesses can post anything that's relevant or informative for the community. We'd only remove something if it was incredibly offensive or inaccurate, but since it's mainly companies engaging with our platform that hasn't been an issue.

As a not-for-profit, we have a tiered monthly membership structure where smaller companies will pay less and larger companies pay slightly more, to make it affordable for everyone. This does present a challenge in that editorially, you want to highlight the smaller companies with new ideas and give them the support they need – but commercially you need to onboard and retain those larger players! It's important to showcase a good cross-section of the alliance in everything we do, which does reflect the UK FinTech scene as a whole.

"EDITORIAL IS NOW AN ENABLER, RATHER THAN A GATEKEEPER"

AND HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE THAT ENGAGEMENT, WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST ENGAGING PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY?

In true FinTech fashion, we have a "win fast, fail fast" mentality. Communities are dynamic, living organisms so you can't be afraid to try

something for a few months and then admit to yourself it hasn't worked. The biggest barrier to joining the community for FinTech companies is the time and effort involved in engaging – you get out what you put in – so we have tried a number of content styles which are a mix of low and high effort.

One month, a company might submit a small comment to be included in an article. Then when they are less busy, they might take part in an interview feature or even host a Community Meetup. You have to work with your community through the busy, tough periods and the periods where they want to feel supported and engaged.

An example of our experimentation has been realising that some of the most involved members we have are early stage FinTech Founders, so we slowly started bringing more questions into interviews about what advice FinTech leaders would give them. Now, we have entire advice columns based on the most common problems founders cite – hiring and fundraising.

WHAT ARE THE KEY THINGS YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT SERVING YOUR COMMUNITY?

You never know what parts of your platform people will value until they start using it! We found that people and businesses really appreciate that everyone is treated the same. There is an unlimited chance to take part and have your voice heard, and a good variety of ways to do that.

A lesson for us, having not come from corporate backgrounds, is how to engage with the larger institutions. That's about finding the right person in the company to deal with and understanding what they want to get out of the community, where smaller companies can be a bit more general in their approach.

For those players, it's important to help them put a plan in place and have regular conversations about what they need from the community and whether that will change month on month. Having a solid plan for those first 90 days is vital so they begin to see the benefit. Smaller companies often have one manager making the decisions but larger businesses might have whole teams they need to justify their membership to, so we need to be clear on expectations and helping them bring that value to internal stakeholders.

WHERE DOES THE COMMUNITY "LIVE"?

Our community largely engages in a very public way on our website by posting content and being involved in interviews and events. However, they also want to engage with each other in more private or informal ways, such as attending closed events or using social media, when it comes to discussing works-in-progress or challenges they need help with.

While we, like any publisher, want to gain traffic to our website, it's actually OK if the community doesn't "live" there. We don't take revenue from advertising, it's purely from a community of companies that are benefitting from their monthly subscription – so we're happy to foster those communities on Twitter, LinkedIn and even elsewhere. With a B2B offering, sometimes you have to follow where your community already goes and find out how you can bring value within those existing spaces.

For more info on FinTech Alliance, visit https://fintech-alliance.com To feature your community, please email heidi@365media.com.
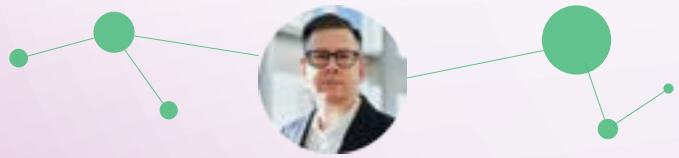
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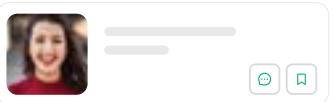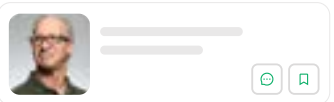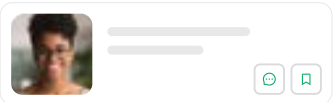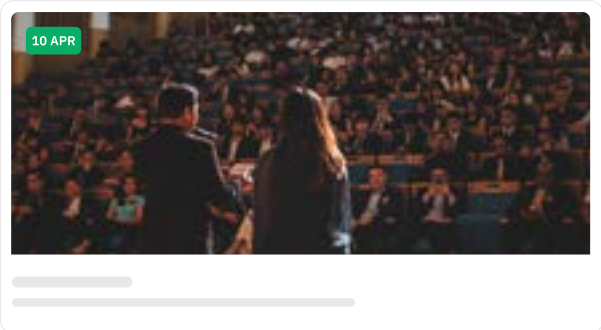
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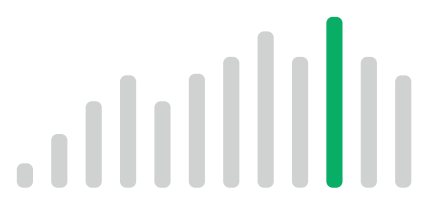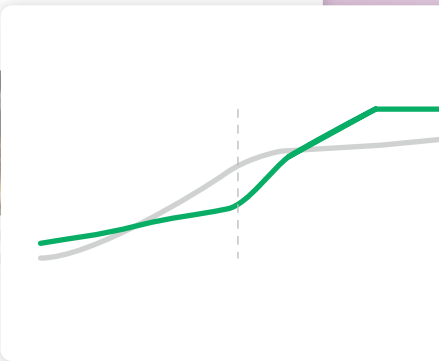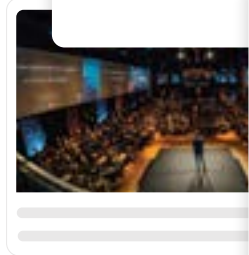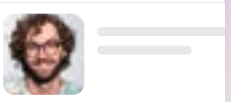
The much-awaited CMX Annual Report has landed – and is packed with community trends, benchmarks, salary data and more - click here to access the full report. Read on for the key findings

KEY FINDINGS

1 COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT IS MOVING FROM A GROWTH TO A MATURE INDUSTRY.

22% report having a dedicated community department, up from 15% last year. Community roles are also becoming more specialized, with 35% of teams having at least one person focused full-time on Community Operations.

2 ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY, BUT CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE TO MEASURE THAT VALUE.

87% agree community is critical to the company's mission and 79% believe community has had a positive impact on their organization's objectives. But, only 10% say they can financially quantify the value of their community and only one-third can connect their community data to their customer data.

3 THE COMMUNITY SOFTWARE MARKET IS A BLUE OCEAN, WITH NO CLEAR WINNERS (YET).

90% of community programs include an online forum/message board. However, the range of tools used to host communities is vast. The most common platforms businesses use to host their online communities are free tools like Slack, Facebook, and Discord, but the platforms that they're most satisfied with are white-labeled tools like Khoros, Discourse, and Discord.

4 TIN-PERSON IS MAKING A COMEBACK AND VIRTUAL IS HERE TO STAY.

29% of communities hosted an in-person event in 2021, despite the surge of COVID-19. 90% of those who host events for their community report hosting virtual events in 2021. 72% of those plan to offer the same number or more virtual events in 2022. Almost 4 in 5 community professionals who haven't hosted in-person hybrid events yet plan to do so when it is safe to gather.

5 COMMUNITY-LED EVENTS ARE GAINING IN POPULARITY.

44% of those who run events report that some or all of their events are community-led (hosted by members). 25% of those who have community-led events just started them in the past year. Of those who are not yet running communityled events, 49% plan to do so in the coming year.

6 COMMUNITIES ARE CAUTIOUSLY DIPPING THEIR TOES INTO WEB 3.0.

15% of communities are actively working on Web 3.0 focused projects and an additional 17% are considering it. Decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) are the most common form of Web 3.0 project that community teams are working on.

7 COMMUNITY PROGRAMS ARE INCREASINGLY FOCUSED ON DRIVING GROWTH.

19% of community programs are focused on acquisition as their top objective, up from 13% last year. Customer support and success continue to be the most popular objectives, but customer support decreased slightly from 26% last year to 24% this year. This represents a shift in how businesses are thinking about the value and focus of community.

Boosting Community Engagement With Innovation in the Gamification Space

By Varun Luthra, Country Head, ANZ, Grazitti Interactive

Gamification is often used as an engagement tactic in many industry types. Why, you ask? Because it works! Especially when applied to the online community space.

Gamification is a technique that adds game-like features to the community to make it a more fun and interactive experience for customers. It is designed to take community engagement up a notch by providing members an incentive to participate.

Research suggests that gamification may increase new business users by almost 600%[i]. Another study shows that by 2024, the gamification market will touch $32 billion[ii].

But what's next when it comes to the application of gamification in online communities? Let's find out!

The Role of Gamification in an Online Community

Gamification ignites members' interest and encourages them to contribute to the community on a regular basis. A successful online community will embed gamification as it is a proven method of generating engagement.

Communities utilize gamification by rewarding and recognizing members with:

- Badges
- Points
- Leaderboards
- Ranks and levels
- Custom avatars

Another advantage of applying gamification in online communities is that it promotes transparency among users. Users can see what their peers are doing in the community and what they are doing to win the rewards.

Game-Changing Innovations in the Gamification Space to Make Your Community Dynamic

Game-like features in an online community have a way of keeping community participation ongoing. It not only starts with members becoming competitive to achieve rewards and recognition from their peers, but can also spark genuine conversations.

Here are some recent innovations in the gamification space that you can apply to your community and make it more cutting-edge.

Integrating Your Community With Third-Party APIs: An Application Programming Interface (API) allows two systems to talk to one another. This allows for seamless integration and more accessibility between two systems. You need an API with which you can fully integrate gamification technology within your community. This enables you to manage which community actions or activities are more or less relevant and how each of them is to be rewarded through gamification.

1 Integrating Your Community With Third-Party APIs:
An Application Programming Interface (API) allows two systems to talk to one another. This allows for seamless integration and more accessibility between two systems. You need an API with which you can fully integrate gamification technology within your community. This enables you to manage which community actions or activities are more or less relevant and how each of them is to be rewarded through gamification.

2 Decentralizing Your Community With Blockchain:
If you have multiple independent communities, you can use a decentralized gamification system to transfer data between them. The data can include member points, rewards, ranks, etc. This helps link multiple communities together, which lets your customers view their progress on the community of their choice.

3 Analyzing Gamification Metrics for Better Community Engagement:

Leveraging gamification can boost engagement by using incentives but that's not all you need to focus on. It is just as important to know how your members are responding to your gamification efforts. Analyze your members' behaviors and identify why certain activities or incentives are more effective than others. When you have answers to these questions, you can use this knowledge to grow your community. Dig into metrics, tools, and dashboards to decode member behavior within a gamification system. This in-depth knowledge will help you to know why your incentives are working and how to optimize your engagement strategy.

People are creatures of habit. Once your members start engaging with each other in the community, they will continue to collaborate and make the community thrive.

Gamification creates an opportunity for brands to highlight, acknowledge, incentivize, and reward members for making their communities more robust.

Team Grazitti has extensive experience in building robust, multidimensional online communities that empower you to take your business to the next level. To know more about ScoreNotch, our gamification solution for Salesforce Lightning communities, drop us a line at info@grazitti.com and we'll take it from there.

Consult our in-house community experts or request a free community audit to level up your community game. Scan this QR code to register.

The Periodic Table of Community Strategy

By Michelle Goodall, Guild

Michelle Goodall has poured two decades of community experience into creating a Periodic Table for Community Strategy, distilling all the important "elements" into a quick visual reference. Here, she explains the rationale behind her 10 "elements" of community strategy, and how to use this superb visual guide.

1 TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF COMMUNITY

I believe there are broadly 10 categories or types of community — many will straddle multiple categories. I wrote about the 5 types of Community, or the '5 Ps of community' - Practice, Purpose, Product, Play, Place - which seems to resonate with many. Extend the 5Ps of community further and you get Social, Learning, Networking, Brand and Support communities.

2 COMMUNITY GOALS

All communities should support some kind of measurable goal.

If you are investing in community as a brand or organisation, community should support your primary business goals - whether that's to generate ideas and insight, to sell more, to get closer to your customers and prospects, to increase brand awareness, drive meaningful change, to power customer support, co-create things and so on.

I've focused on aligning community to goals that apply mainly to business and organisations to help you more easily make the connection between organisational objectives and how community can help achieve them.

3 COMMUNITY & MANAGEMENT ROLES

Depending on the size and complexity of your community strategy, your budget and the platform you choose, there may be a number of different community roles.

From Community Sponsors, to Community Owners, Admins, Hosts, Moderators, Analysts etc.

I've also cheekily added Chief Community Officer as we believe it's time to recognise just how strategic community specialists are - and the powerful role they play creating value in organisations today.

In truth, most communities are devised, built and run by a single Community Manager. If that's you, at least this element of the table highlights just how many hats one person has to wear! Perhaps you can ask for a raise and show those who need to know that Community Managers are multi-skilled professionals.

4 COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP ROLES

Communities are not homogenous. They're collections of many individuals - all with different needs, behaviours, motivations and roles. Some of these member roles may be defined or bestowed by the community hosts, such as Community VIP or beta tester. Some are naturally created through a desire to support the community, e.g. Community Advocate or Community Champion. Some roles simply evolve over time - from Community Newbie to Community Elder for example.

I've purposefully not included Com-

JOIN GUILD COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

Periodic Table of Community Strategy V 1.0

munity Lurker - ideally that word should be banned. There are much better ways to describe someone who isn't actively engaging - for example, Community Member, Reader, Learner or Explorer. More here: 'Why we need to ban the word 'lurker' in community strategy.'

5 COMMUNITY PLATFORMS

I've decoupled social media platforms from community platforms. Controversial.

Here's the reasoning. If you are really serious about building a community, it's high risk to only consider ad-funded social media platforms. So, I've separated them out.

Most community strategists don't recommend building a community on social media if you respect member data, and are looking for sustainability, longevity and value...and certainly not if you want community content and discussion to be visible rather than battle daily with social media algorithms.

So, in here you have Guild (naturally) alongside other platforms built specifically for different types of online community, or which measure insights from community data, e.g. Orbit.love.

There's not enough space to add them all, so I've spoken to other community strategists to get a shortlist. Note: inclusion does not equal recommendation. You'll need to do your homework. Start by joining other community strategists on this community for community managers.

6 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

See the note above.

There's not enough space for all social media platforms or sub-categorisation of these platforms into messaging/network/aggregator etc. So I've added 6 of the most popular platforms where community building takes place.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

I really had to hold back here. These elements are the content formats, the triggers, the rituals, the currency in communities. And what works in one community may not in another.

Whether it's AMAs, guides, meet-ups, video, audio, frameworks, polls, mind maps or simple questions - think about the emotional drivers behind what engages people in your community. What drives them to open up, collaborate and share? Make sure the community you build and the techniques you employ make people feel valued.

"THINK ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL DRIVERS BEHIND WHAT ENGAGES PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY."

These are based on the engagement techniques and tactics that work well in Guild communities. This is an iterative model, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

8 COMMUNITY MEMBER MOTIVATIONS

The most successful communities create a culture of "we" and understand what broadly motivates people to join, engage and stay. Advanced community strategy looks at distinct individual motivations and how to meet those needs.

There's a lot of behavioural and social science behind successful community building and management. Community Science has its roots in Anthropology, Psychology, Linguistics and Social Psychology.

Just asking yourself "what do my members want to achieve and what are their motivations?" is a great start.

The Community Member Motivations elements include Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations, Collaboration, Incentives, Recognition, Driving Change and even good old Customer Service.

9 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE CHECK-LIST

These are some of the basic elements that ensure the smooth set-up, launch and sustainability of your community. Very few communities become successful without pre-planning.

Again, your focus will depend on the scale and complexity of your community, what your goals are, and the budget available.

At the very least, your community should have a Purpose, Guidelines and a clear idea of what membership will require from people (e.g. is there a cost, a commitment, a barrier to entry?).

Organisations and businesses will need to spend more time on community governance than more informal communities.

Most professional community managers will need to align their communities to business goals and data governance, internal and external communications, tech stacks, budgets, business intelligence,

business measurements and much more.

10 COMMUNITY CHECKLIST

This is your go-to checklist for a successful community strategy.

As a short-cut, focus on answering these 13 points

1. Define your community goals/aims/objectives
2. Define your community category/type
3. Define your audience/s and their motivations
4. Define any member requirements to join the community
5. Define the role of your organisation/brand
6. Define your community timeline and key milestones
7. Define your community resources
8. Define your community budget
9. Define your moderation model and process
10. Choose your community platform (and if you've got this far and have got any value from the model and this post, please do consider Guild!)
11. Define your community measures and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
12. Create a measurement framework
13. Define governance requirements (e.g data, safeguarding etc.)

If you have comments, feedback or just want to say thank you, please message me on Guild.

Even better, come and join me and other community strategists on Guild Community Collective where we're discussing the Periodic Table of Community Marketing... and everything else that helps us collectively to build and manage thriving online communities!

Simplicity took precedence over perfection so there are obvious omissions (and possibly some symbol duplication) but hopefully this is a useful guide. We'd love to hear your feedback for future iterations – share your thoughts in Guild's Community Collective Group here.

Build powerful professional communities with Guild

Mobile-first and purpose-built for professional groups, networks and communities.

The Power of Professional Community™

Request a demo and apply to join Professional Community Leaders on Guild: guild.co/contact
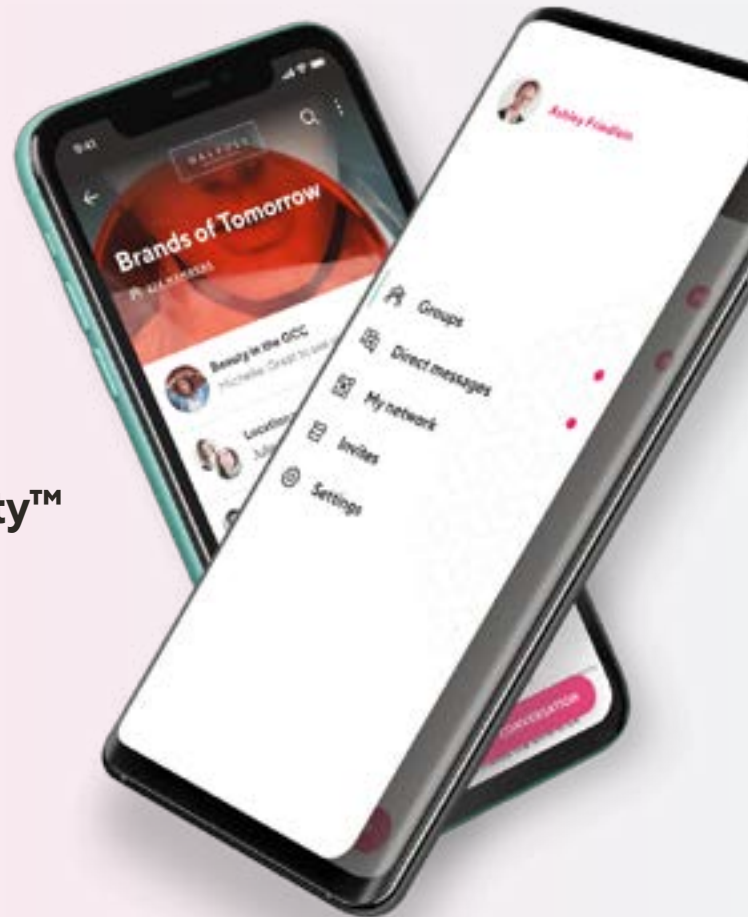
Why Guild?

For those who believe in The Power of Professional Community™ – connecting people to do good things together

Elegant user experience – simple to set up, clean design, mobile-first, custom branding

Everything a community builder needs – moderation features; professional profiles, high levels of service and support, data and analytics

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Trusted by

THE MARKETING SOCIETY UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE Judge Business School msi Global Alliance Habitat for Humanity® Deloitte. CIPD

AUDIENCE DATA:
THE NEW CURRENCY OF COMMUNITY

By Barry Tonoff

In a world where filling your gas tank costs more than your car, the concept of inflation is easily (and painfully) relatable. In the digital world, the value of another currency is also rapidly inflating. No, I'm not talking about crypto; it's audience data.

This year—led by Google and Apple—much of the digital universe will be moving away from the mercenary, cookie-based tracking world in which we currently and unhappily live. And that has many digital media companies and publishers scrambling for new ways to understand audience and community behavior. In this new world, the collection of first-party audience data will be center stage and will be the foundation for how we interact, understand, and engage with our audiences and communities in the very near future. With that in mind, it's crucial for community managers and audience development professionals to start placing audience data at the center of your engagement strategy.

START WITH A PLAN.

Like any financial instrument, it's important to have a plan to grow the value of your investment. Audience data is no different. You'd be surprised how many organizations collect data from their audiences with absolutely no idea about what to do with it. Capturing the attention of an audience is hard work. Asking them to share information with you is harder still. It's vital that you be strategic by identifying the key data that you need; understand how you're going to collect it, store it and access it; and have a clear understanding of how you will leverage that data to grow your business; engage your audience more effectively; enhance your relationships with sponsors; and surface insights to better inform decision making.

Crucial. Vital. Essential. Mandatory. We can't stress it enough. After reading this article, immediately start developing an Audience Data Strategy.

PROVIDE VALUE IN RETURN.

Currency is a unit of exchange. It's important to think of audience data in the same way. Data is valuable and audiences know it. They want—and deserve—something valuable in return for it. We're past the point where you can just throw up a form and cross your fingers. At CredSpark, we advise and help clients create compelling interactive experiences, combining content and data generating opportunities while providing tangible value for audiences. These experiences can collect contact info, lead qualification factors, customer intent signals, market research data, audience knowledge, and much more. Incredibly value stuff, right? So it's equally important that you place the value you're providing to your audience in return at the center of your Audience Data Strategy. Interactive content experiences are a great and cost-effective way to achieve that.

EXPERIMENTATION & FLAWLESS EXECUTION ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE.

Effective audience and community engagement is like a great conversation. It's back-and-forth; it's improvisational. When developing compelling, data-generating experiences, don't be afraid to experiment. Surface audience opinions with a poll. Let the audience test their knowledge with a quiz on a topic and see how they compare with the rest of the community. Take evergreen content and create a gamified experience around it. Create an adventure-like experience where the audience gets recommendations based on their needs and interests that you collect in the process. The opportunities are endless. And if you get stuck, ask your audience for their ideas and make them a direct part of the creative process. They have a stake in the health and vibrancy of your community, too.

DON'T FORGET: USE THE DATA YOU GET.

If you're going to ask your audience for their valuable data, it's your responsibility to use it in a way that enhances the value and appeal of your community. At CredSpark, we suggest using the following framework.

1 *Identify the problem you're trying to solve (ex: I need to qualify leads for a sponsor or I need to understand our audience's knowledge of a key topic).*

2 *Identify the specific data you need to solve that problem. And be brutal: ask only for what you need.*

3 *What compelling experience can I create to generate that data?*

4 *What value is the audience getting in return and how can I best convey that value to them at the outset?*

5 *What's my plan for using that data after I collect it?*

With anything of value comes a sense of stewardship. Your organization should feel that way with your audience data.

CASH MAY STILL BE KING, BUT YOUR AUDIENCE DATA IS THE ACE.

If you want to position your community for the future, start thinking about your audience data strategy now. Because the cost of not knowing your audience is a lot more than filling up at the gas station. (well, almost...)

Create compelling interactive content that sparks engagement and generates valuable audience data.

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credspark.com

Visit our website to…

- Get tested ideas from client examples.
- Learn from interesting case studies.
- Discover strategies & insights with thought-provoking articles.

MANAGING A BLOCKCHAIN COMMUNITY

Isaac Akwanga, Co-Lead at Blankpage shares his experiences of Community Management in Blockchain.

YOU MANAGE A BLOCKCHAIN COMMUNITY - WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Blockchain technology is experiencing tremendous growth, with new projects popping up daily and global headlines making it a household topic. A recent report in block geeks (a global BLOCKCHAIN education website) shows Blockchain demand is booming and expected to grow at over 60% yearly and behind every project there is a team - and a community.

BLOCKCHAIN communities are the BLOCKCHAIN project touchpoint; an audience that shows interest in what you have to offer. They are the people who find your project relevant, believe in your vision and are ready not just to invest but to build and grow a meaningful relationship with your brand or organization over time.

Just like any other niche community, the Blockchain communities are also human-centric. They are established by Blockchain projects or organizations that leverage value for people inclusiveness in some decision-making processes, idea sharing, and suggestion making. Building communities in the Blockchain spaces are also designed in such a way the organization creates a platform for its team to interface with their customers or members as a human-focused service that goes beyond selling Cryptos, Defi, NFTs, DAOs, Gaming, the launch of New Wallet or Dapps, and Metaverse products or services to the people. Etc

The Blockchain community serves as an avenue for empathy and networking between peer-to-peer and with the organization team. And the Community Manager needs the energy, positivity, listening and communication skills necessary for any community – because building solid relationships is key to success, as is the ability to create a sense of belonging and accrue importance to the project.

Blockchain technology is on a rapid growth trajectory and so we should also expect communities are becoming more significant and inseparable from BLOCKCHAIN projects.

CAN YOU GIVE US SOME BLOCKCHAIN COMMUNITY EXAMPLES?

A good example of a Blockchain community I admire is the safemoon community. Safemoon is one of the new projects that hit the crypto market in March 2021, and with their unique community-driven approach, they built a huge, supportive and loyal fan base.

One strategy they maintained in building their community was inviting the community members to take part in some of their team's decision-making processes. This approach goes a long way to provide inclusivity which makes the community members feel valued.

The safemoon community empowers people to help each other on different social channels, disseminating the latest information, answering questions, discussing, partaking in testing beta SOFTWARE release (The Safemoon wallet) and guiding new safemoon token holders on how to go about their investments, migration processes, while securing their assets from thefts.

Increasingly, blockchain communities are being set up as DAOs. The Decentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO), is an idea that began in 2016/2017 with the Ethereum community as the pioneer, is a good example of a BLOCKCHAIN community. By establishing this community model, Ethereum understands, at the heart of all successful products, services or projects are the people. This includes the team and the customers while giving them voting power to exercise, and to play an important role in the organization.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO BLOCKCHAIN COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT?

I got into Blockchain Community

> **"AS WITH ANY COMMUNITY, THE GOAL IS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HUMAN-FOCUSED ORGANIZATIONS AND THE AUDIENCE."**

Management 2 years ago. Before then, I worked in Digital Marketing where I specialized in lead generation campaigns for real estate and other small businesses. I had the opportunity to engage with a cross-team collaboration in the organization I worked with, and the experience sparked in me the curiosity to learn about customers service and community-building skills.

I was interested in blockchain technologies and so researched non-technical aspects of Blockchain / crypto jobs on soft-skills that range from social media, content marketing, branding, article writing, and BLOCKCHAIN community management roles. I decided to focus on community management while niching down to BLOCKCHAIN to follow my passion.

I started with a volunteering/ambassadorial position - I was giving the role of a moderator on Telegram and Discord server on 2 projects that helped shaped my understanding of what community management is about. I learnt a huge amount thanks to Scalp marketing, Tuda-Birds Metanest, and Crypto banks pad.

In my experience, managing a Blockchain Community is very much relatable

to that of a brand community, so there are lots of opportunities for brand community managers to get into blockchain community management.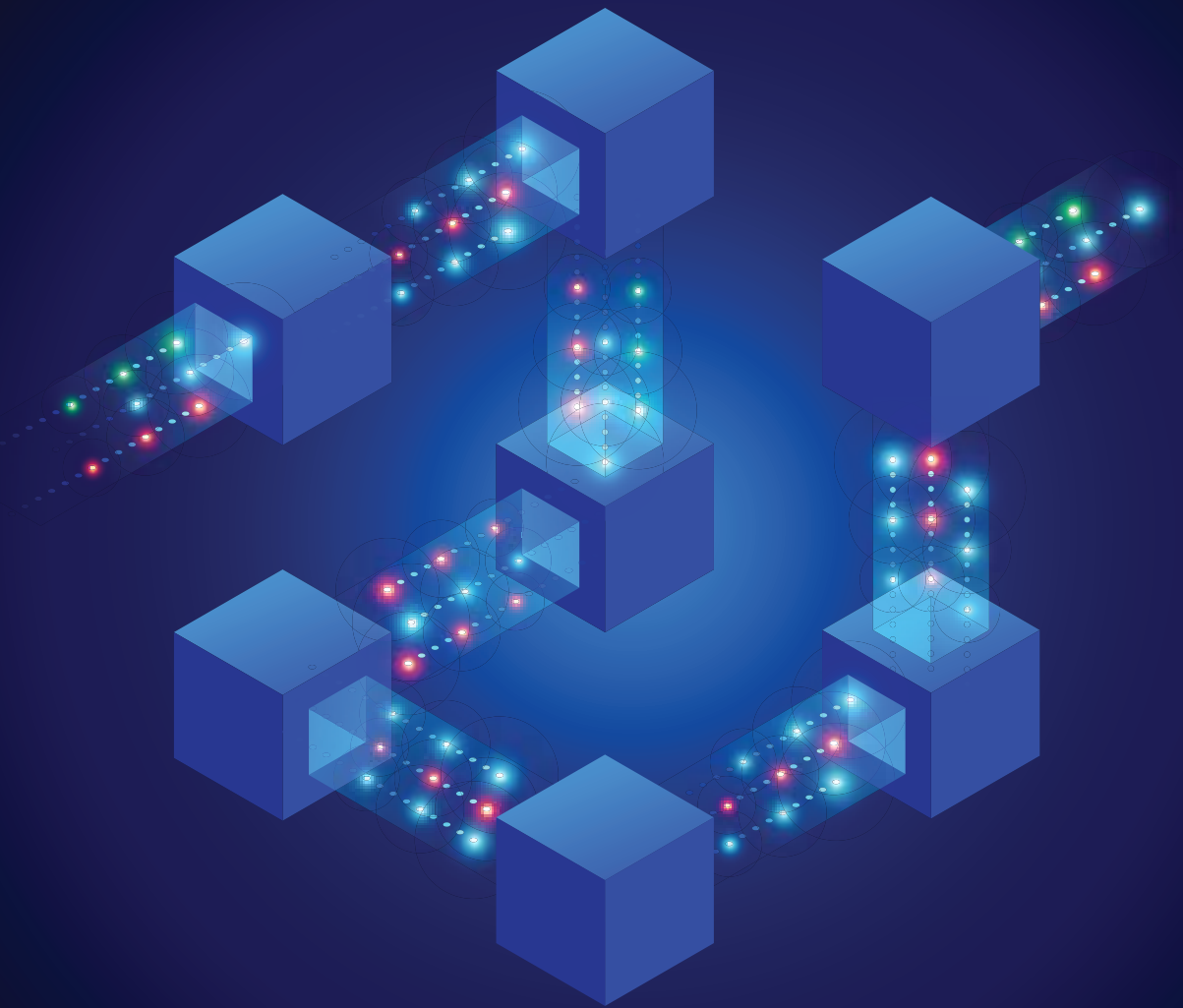 As with any community, the goal is to build relationships between human-focused organizations and the audience. Just like any other community that is human and customer-centric so is the BLOCKCHAIN community positively impacting people through relationship building while caring about inclusivity.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO COMMUNITY MANAGERS INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT MANAGING COMMUNITIES IN WEB 3.0

I think every community manager irrespective of niche who understands what it means to:

i)create experiences and bring people together through community and ii) help businesses, organizations and brands to stay connected with their customers through common interests - can transition into managing Blockchain spaces. What truly matters is letting your passion for the space determine your action while ensuring you master the art of giving the members a sense of belonging and access to shared interest with peers. Learning about Blockchain and cryptocurrency is foundational and fundamental to overseeing and running a BLOCKCHAIN community. Your ability to meet the

demand of those members especially the ones who need a walkthrough of your project is very important. However, you don't have to know it all. But some training from reputable institutions that will help you understand the technology is helpful - I'd recommend the Certified Blockchain Expert course.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU THINK ARE AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY MANAGERS TO INNOVATE AND LAUNCH THEIR WEB3 COMMUNITY BUILDING PROJECTS-WHERE MIGHT THEY START FROM?

Web3 is the next phase of the internet which allows the internet to have its own native economy so I think the opportunities are endless. Your starting point is to grasp the in-depth knowledge of what web3 is all about, and you can do that through research, following influencers in the space. I'm seeing lots of Community Managers start to launch their own projects.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FORESEE FOR COMMUNITY MANAGERS IN THIS SPACE?

One notable practice that has been trending and I foresee as a major challenge for Community Managers is in the area of reputation. Community managers should ensure they do their diligent research about a project before putting themselves

forward for any BLOCKCHAIN community. Always make sure the project team are fully doxxed. Get to know them, meet them and establish a professional relationship. Find out each team member's past project involvement, was it successful or not? Ask a LOT of questions, eg are there financial issues related to the team or any team member before, and do your own due diligence.

Ensure you thoroughly study the project's use case to have an understanding of how much impacts it has on the people and how it's worth your time and effort. Finally, ensure you remain an expert, this space is constantly changing and so you need to be the kind of person who is happy to be always learning and developing.

I think it's going to be a big challenge if you are not able to articulate the values of building a BLOCKCHAIN community and be able to present it clearly with data, while yielding a profitable outcome from it. This will go a long way to protect your image from future occurrences of scam projects while establishing you as a professional CM to reckon with, in the industry. It's a new frontier, a really exciting one for community management professionals, I'm excited to be in this space.

We're looking for your experiences and insights on Web 3.0 and Community Management– contact heidi@365media.com if you'd like to contribute to the next edition

hivebrite

How to Create a Content Strategy for Your Community

Useful, inspiring, and consistent content gives your members a reason to come back. It helps grow your community while strengthening your brand. It supports the creation of (stronger) partnerships and more.

A great content strategy enhances every aspect of your content creation efforts, making your life easier and your content more impactful.

With this guide, you will learn :

- How to create a content mission statement
- How to understand your members' needs
- How to organize your content creation
- How to measure the effectiveness of your content creation
- And more

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How to Create a Content Strategy for Your Community

The complete guide

Create better content for your community

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Hivebrite is an all-in-one community management and engagement platform.

It empowers organizations to launch, manage, and grow fully branded private communities. Hivebrite is completely customizable and provides all the tools needed to strengthen community engagement.

Over 800 customers worldwide, including American Heart Association, JA Worldwide, WWF, Cartier Women's Institute, NYSE, Earthwatch, the University of Notre Dame, and Princeton University Advancement, use Hivebrite to create and engage vibrant communities.

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New York, Paris, Sydney

Sabin Vaccine Institute Increases Global Reach with Boost Community Platform

The global health non-profit uses Hivebrite to manage its community dedicated to supporting immunization professionals worldwide.

boost
A global community where immunization professionals connect, learn and lead
SABIN

Challenges

- Create community to support immunization professionals worldwide
- Facilitate member sign-up and use
- Disseminate immunization news and resources quickly to the community

Solutions

- Fully branded community platform
- Interactive members directory
- Media center and news module to share resources
- Communications campaign module to build effective e-blasts
- Live community newsfeed

Benefits

- 985 activated profiles
- 655% increase in members in 7 months
- Increased global reach - immunization professionals supported in 115 countries
- Increased community diversity

Sabin Vaccine Institute is global health non-profit on a mission to make vaccines more accessible, enable innovation, and expand immunization

In recent years, the immunization landscape has become increasingly complex with an increase in vaccine hesitancy, violence against health workers, and ongoing global health system delivery barriers. In response to this, the organization secured funding to create Boost, a global community to better support immunization professionals.

Choosing the Right Technology Partner

Boost's mission is to enable immunization professionals to connect with peers and experts, learn skills, and lead immunization programs in challenging contexts.

"We knew that one of the biggest initial hurdles would be getting people to sign up and use Boost.

We needed to make joining and participating in the community incredibly simple. Straight away, Hivebrite was the clear choice," said **Elizabeth Kohlway**, Manager, Community Building and Digital Engagement at Sabin Vaccine Institute.

Empowering and Supporting Immunization Professionals

Networking is a huge component of the Boost community.

Connecting members is facilitated by the member directory that allows members to quickly and easily search for peers based on criteria such as experitize and location. Hivebrite's interactive map displays all members' locations visually. Members can send direct messages to others to grow their network, exchange ideas, and ask questions.

Increasing Global Reach and Diversity

Boost can now support more immunization professionals around the globe to grow and lead their careers and accelerate change in their communities—especially reaching those working at the national and sub-national levels. Increasing its global reach has also enabled Boost to increase its community's diversity.

On-going Customer Success Support

The team can quickly and easily share relevant content to engage the community. Analytics give the team insights on member and content engagement so power users and popular content can be identified.

"Hivebrite's Customer Success Managers and resources are a great support. Within two weeks my team and I had a good grasp on how to use the platform. And it is great to know that customer success is always on hand to assist and advise when needed!" said Elizabeth Kohlway.

MAPPING COMMUNITY VALUE-CREATION TO BUSINESS GOALS

By Patrick Woods,
Co-founder and CEO, Orbit

How often have you been asked, "how many leads did we get from last night's meetup?"

It's an inaccurate question at best. At worst, it's a question that grossly misidentifies the role and impact of community. That's because this kind of question focuses on value capture when, in reality, community teams should be focused on value creation.

I would argue that most companies don't have enough (or any) conversations about which of their tactics are aligned to value capture and which are aligned to value creation. But it's important to note that this isn't an issue of semantics. Being clear on the vocabulary and the meaning of these strategies is crucial to dispelling confusion and aligning the right teams towards the right business goals.

There's no question about whether community management does or doesn't lead to value creation. It does. However, I've noticed that there's some general confusion about how this specific kind of impact maps to business goals. So, before we get into the details of how community management drives value creation, I'll heed my own advice by first defining value capture versus value creation, so we're on the same page.

VALUE CAPTURE VS. VALUE CREATION

We're all familiar with the sales and marketing funnel as a metaphor and measurement device. It's been around forever. The classic metaphor of the "funnel" has defined most go-to-market strategies (since 1898!).

It's focused on optimizing every step of the purchasing process—from awareness and discovery to evaluation, adoption, conversion/sales—pushing leads through linearly, extracting value from a prospective customer at each stage.

Notice that I say extract value from prospects; not create value for prospects.

Community, on the other hand, isn't about pushing people toward a binary endpoint. It's about creating an environment so compelling that it naturally attracts people toward its center.

Value creation encompasses many of the activities carried out by community teams, developer advocates, content creators, and event organizers. They create value for community members by producing content and tutorials, developing training materials, hosting events, and creating spaces where people can share ideas and connect with one another.

Value capture is primarily about generating pipeline and qualifying and closing prospects. The people in charge of these activities are your demand generation experts, SDRs, SEs, and AEs. For example, you wouldn't typically ask an SDR to write a tutorial or host a community Slack channel. They're solely focused on lead qualification and, more generally, capturing value.

Both of these sets of activities have their role to play in growing organizations. If you're creating value without capturing any for your organization, then it's an expensive, unsustainable exercise that's unrelated to your business goals. While only capturing value ignores the opportunity to leverage the entire audience around your business. Both activities are essential, but critically, they need to be aligned. It can be tough to achieve success if everyone has different underlying assumptions about how they connect together. This usually leads to a mismatch between activities and their expected impact. To avoid this critical misstep, I'm sharing a framework that you can use to map your value creation objectives to business goals.

MAPPING COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

The framework borrows from Phil Leggetter's brilliant 'AAARRRP' strategy framework for developer relations and 500 Startup's Pirate Metrics, focusing on the business goals of awareness, acquisition, activation, retention, referral, and product. It's supplemented by real-world examples of businesses that successfully apply community management strategies towards tangible goals for you to learn from.

> **"COMMUNITY IS ABOUT CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT SO COMPELLING IT NATURALLY ATTRACTS PEOPLE TOWARD ITS CENTER."**
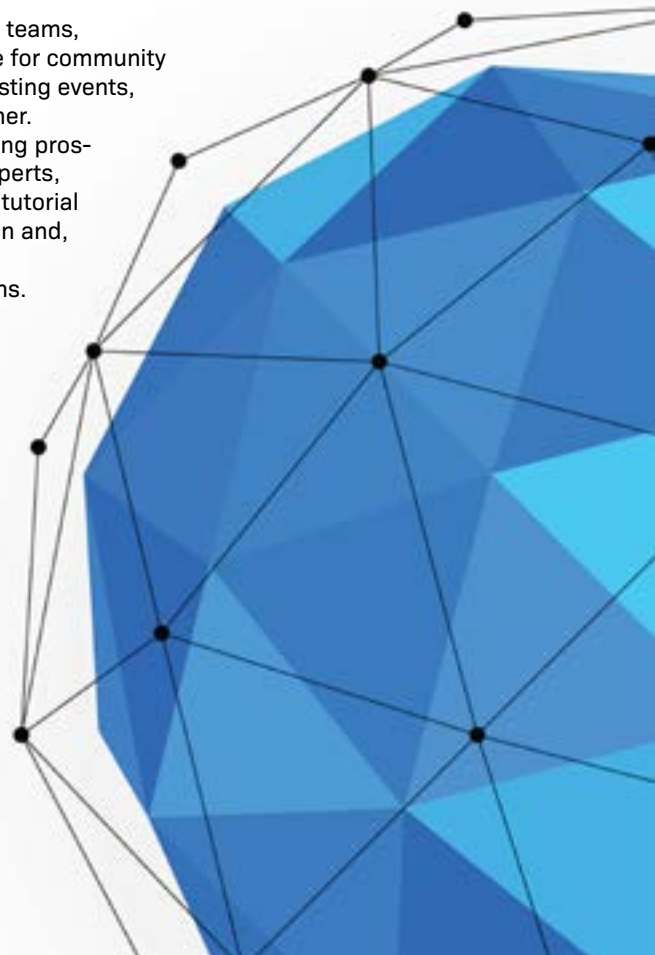
OBJECTIVE	COMMUNITY STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
Awareness	WoM (online or in-person) from current members; community-generated content gets distribution and drives click-thrus	Netlify's Jamstack community
Acquisition	Inspiration and social proof from within the community encourages trial of the product	Vercel/Heroku/Digital Ocean/Netlify GitHub 1-click deploy buttons
Activation	The community is able to provide answers, resources, and encouragement to keep a user moving	Wes Bos using Sanity for "Mastering Gatsby" course; Nat Eliason's "Effortless Output in Roam" course
Retention	Long-term usage thanks to a deeper sense of connection to the product through other members	Zapier / Makerpad consistent flywheel from tutorial to adoption + product use.
Referral	Following a positive community experience many members will become new WoM advocates	Miro's Community Miro-verse showcasing community-created templates
Product	Frequent and high-quality opportunities for product feedback and ideation	Obsidian's forum has a highly-engaged and engaging feedback channel

"EACH OF THESE STRATEGIES COMBINE TO GENTLY PULL PEOPLE INTO THE FOLD BY OFFERING SOMETHING OF VALUE TO THEM."

For those of you missing revenue as a business goal, worry not, communities can drive revenue. It's just that it should be viewed as a second-order effect of creating a compelling value creation machine.

It can be tempting to read this framework as a linear progression, like a funnel, but it's more of a flywheel of value creation. Each of these strategies combines to gently pull people into the fold by offering something of value to them.

This is a positive-sum, or win-win, approach to attracting and retaining customers. By focusing on value creation, you create a sense of gravity that consistently pulls prospects and customers into your organization's orbit. That kind of loyalty has to be earned, not extracted.

PLAY THE INFINITE GAME

An example I often think about comes from game theory. In his 1986 book Finite and Infinite Games, James Carse wrote, "A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, an infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play."

I'll admit this feels more like a meditation and less like business advice, but I think the sentiment will resonate with community-minded thinkers. The rules of value capture—for example, lead qualification—while necessary in many cases,

exist to bring conversations to an end. The rules of value creation seek to keep the conversation, or the game, going.

By creating value, companies earn the right to continue the conversations and relationships with the people in their orbit. The most effective way to create a lot of value is by building high-gravity communities. It's a virtuous cycle, but you have to be willing to put some investment in first.

Members of high-gravity communities benefit from the connection, collaboration, and self-actualization associated with bonding over a common interest or cause. These interactions benefit the individuals involved in each relationship, but the benefits also accrue to the community overall and on to the wider business.

In this way, value creation helps companies keep conversations going with their communities, versus ending the dialogue early simply because the individual doesn't yet have the need or budget for a paid plan. Our hope is that more companies turn towards perpetually creating value through win-win relationships with prospects rather than rejecting them and risk losing them forever.

22 COMMUNITY COACHES & CONSULTANTS IN 2022

If you're looking for help to get started with community or to grow and scale an existing community, we've got you covered. The Community Industry has an incredible and diverse array of talented coaches, consultants and trainers. We've highlighted 22 that caught our eye in 2022. Check them out and tell them you found them in CL Magazine:

NITYESH AGARWAL | myfirstcommunitymanager.com

I help founders and creators build invaluable communities where professionals connect and learn from each other.
Zone of Genius: I'm passionate about helping builders with limited resources. I provide all the help you need to build an engaged community.

ILKER AKANSEL | www.ilkerakansel.com

I help organizations harness the impact, and individuals understand the power, of community
Zone of Genius: I'm a community strategy consultant with a focus on developer, talent and brand communities. As a trilingual professional with tenures in the UK, Switzerland and Turkey, and with 20 years experience at Google, Cisco and the London Olympic Games, I'm at home in global communities, teams, organizations and projects.

MARJORIE ANDERSON | communitybyassociation.com

Associations Expert

I help associations and nonprofits connect to their mission through community.
Zone of Genius: I specialize incommunity strategy development and advisory services.
**Signature mastermind:** Watch this space, coming soon!

ERAN BUCAI | www.dotcomtruths.com

Tech Help for Community Builders

I help solopreneurs overcome their tech struggles to launch a membership or community-led business. I'm obsessed with helping people & I'd love to help you.
Zone of genius: Helping solopreneurs overcome their tech struggles, starting with choosing the best software for their business. I also offer done-with-you services and specialize in building sales funnels, membership sites and online courses.
Signature mastermind: Dot Com Truths Tech Support Membership
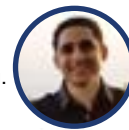
SUZANNE BUCKLEY | suzannebuckley.com

Knowledge Management Expert

I help business owners and entrepreneurs in the mindset and knowledge management industry (particularly those who consider themselves neurodivergent), to create, nurture and streamline their online communities in order to grow their businesses.
Zone of Genius: Mindset and PKM businesses and entrepreneurs
Signature mastermind: VIP day for membership/community owners - book via the form on my website.

VICTORIA CUMBERBATCH | adventuresofv.com/services

I help newbie or newly transitioned Community Managers on a 1x1 advising basis, with aspects spanning: brainstorming, strategizing, prioritisation, peer review, advising, etc.
Zone of Genius: Making the complex, practical & digestible. Engagement. Facilitation. Micro Communities [<500]

SANDRA DE FREITAS | www.EngagedGroups.com

I help membership, course and workshop owners Grow, Engage and Monetize their free groups, and help them keep retention high in their paid groups
Zone of Genius: FB Groups
Signature mastermind: My Engaged Groups membership www.engagedgroups.com/membership You want to keep engagement high in your community but you don't know how to make that happen. Our membership provides you with a library of quick strategies to implement, a monthly set of engaging posts + images for you to schedule in your group and a live Zoom Q&A.

BLAISE GRIMES-VIORT | istheanswer.consulting

I help community-led organizations. We're a change agency focussed on growing community-led organisations. We design sustainable culture-driven digital networks and empower community-driven brand value, product innovation and revenue generation. Inside and out.
Zone of genius: We specialised in online community and social media auditing, strategy and research. We blend traditional community building with social media methodologies through a unique innovation-based framework. We promote deep integration with corporate goals and train clients on applying a community mindset throughout their organisation.

RACHEL HAPPE | www.engagedorgs.com

I help enterprise community owners create cultures that accelerate collaboration and learning.
Zone of Genius: Simplifying complex systems and identifying practical recommendations to improve them. Advising executives, stakeholders, and program owners while mentoring teams as a fractional addition to enterprise community teams.

SAMANTHA HARRADINE | www.tribegeeks.com

Great for FB Groups

I help online experts & coaches build their way to 6 figures using Facebook groups
Zone of Genius: Organic Facebook Marketing, with a focus on leveraging the power of Groups to build a 6 figure + business as well as message & marketing to show online experts to scale to 6 figures.
Signature mastermind: Facebook Group Mastery Course - Facebook Group Mastery will show you how to get a flood of new Facebook Group Members and make offers to them in a way that feels easy and natural.

ERICA KUHL | www.ericakuhl.com

I help high-growth late stage startups to mid-size public companies.

Zone of Genius: I build powerful and authentic customer communities tied to business objectives as well as advising community leaders on how to optimize, scale and plan for the future of their customer communities. My community building formula is simplified into a 5 step process in order to show you results and recognize a return on investment as fast as possible. I provide all the tools, templates, processes, and introductions to make your journey to a successful community a smooth one!

RICHARD MILLINGTON | www.feverbee.com

Pure Genius

I help enterprise level corporations build and grow their communities. I'm the founder of Feverbee, Author of Buzzing Communities and The Indispensable Community.

Zone of genius: We've worked with the largest organizations in the world (including Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, SAP, Oracle, Google) to build communities where members share knowledge, solve problems, and feel a powerful sense of belonging.

Signature mastermind: We offer Consultancy services, but we also offer a number of self-paced courses including Strategic Community Management.

TODD NILSON | clocktoweradvisors.com

I help organizations in the B2B, healthcare and non-profit space build sustainable, thriving communities that drive tangible results. I also help build digital workplace solutions to help acquire, engage, empower and retain employees. My goal is to build communities, not audiences.

Zone of Genius: I'm a full life-cycle strategist who understands the technical as well as social elements of community building. I'm often brought in most effectively in early stage community buildouts where I can get executive leadership well aligned to the effort. I've also got a good grounding in gamification, SEO, digital marketing, and Web3.

JAKE MCKEE CONSULTING | www.jakemckee.com

I help companies large and small who have an active base of connected customers/fans in most industries

Zone of Genius: I'm a fixer. After 20+ years building communities, I help you solve your most complex strategic, logistical, or experience challenges related to building a successful online community. Great strategy is the one you will actually use on a daily basis and I help you create and execute community strategy that's based on measurable goals, robust processes, well-trained staff, and internal support.

Signature mastermind: I practice what I preach with Dinner5 (www.dinner5.org), the monthly series that brings senior community leaders together in small groups for connection, conversation, and camaraderie.

KATIE RAY | katiescommunitycorner.wordpress.com

I help with Community Led Growth. I really enjoy working with the B2B SaaS and startup space who want to build a community for their customers or for evangelizing a specific idea or theory.

Zone of genius: Hyper Growth, Community Programs, Super User Programs

TOM ROSS | tomross.co/community/learn-community

I help community builders to launch, build and scale successful online communities.

Zone of Genius: As an entrepreneur and founder, I love helping others to build paid communities that can scale the positive impact they're making. I work heavily with folks figuring out community validation, value propositions, pricing, community models and marketing strategies.

Signature mastermind: Learn Community is a thriving hub of 150+ community builders. Members benefit from weekly workshops, a busy forum, community critiques and more.

DEB SCHELL | findcalmhere.com

I help entrepreneurs find calm building, launching, and growing paid online communities so that they can lead with energy, confidence, and purpose.

Zone of genius: I specialize in discovery, community strategy, and community growth with most clients hiring me based on my expertise with the Mighty Networks platform.

Signature Mastermind: The Mighty Mastermind, a cohort inside the Find Calm Here Community that helps new community builders (Mighty Network Hosts) get clear on their community structure, strategy, and launch plan. Ideal for coaches, consultants, authors, speakers, leaders, to help them scale their existing business and stop trading time for money.

ROSIE SHERRY | rosie.land

Follow her on Twitter

I help people start and grow their community efforts.

Zone of Genius: I see things no one else does.

Signature mastermind: Lurk as a Service — community support, advice and coaching as a service

RACHAEL SPIEWAK | www.rockyourtribe.com

I help business leaders build powerful communities online.

Zone of Genius: I develop unique digital community strategies for business leaders to expand their influence, raise their profile, build relationships, and increase sales.

Signature mastermind: Rock Your Tribe® VIP, my private membership where I provide daily guidance, feedback, and support for business leaders who run communities.

CARMEN TABUMAN | communitycoach.me

I help build communities - I'm a Community Coach with a track record of success building communities for startups and multinational corporations across various industries

Zone of genius: NFT communities on Discord

Signature mastermind: A 4 stage program with practical worksheets and resources and one-on-one mentorship.

DIANA TOWER | www.dianatower.com

I help overwhelmed business owners boost retention and craft remarkable member experiences members can't help but rave about.

Zone of genius: Think of me as the Unicorn Whisperer. I know what it takes to keep members engaged, paying and proud to be a part of your community – and I can teach you how

Signature Mastermind: The Membership Retention Kit – Get savvy about the 6 Retention Levers

JENNY WEIGLE | jenny.community

I help brands create their first online customer community

Zone of Genius: Most recently, I've been immersed in the world of category design and what it takes to create a category community. (If you you're not sure what this means, check out the book: Play Bigger, to learn more about category design.) Working with executive teams to help them play and budget for the earliest phases of their customer community.

Signature mastermind: Working with executive teams to help them plan and budget for the earliest phases of their customer community. Contact me if this something of interest to you.

Community is future of VoC:

*How communities are changing the innovation game*

Feedback drives innovation

Let's start with the obvious: when your customers experience friction with your brand, they want to tell you about it. That's incredibly valuable feedback for you — so if you're not using it, you're missing out.

Now, the less obvious: the old approach to gathering this feedback — meetings, surveys, focus groups, and feedback sessions — is inefficient and outdated. And while surveys are undoubtedly important, they don't capture every pain point your customers want to tell you about. There are two main issues with the old approach:

1. The old approach can't give you context

When you have context, you can focus on the problems that people have, not the problems that your products have. Focus groups and feedback sessions tend not to give you this context, because they too often focus on ways to improve the product or specific design decisions. This takes the solution out of context from the problem, i.e. the situation where the product is being used. Even feedback that gets repeated again and again, when it doesn't have context, won't help you drive real innovation.
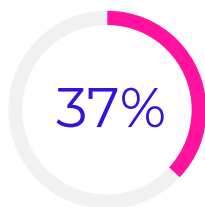
37% of respondants say they've ignored a survey request because they had already given feedback somewhere else.

2. The old approach can't give you real-time speed

Surveys and other traditional feedback mechanisms don't capture people's feedback about pain points *while the pain is happening*. When we take the time and resources to set up a fabricated situation, we miss out on the real-time frustration that so often drives invention.

If you can capture that spontaneous invention right when it's happening and give a way for that person to show you exactly what they are going through, you can harness that frustration at scale across every customer and potential customer. That's when real innovation starts flowing.

Khoros®

So, how can brands capture that power? *Brand-owned communities*

The solution is to give people a space to innovate whenever inspiration strikes — and incentivize them to share those insights. The top 25 social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin, Reddit, Quora, WeChat, YouTube, and more have over 17.5 billion daily active users around the world. People spend billions of hours every day on these sites venting and sharing frustrations with little to no hope of anyone hearing them or doing anything about — and they know it.

The key isn't to get your customers to stop complaining. Rather, it's to create a space where they feel they're being heard to impact change. This is what communities do!
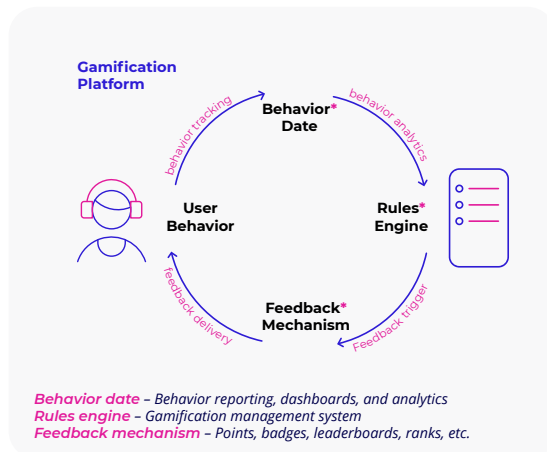
1. Harness the power of frustrated masses

Public social networks, unsurprisingly, gather people to share their common frustrations. When your brand is on the hot seat, it creates a huge wealth of information that you can use to improve customer experience and products, services.

The problem? Brands sometimes can't participate in — or even find — these conversations on public communities. A brand-owned community harnesses the power of frustrated customers and gives them the power to impact change.

## 2. Accelerate ideation and innovation with gamification

Once you've created a space for people to share ideas, the next step is to maximize creativity and productivity within the community. You can incentivize people with non-monetary rewards, but many brands go a step further, offering contributors early access to new products, executives, discounts, and indirect payments.

Behavior date – Behavior reporting, dashboards, and analytics
Rules engine – Gamification management system
Feedback mechanism – Points, badges, leaderboards, ranks, etc.

Adobe's crowdsourcing superpowers

Adobe, a leader in this space, uses their community as a major source of ideas. The Experience League connects customers with their peers and gives a place for the customer voice to be heard through ideas and voting.

A new leader board for the community provides another area for members to highlight their achievements and contributions. By encouraging more engagement, any member can make it to the top 10!
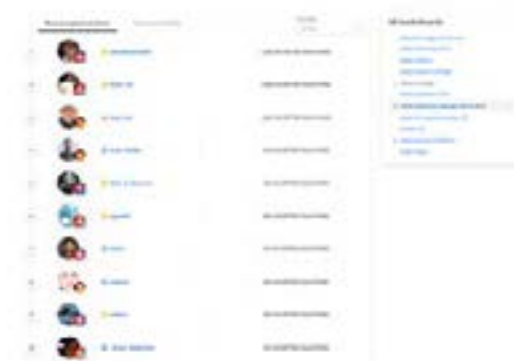
Building a winning community

One of the most amazing things about online communities is how quickly they can scale. Unlike in-person or over-the-phone brainstorming, which set limits on the number of people who can contribute, asynchronous online groups can include any number of people without worrying about interruptions or time limits.

The bottom line here is that when brands use asynchronous, democratic, incentivized communities to source ideas, they can reduce the costs of innovation while increasing the outputs.

Tips to level up your gamification

Factor in
YOUR AUDIENCE
as marketing channels

Unlock their most powerful untapped resource: **THEIR COMMUNITY!**

snöball

Your go-to community marketing & audience growth platform that mobilizes existing audiences into becoming influential advocates to drive audience acquisition, retention, and engagement.

Let's have a 17-min chat
snoball.events

5 STEPS TO CREATE MEANINGFUL FACEBOOK GROUP ENGAGEMENT

Rachael Spiewak, Founder of Rock Your Tribe®, Facebook Power Admin, Meta Certified Community Manager

The best Facebook Groups are driven by meaningful engagement. Meaningful engagement is what builds bonds between members and elevates your Group to a Community. It's what motivates your members to invite their friends to your Group, and it's what keeps them coming back for more. **Follow these 5 steps** *to create the kind of engagement that turns your members into raving fans who love to spend time with each other and you.*

1 START CONVERSATIONS BY ASKING A QUESTION THAT'S RELEVANT TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

The idea is to get people talking. Don't go over their heads or make it too complicated. Yes/no questions work just fine as long as people respond to it.

These conversation starters, or Engagement Posts, are opportunities to show that you know what matters most to your community members, which will help deepen your connection to them.

They're also opportunities to simply get to know your members better, and to help them get to know each other.

How often should you ask something obviously related to your Group's purpose vs something off topic but fun? Use the 80/20 rule as a general standard.

Protip: keep the design element simple by using Facebook's color blocks instead of spending your precious time on creating branded graphics.

The real magic of Engagement Posts happens in the comments.

2 REACT AND COMMENT BACK TO YOUR MEMBERS' COMMENTS.

Keep it friendly and supportive. **Cheer your members on**. Ask follow up questions.

Answer their questions generally and point members in the right direction. This establishes you as a trusted, go-to person.

A big mistake business owners make here is to pitch an offer. Unless someone comments with "how do I buy?", stick to building trust and relationships when interacting in the comments on your Engagement Posts.

3 KEEP TRACK OF WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOUR MEMBERS, PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY, AND REFERENCE THESE MILESTONES AND SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS (AS PRIVACY STANDARDS ALLOW).

Always keep in mind that your community members are the stars of the show. **You're the Executive Producer.**

Make them feel like stars by congratulating them on a new job, wishing them a happy birthday, and celebrating their special moments either in a post or in the comments if you see an opportunity.

4 KEEP TRACK OF WHO DOES WHAT AND REFER YOUR MEMBERS TO EACH OTHER.

Communities are built on relationships between members, so **help your members create those bonds**.

If a member posts a question or comments on a post and you know of another member who can share some ideas, tag them in a comment.

If a member mentions a hobby and you know of another member who has the same interest, tag them in a comment.

5 USE MODERATION TOOLS IN YOUR FACEBOOK GROUP TO KEEP THE ENGAGEMENT HEALTHY AND ORGANIZED.

Years of work to build a vibrant community can be negated in an instant if, for example, a Group member makes a culturally disrespectful statement and it's not moderated appropriately.

A popular group where anyone can post anything at any time, with no system for addressing Frequently Asked Questions, will soon become cluttered with redundant posts, spam, and complaints about clutter and spam.

There are plenty of moderation tools available in Facebook Groups. It's up to you and your team to **create your community standards and decide how you'll enforce them**.

HARNESS THE POWER OF YOUR COMMUNITY WITH EVENTS

Matt Snodgrass, Director of Community, Swapcard

"At Swapcard, we're on a mission is to bring people together and create meaningful connections, no matter where they are".

"While attending physical events over the past decade, I noticed that many people attend in a single-person capacity. I was sitting at an event feeling very alone because it was so hard to meet the right people. Networking at events was like searching for a needle in a haystack. I thought to myself: There must be a way to bring these people together and let them connect in a meaningful way,'' said Baptiste Boulard, CEO and co-founder of Swapcard. Since then, Swapcard has become the leading all-in-one events and community platform.

ARE EVENTS PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES?

Events and communities work hand-in-hand because a good event builds community while you're there, and a great community harnesses the energy from their event to keep members engaged.

But sometimes, the word "events" can scare community managers.

We tend to think of sprawling multi-day extravaganzas requiring hundreds of hours to set up, manage, and facilitate.

But events don't have to be a monumental effort!

Whether it's a two-day conference, a one-hour webinar, or a 15-minute roundtable session, you've got an amazing opportunity to bring your community together.

Swapcard makes it easy to build a community around your events and create events that engage and energize your community.

UNLOCK EXPONENTIAL REVENUE GROWTH WITH EVENT-BASED COMMUNITIES.

Event-based communities, such as those offered by Swapcard, are exactly the kind of new digital channel that marketers should be adding to their toolkit.

An intuitive and easy-to-use platform makes engaging with community members simple and seamless. Brands can regularly connect with community members through newsfeeds, job boards, group chats, polls, and many other engagement features.

An established community not only makes event organization easier, but engaged and enthusiastic members also translate into the greatest ambassadors for your brand.

The flexibility of the platform allows community managers to create tiered community subscriptions with tailored member benefits. You can get creative when it comes to monetizing your community. For example, you may want to charge for access to exclusive content, such as webinars, pre-recorded videos, or roundtable sessions.

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

So, why should your audience join your community?

After two years of intermittent pandemic restrictions, people are keen on finding authentic and meaningful connections. Your community can give that to them, both online and in the real world.

Also consider— event days can be hectic, making it difficult for some attendees to truly connect. Whether they forget to exchange contact info or they're unsure what to say because they're out of practice, your online community is the ideal place for members to keep the energy of your event going and to network outside of event days.

Swapcard communities make it easy for people to connect and converse about topics they are passionate about. With Swapcard's smart networking features, finding like-minded individuals to meet online or in real life is simple and stress-free.

Continuing conversations, finding new business opportunities, and having access to year-round dynamic content are just some of the ways a community becomes a valuable resource for members.

See how Swapcard can help you harness the power of your community.

CREATE YOUR FIRST COMMUNITY EVENT!

THE HUMAN COST OF VIDEO MEETINGS
WHAT'S YOUR VCU?

By Mack Reed, CLIPr

Diving headlong into year 3 of Zoom fatigue, you're probably wondering how you can make video meetings work better. Grind less. And mean more.

*How do we keep our team connected in the new world of mostly-remote? How do we learn from each other? How do we grow as a team? Is video working for us or **against us?***

We've been thinking of a new metric — Video Content Utility (VCU)— a metric that measures the actual value of a meeting and maybe helps your meetings matter.

More on that in a minute.

"This meeting could have been an email."

It began as a common observation. Then it devolved into a rueful joke.

Now in the video age, it has decayed into a moldy truism: You rally colleagues to answer a question, chew on a problem, and dream up next steps— only to learn you have wasted everyone's time: To be honest, a Slack chat or email thread would have coughed up the same result.

But it's not the collaboration format that's the problem — a video meeting is supposed to gather the right people to explore, cross-pollinate, ideate, plan, and decide.

The problem might be that you're asking the wrong questions of a meeting — "What should we do? Where are we going? How do we succeed?" — and you're not thinking of the right ones:

Which brains belong here? What questions should they answer? Who should we digest this for later? What will they want to know?

This is where the notion of VCU gains traction.

$$VCU = \frac{X + Y}{Z}$$

X = HOURS OF VIDEO RECORDED
Y = % OF EMPLOYEES SHARING RECORDED MOMENTS
Z = % OF RESHARES OR SECONDARY SHARES

That's how you measure Video Content Utility.

So much of a meeting gets lost in the workday bustle, the weekly noise, the quarterly grind.

If you're lucky, a great meeting organizer (or at least an excellent notetaker) distills all the creative collaboration and smart ideas that your meeting generated. Maybe they toss out an email that compresses it into clear marching orders — or maybe just a half-hearted summary.

You left behind a lot of value locked up in that recording: Gone are brilliant suggestions from your most creative thinkers that didn't directly drive the decisions you made—retrievable, shareable ideas that could drive better decisions in your future. Gone are the moments where clever collaboration evolved your strategy, sharpened your tactics.

Gone is the genius that — if you had captured it — could have focused your company's future and driven you faster towards your goals.

You could pay a smart employee to hand-sift all that video for the moments that matter and bring them to the next meeting. But who can afford that?

Your only hope is that someone — your notetaker? — remembers those moments reliably and brings them to the next meeting like this.

If they are even invited.

Meanwhile, all those moments of incandescent genius stay locked up in your Zoom, OneDrive, or Google vaults, fading in the memories of the few people who happened to be in the meeting.

Next time, everyone's going to spend the meeting's first half struggling to remember **what really happened** and then deciding which parts were important.

Maybe, just maybe, someone will remember the one thing that triggered your decision and somehow got pasted as a string of text in follow-up email thread, like the faint echo of a single, beautiful musical note.

And on you'll grind, into yet another Zoom call that could just as well have been an email.

Curious about VCU? Come talk to us. We know how to make it work for you.

Mack Reed is Director of Product Management at CLIPr, guiding the development of the platform's functionality, user experience, community, and brand.

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