

Community Leaders

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2021

USING DATA TO DRIVE IMPACT

**CREATING BRAVERY FOR
MEMBER-LED ENGAGEMENT**

**HOW TO CREATE A 6 FIGURE
FACEBOOK GROUP**

**HOW TO CHOOSE THE
RIGHT SOFTWARE**



**RICHARD MILLINGTON TO
KEYNOTE CLIX, MEMPHIS**

4/5 APRIL 2022



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From the fundamentals of strategic community management to building new in-house capabilities and revenue streams, registration for our Fall courses is open now. New trainings will continue to be added - if there's something you really need and don't see, let us know amy@communityleadersinstitute.com



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WELCOME



Welcome to the first edition of Community Leaders Magazine, the new community magazine brought to you by Community Leaders Institute (CLI). CLI is on a mission to unite, support, educate and nurture communities and community leaders through training, events, networking – and of course, community.

Each month, Community Leaders Magazine brings you the inside track from across the community ecosystem – including compelling thought leadership, practical how-to guidance and interviews with community managers and leaders so you can see how your peers have overcome the same challenges you're facing.

WE BELIEVE THE SHIFT TOWARD COMMUNITY DRIVEN IS ACCELERATING

We'll cover everything from launch strategies and monetisation to content, engagement, measurement and moderation. We'll deep-dive into what's driving growth for some of the world's most successful

communities. We'll share lessons learnt from community pioneers on measuring and calculating community ROI, getting community governance right, impactful strategies for engagement - and everything else in between.

We believe the shift toward community driven is accelerating, and that we're stronger as community leaders when we come together to learn, share, ideate and innovate. With so many facets and types of community, we're your perfect opportunity to connect and share stories, learnings and experiences across community divides, to raise the bar for all.

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.

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COMMUNITY GAME CHANGERS

Each month we ask community experts what's impacting their communities and how they're responding to new challenges and opportunities



Sonia Andriano,
Events and
Community Manager,
SeedLegals

If the biggest challenge for

community managers in 2020 was to turn their whole engagement programme virtual, in 2021 it's to understand if their community is ready to go back to some in-person events and what kind of programme is preferred (virtual, in-person or hybrid). In the FinTech space, networking is essential to meet investors, clients and challenge ideas with peers. So far, no virtual event I've seen has been able to replicate that experience. That's why I believe the biggest game changer in the FinTech community in 2021 is going back to in-person events for social purposes, while still offering virtual programmes for educational and branding purposes (this is a tech community after all!)



**RD Whitney, CLI
Founder** The
Pandemic: A Slingshot
for Community. It
has been inspiring to

see how organizations quickly adapted and embraced the community model during the pandemic. They couldn't meet customers or members in person, so they pulled their community together online and increased the frequency. Words like "lifeline" and "essential" have been used to describe the importance of these communities to the professionals that depended on them. While the community "industry" has been thriving for decades, Covid 19 was the sling shot that has advanced the profession. When you see headlines from TechCrunch saying the "Chief Community Officer is the new CMO" you can clearly see the game has changed.



**Diana Tower -
Membership
Community
Strategist**

What's a game changer for

Community? While many might highlight a new app, platform or tech innovation, for me the real game changer is being human. Fostering, allowing, encouraging, acknowledging and protecting the human element. While it ain't sexy, it's the heart and pulse of any community. Without it... flatline. *Beeep*

When the human element is acknowledged, addressed and encouraged every step of the community experience, THAT is a game changer for you and your members. Your members stop seeing your community as a commodity; just another Facebook group, or Q&A forum. They see it as a fundamental part of their day, and FEEL a sense of belonging that convert them into members for life. #retention!

What do I mean by "every step of the community experience? I mean everywhere. In your free content, your onboarding (email and community based content), your manifesto (guidelines), your values, your visuals, your communication (in the content you write, videos you share, presentations, comments, DMs.)

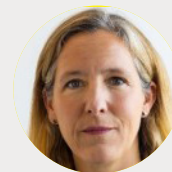
By giving your members permission to be human and FEEL the rainbow of emotions at every step of the Community experience, you'll not only foster an incredible community, but one that's easier to manage as well; and THAT is a true win-win game changer."



Sasha Suzdaleva,
Community Marketing
Manager, Axora

I think the growth of communities,

particularly in a B2B setting, has been due to a perfect storm of three things. The first is the growing importance of authentic, "value-add" marketing. The second, is the need for "real" connection beyond social media, particularly in what many have called the loneliest era, exasperated by the pandemic. Lastly, due to technological advancements, we can organise and build virtual communities like never before. There's still lots of room for improvement in this space, but community platforms have come a long way over the last couple of years."



**Michelle Goodall Chief
Marketing Officer,
Guild** A big lever
for 'community' has
been that those who

would be classified as being part of the 'knowledge economy' have realised the value of community when added to their online media or newsletter platforms.

High profile experts and journalists, especially those at the intersection of technology and democracy, are creating communities as an extension of their subscriber newsletters. Examples are Casey Newton, ex Verge editor, and his Platformer Substack and community on Discord and Simon Andrews' highly regarded Fix newsletter and community on Guild.

Topical discussions within private, paid communities ensures newsletter membership stickiness and a constant temperature check of what's resonating. It can also spawn new editorial topics for the next newsletter. It's a wonderful, cyclical model.



Online Community Platforms vs. Social Media

THE GREAT DEBATE

By Marjorie Anderson

In the community management profession, there's a bit of a debate around whether it makes sense to build your community on social media or not. The argument on both ends is logical. Social media allows you to meet your members where they're already engaging. Community allows you to create the experiences your community wants and protect their data.

WHEN IS SOCIAL MEDIA A GOOD IDEA WHEN BUILDING COMMUNITY VERSUS AN ONLINE COMMUNITY PLATFORM?

The answer is...it depends. Full transparency, for organizations/associations and brands I 100% do not recommend that you build your community on social media for sustainability and longevity. That's not to say that it cannot be done, but when you think about how the data is

I BELIEVE THAT THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE WITH YOUR MEMBERS FOR SOCIAL CHANNELS TO BE A LONG-TERM, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

maintained, how much control you have over user experience, and what your long-term strategy is around developing a closer relationship with your members/customers, there's only so far social media will take you.

Social media can be a great place to get in front of your community when they don't already know you exist. The notion of meeting people where they are makes it easy for them to engage with you without taking them out of normal rhythms and habits that they have already formed. For instance, creating a Facebook group for women who surf to share tips on technique and safety might be the best way to get in front of your ideal community member since she may already be participating in a Facebook group about surfing.

Same goes for anything else that might be incredibly niche. If your community is focused on a very specific area, it might be a good idea to start building that community in social spaces where they are already gathering. Say you love gardening. Your favorite plant to garden is hostas and some of the gardening groups you belong in have a decent number of "hosta fanatics," as well, but you haven't necessarily created a level of trust or a sense of community with those individuals yet. Instead of looking to create a separate, owned community, it may not be a bad idea to start a group

in that same space for lovers of hostas so that you can start to build that level of trust and engagement.

In either of these cases (and other use cases that I haven't covered here), the big question you'll want to answer is whether it makes sense to keep these communities on social for the long-term.

However, when we're talking about associations, starting on social media is the tip of the iceberg. My opinion is that this is not a long-term strategy for engagement for online community. It can help jumpstart your efforts, but you should be building a plan for migration to an owned platform at some point 2-3 years into launching on social if that's the direction you choose to take. Even better would be making the right investments up front, but not all associations are in the position to do so at the beginning. You may be thinking "why would I purchase a community solution when I can build on social for virtually nothing?"

BECAUSE YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR MEMBER'S DATA AND CUSTOMIZE THE MEMBER EXPERIENCE.

This should be of utmost importance to you. When you build on someone else's platform where you have no control over experience and how data is handled, it limits your ability to create a connection



Marjorie Anderson will be Chairing CLIX, 4-5 April 2022, Memphis, Tennessee

Where Community Leaders Come Together



with your members and protect them and their information from bad actors. You also likely have little information that you can extract from that platform to understand your community member's needs, how they are engaging, what's working well, and where you have opportunities.

I believe that there's too much at stake with your members for social channels to be a long-term, sustainable solution for building community for your association. I think it's fine to get people in your community door, but it will not be what keeps them.

SO WHERE DO WE LAND ON THE GREAT SOCIAL MEDIA VS. COMMUNITY DEBATE?

Use your best judgement. As I stated, both have their place, but if you're

looking for longevity, good user experience, member loyalty, and trust and safety, I strongly urge you to make the investment in hiring a community manager (or consultant), if you don't already have one, who can help assess your need and help you plan for the future. Guided by your community strategy, making informed, strategic decisions about where your community lives is the best way to set it up for success.

Where do you currently build community? If you're using social media, do you have plans to migrate to an online community platform? Share your experiences with CLI

MARJORIE ANDERSON IS AN EXPERIENCED COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL WITH EXPERTISE IN BUILDING A LARGE GLOBAL COMMUNITY FOR ASSOCIATIONS. SHE IS THE FOUNDER OF COMMUNITY BY ASSOCIATION, L.L.C., AN ORGANIZATION THAT DUALY SUPPORTS COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS IN ASSOCIATIONS AND NONPROFITS AND THAT PROVIDES INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO THESE ORGANIZATIONS ENABLING THEM TO BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THEIR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.



Featured Speakers include:



Richard Millington: Author: Buzzing Communities & The Indispensable Community



Ashley Friedlein: Founder of Econsultancy and Guild



Eric Ly: Co-Founder of LinkedIn



Venessa Paech: Co-Founder of Australian Community Managers and SWARM



David Spinks: Author of The Business of Belonging, Founder CMX

BY STEVE & SAM HARRADINE

HOW TO

**EASILY
CREATE A
SIX FIGURE
FACEBOOK
GROUP...**

**EVEN IF NO ONE'S EVER
HEARD OF YOU!**



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT COMMUNITY SOFTWARE



by Eran Bucai. If you have wanted to build a membership business or an online community, this article is for you. I will simplify the thought process when choosing the software for setting this up and save you a ton of time trying to figure this out on your own.

There are three parts to consider when you want to create a membership business and an online community.

Part 1: The strangers to customers process

Part 2: The post-purchase experience

Part 3: The pricing model and strategy

To build an online community or a membership business, you need to acquire customers.

THE STRANGERS TO CUSTOMERS PROCESS

The strangers to customers process include considering things such as:

- Landing page (to capture emails)
- Email autoresponder and follow up (nurturing a prospect toward a sale)
- Additional list building strategies such as chatbots or appointment scheduling software
- Payment integrations (Stripe, PayPal, and others)
- Sales page creation and features available
- Checkout process with order bump, upsells, downsells
- Affiliate tracking, payouts and management

You get the idea.

THE POST-PURCHASE EXPERIENCE

The post-purchase experience is all the features you may need to consider concerning how you want to deliver the transformational experience to your members.

There are three key aspects that most communities and membership businesses need to consider:

- Community engagement (people talking to each other daily, similar to Facebook groups)
- Live events, weekly, bi-weekly or months (people attending a Zoom call

as a group to learn, engage and connect)

- Education and information consumption (online courses, video tutorials, PDF downloads, and other self-study tools)

Beware of buying into the idea of a software that provides “all-in-one”.

Two software tools may claim to have email marketing but have completely different functionality and level of customization.

The same goes for video hosting, live webinar features, and community.

PRO TIP: Think about the overriding value of your membership. What is the ONE thing that makes this online community and membership special? What is the ONE thing that your people sign-up to receive? By getting this question answered for real, you can eliminate all the “nice to have” features you as a business may “like to have” and focus on what truly matters to build a solid community.

If it is a community that enables connecting with other like-minded people, video hosting may not be a big deal in terms of the features.

A more robust community software may be a better choice. That’s the strength of going with software like Circle or Mighty Networks.

If you are looking for more of an educational community with course style content that gives members a lot of training, a choice like Kajabi or New Zenler may work better.

THE PRICING MODEL AND STRATEGY

The last thing to consider is pricing.

Every software has a cost. Some are more expensive.

If you are starting, consider starting with lower-cost options or even free methods to spark the community to get

proof of concept and figure out what is essential in alignment with parts 1 & 2 above.

To wrap up, here are a few common pitfalls:

COMMON PITFALLS

- Getting advice from someone without them knowing your vision and requirements
- Getting advice from someone who promotes just one software tool and is incentivized to do so.
- Getting advice that fits someone who is in a different stage in their business to yours. Context is key.
- Not having proof of concept to your business before going all-in.
- Being unaware of hidden costs such as missing features from the software you think is “the one” or having % of your sales deducted as part of your subscription (most companies let you have 100% of the sales, some don’t)

PRO TIP: when you decide to sign up for a software tool, find an affiliate and sign up under them.

But before you do, inquire to find out how they can help you make the most out of your purchase.

You may be able to get a bonus to a purchase you’re already going to make and thus shorten your learning curve.

For example, I typically offer to spend an hour on Zoom to help someone get their software up and running and take care of the more challenging integrations.

Did you find this article helpful? Send me your thoughts at contact@eranbucai.com. I would love to hear from you. If you want help to shortlist 2 or 3 of the best options in alignment with your vision, get in touch with me to chat.



VITAL TIPS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY'S SURVIVAL

Communities come and go all the time. They can make for very expensive – and very public – failures. Sometimes the failure isn't even a reflection on the value or apparent success of the Community itself, but just the 'Changing of The Guard', a new CEO who doesn't see the return or wants to prioritize efforts elsewhere. Successful communities are embedded within their organizations and have taken time to nurture relationships to safeguard their future.

1 KEEP YOUR FINGERS ON THE PULSE OF YOUR SENIOR MANAGEMENT'S AGENDA

Communities can't be marooned islands, dictating their own agenda and path (or at least, not within big Corporates they can't - perversely the ability to carve their own path is exactly what makes entrepreneur-owned communities so much more likely to succeed than enterprise level ones, but that's another story!). Corporate or Brand Community Managers need to have their fingers on the pulse of what's important to their company – and especially their CEO - and always be evaluating and pushing for ways to ensure their Community is delivering and building on this – which is a delicate operation indeed, since Communities also need to:

2 SERVE USERS

If a Community is trying specifically to deliver on a Corporate's own agenda, there's a real risk it won't align with its users' needs and wants. Successful communities stay funded by serving their business' needs AND stay active and engaged by serving their community's needs – in the middle of that Venn diagram lies the Midas Touch.

3 EMBED YOUR COMMUNITY ACROSS THE ORGANISATION

Get good at collaborating, involving, inviting and building strong internal alliances. Successful communities have a wide range of stakeholders across the business, who all feel their needs are getting met. Whether that's product development, customer service, marketing, PR – find ways your Community can serve each specific department with exactly what it needs and craves, to become indispensable to the business. As Richard Millington suggests in his book *The Indispensable Community* – the best way to get support is to give support.

4 SUPPORT ISN'T JUST ABOUT MONEY

Building internal alliances isn't just about ensuring your Community's funding, it's about opening up access and benefits across the business which will provide mutual benefit to both the business and members

5 FEED YOUR COMPANY'S IMAGINATION

Sometimes Communities fail because senior management don't believe they're returning sufficient value (and often, this can be true). But sometimes the potential for a community to return that value just isn't being realised, because it hasn't been imagined. Think creatively about ways in which your Community can be a powerful and transformational force in your business. Enterprise level brands in particular, have access to such powerful data and insights and incredible market reach – think of ways in which your Community could be used as a powerful and insightful tool in your business, beyond the ways it's already doing so. And think of ways in which you could really, truly add value for your users, using the expertise, reach and access you already have.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT COURSE

If you need to get more strategic in the management of your Community, check out the Strategic Community Management Course, by Richard Millington at Feverbee. The only transformative 6 week Community Management course that will change the way you look at and manage your community. Check it out here.



8 TRENDS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING IN 2021

1 VIRTUAL EVENTS BECOME A STANDARD COMPONENT FOR COMMUNITIES

The normalisation of virtual events through Covid has created an opportunity for communities to create digital moments in time which unite, engage and connect their members. Coming together at a specific time, focuses and concentrates the value, networking and learning members are already getting from their community. Whilst live events started to create virtual equivalents from necessity, communities are creating virtual events to serve the needs and desires of their members.

2 VIRTUAL EVENT PLATFORMS TRANSITION TO BECOME COMMUNITY PLATFORMS

In 2020, the number of virtual event platforms increased dramatically - with production companies transitioning to a virtual offering, event apps developing their offer and an influx of investment and acquisition totally transforming this tech space. 2021 will see continued investment and growth, but event platforms will increasingly develop capabilities to reposition themselves in the community platform space, both to meet the needs of growth and development within community but also to meet the needs of events taking a more 365 approach.

3 DEMAND FOR INTEGRATIONS WILL INCREASE

As businesses develop their community-first approach, they will want to do more with the rich data and insights that their community delivers. Integrations with CRM will become de facto, and more community building platforms will offer total in-the-box solutions including CRM, email marketing, event registration etc.

4 COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO BE A PANACEA TO REMOTE

In 2020 remote work drove the growth of Community, as people looked for ways to stay connected from their own homes. Remote work catalysed and normalised digital networking - it was no longer weird to have an extensive network you'd never actually met in real life. Messaging and chat across multiple platforms, asynchronous communications, online collaboration - it's now all a normal part of our working lives. In 2021, workers continue to be partially remote and online collaboration has become a normal part of our work.

5 RICHES IN THE NICHEs

This only actually rhymes if you're American, but communities which really serve their niche effectively will flourish and grow. Larger communities will do well to create sub-groups or segmented marketing activities which mean their audience feels understood and heard. Personalisation is still hyper important.

6 FLASH-IN-THE-PAN COMMUNITIES

With the trend toward community building accelerating, we'll see a plethora of communities start in a flurry of activity, hyped up promises and social buzz. But they'll fizzle out over the course of the year as community owners appreciate the level of commitment and strategy needed for success.

7 THE RISE OF THE COMMUNITY MANAGER

Social Media Manager wasn't even a thing, a decade or so ago - now they're in every company, and form entire departments. The Chief Community Officer is the next CMO, said TechCrunch, at the start of the year. Is this the year that when you tell someone you're a Community Manager, they actually know what that means?

8 INCLUSION MATTERS

Finally, 2021 is the year that we'll see more equality, inclusion and representation in communities. With BLM and MeToo, Communities are far more sensitised to the importance of inclusion and we'll see better representation on steering boards and speaker panels and initiatives which encourage inclusion and diversity within the communities themselves.



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HOW TO USE DATA TO PRIORITIZE THE MOST IMPACTFUL ACTIVITIES:

A CASE STUDY FROM FEVERBEE

ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME DOING THE “RIGHT” THINGS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

I’ve known several organizations who tried to take on everything and do it all. They’ve spent years struggling to improve their community in any meaningful way. Sometimes they made easily avoidable missteps. Often, they repeat the same tasks each month, hoping something improves.

They almost never stepped back to consider what’s working and what their biggest wins could look like. It’s very hard to see your own blind spots. It’s far easier to stay busy doing tasks that “seem” like the right thing to do.

As a community consultant, I approach organizations with a systematic, rigorous, process. A process you likely don’t have the time or knowledge to undertake yourself.

This case study highlights what that process looks like and the methods you

can use to improve your community today. It focuses on a tech brand with \$1 billion+ in revenue, but the core principles can be applied to any community.

WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

Prioritization is a daunting task - there are so many ways to think about improving a community.

We start by inviting clients to make a list of all the activities and initiatives they’re working on.

Two things are surprising

- 1. How many items they list:** 19 unique activities each week. That’s too many things, but it’s not unusual;
- 2. How normal this is.** Over the past decade, 200+ community professionals have listed their activities for us, with 15 activities being the average – and the record: 41!

It’s impossible to do great work when you’re dividing your attention into tiny

chunks. This raises a question: Why are we all trying to do so many things at once?

The answer is simple: **We don’t know what works.** If we’re not sure what works, we try to do everything and hope something works.

SO, HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO PRIORITIZE?

If your boss told you tomorrow to improve the community, where would you even begin? Do you try to improve the website? Initiate and reply to more discussions? Work on gamification and superuser programs? Host more events and activities? Offer bigger rewards and more promotions?

There’s mileage in each of these activities. But how much? Which option gives you the best bang for your buck? Unless you have good data that shows what members need, you shouldn’t be doing anything to satisfy those needs.



THE KEY IS TO FIGURE OUT THE FEW THINGS THAT MATTER, AND OPTIMIZE EVERYTHING AROUND THOSE TASKS. DOING A FEW ACTIVITIES EXTREMELY WELL IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN DOING A DOZEN OR MORE BADLY.

STEP 1. DECIDE WHICH METRICS MATTER

Do this by proactively reaching out to your members and colleagues to find out:

1. **What your organization cares about**, and guide the community towards that goal
2. **What members care about**, and guide the community towards that improvement.

WHAT DO MEMBERS CARE ABOUT?

There are two simple ways to find out what your members care about: Surveys, and interviews. Each yields useful insights. We began by issuing a survey and gathering responses.

There was a clear trend. **More than anything else, members in this community wanted to get help from others.** They weren't interested in building their reputation, having intimate discussions, or making friends.

Despite what others may think, this is common in the majority of communities I've looked at. Most people simply want to be helped. So our metric is easy:

- **Metric:** How satisfied are members with the community?
- **Method:** 1–5 scale asking members how satisfied they are with the community during their visit
- **Frequency:** Visible upon every visit to the community

STEP 2: PRIORITIZING ACTIVITIES WHICH MATTER TODAY

Before making any improvements, we needed to figure out which activities were impacting that metric. Typically, we can segment the actions of a community team into the following four boxes (Fig. 1).

Going from the bottom left to top right, there are activities that are short-term and reach a small audience, long-term and reach a small audience, short-term and reach a big audience, and long-term and reach a big audience. As your community matures, you should spend less time in the bottom left and more in the top right.

Our goal was to free up time by cutting low-impact tasks to see what the impact might be on member satisfaction (Fig. 2).

We used this framework to cut down on tasks that were short-term and reached a small percentage of the audience.

This saved around 60% of the community team's time.

Then we assessed the impact of these

changes.

There was no visible impact, which means we freed up a lot of time without any noticeable cost. Now, we work out what to do with this spare time.

STEP 3: INVEST MORE TIME AND EFFORT IN THE ACTIVITIES WHICH MATTER.

Our survey told us not just what mattered to members (helpful responses), but also what they found helpful. We asked whether they cared most about speed of response, who the response was from, or the quality of response (Fig. 3).

Members primarily wanted high-quality responses from staff. Speed mattered, but nowhere near as much as we expected. We interviewed 17 members of the community to better understand what they were feeling and what they wanted, uncovering several interesting items we hadn't addressed yet, including:

- The community is hard to navigate
- Search doesn't show relevant results
- Members frequently land at old posts without outdated information
- Members struggled with information scattered across different content types (discussions, articles, FAQs, etc)
- Members were worried about asking questions when they were "supposed to be the expert" at their organization

4

Problem	Intervention
Members frequently land on old posts without outdated information	Archive old discussions and encourage members to create new discussions with new information
Members struggled with information scattered across different content types	Create a series of "definitive resources" for the community.

5

Problem	Intervention
The community is hard to navigate	Revamp taxonomy and navigation , focused on how members actually searched for things
Search doesn't show relevant results	Add cognitive search via Coveo , enabling members to retrieve information from multiple databases
Members were "supposed to be the expert" and worried about asking questions	Allow members to post with a pseudonym
Members wanted to engage directly with staff on specific issues	Create a "direct to engineers" section to answer the hardest questions directly — and tagged difficult questions this way

6





Now that we had all the research, we could begin designing solutions.

PHASE ONE: LOW-HANGING FRUIT

We always like to begin consultancy engagements with things that can be solved without a huge resource investment.

The first interventions we designed were matched to a specific issue to tackle (Fig. 4 previous page).

Each of these deserves some elaboration.

Archiving Old Discussions

We archived (deindexed from search, removed from navigation, and hid from internal search) discussions of a specific age or use-frequency. (The information was still technically in the community, but almost impossible to find.) This encouraged members to create new discussions, helped us keep the content up-to-date and stopped members from landing on outdated discussions.

Creating Definitive Resources

Next, we worked to create a series of definitive resources. Creating a series of definitive guides are powerful in attracting more search traffic over the long-term. The DigitalOcean community does a terrific job of this.

It's also important to note the value of carefully created resources against other activities, taking a long-term view

– for example a VIP webinar will attract more traffic short-term, but definitive resources accumulate more traffic over time.

Create a number of definitive resources, not just one. If you're not sure what resources to create, look at what questions people are asking on AnswerThePublic.

After we implemented these changes, we assessed impact on member satisfaction, which showed continual improvement from these "low-hanging fruit" changes. This suggested we were on the right track. Next, it was time to go for the big wins.

PHASE TWO: THE BIG WINS

The big wins sit in the top right of the grid showed earlier. Once again, we let the member feedback guide our proposed changes. (Fig. 5 previous page)

Let's dive into a few of these in more detail.

Revamping the taxonomy

When it comes to revamping the taxonomy, you usually have several choices. You can structure community content by:

- User type (Customer, developer, partner, reseller, etc)
- Product category (Product 1, product 2, product 3, etc)
- Sector (Retail, B2B, B2C, etc)

- Intent (Get help, explore, collaborate, etc)

After reviewing the survey results, speaking to members, and using heat map information from CrazyEgg, we completely removed the intent pathways in the navigation and focused on product and user type. We also ensured all key areas were accessible at a maximum of 3 clicks deep.

Adding Cognitive Search

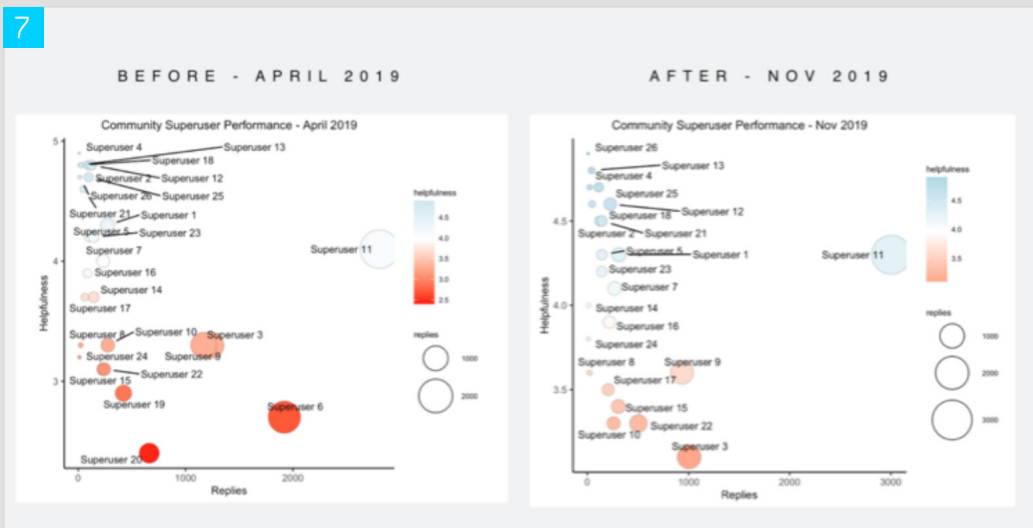
Cognitive search is essentially a federated search tool with some machine learning and pattern-matching involved to show members content that is most useful to them.

In communities with a high volume of information, the native search functionality is usually quite poor, and you should consider upgrading to a federated search tool. It's typically only worthwhile for larger communities – fees can begin at around the \$40k per year.

Direct-to-engineers

We also created a place for members to get help directly from staff on questions a typical member wouldn't be able to answer. This wasn't as popular as we imagined, but it reduced some of the frustration members had with posting questions and being told to file a ticket instead.

Once again, we tracked the results



to see what happened. You can see the impact in Fig. 6 (previous page).

At this stage, the member satisfaction line began to take a sharper curve upward, which we interpreted as a great sign.

Finally, it was time to go for optimization.

PHASE THREE: OPTIMIZATION

Now that we had exhausted the solutions we knew members wanted, we took a deeper dive into the “satisfaction” number.

The community had a 4.1 satisfaction score. But that didn’t mean every discussion was equally helpful. We needed to assess which parts of the community scored higher than others.

Targeting specific category improvements

The performance of different categories varied significantly. We used a bubble chart to show four items of data at once:

- Average time to first response.
- Response rate %
- Helpfulness (by color)
- Active threads (by size of the community)

You can see this chart in Fig 7.

Some categories scored high on helpfulness, response rate, and time to first response. Others were clearly a cause for concern.

Based on this, we made three clear

interventions:

- Reduce the time to first response in the Product 2 category by assigning virtual agents to support
- Increase the response rate in the Product 1 category by surfacing unanswered questions on the homepage
- Improve the quality of response in Developer and Partner categories by recruiting experts to answer questions

Reviewing superuser contributions

Next, we explored a hunch that superusers might not be equal in how they engage and interact with members. By looking at the helpfulness score on the responses to each superuser, we found that many frequent posters were posting the least helpful responses simply to gain the rewards, so we added the following interventions:

- When the superuser campaign relaunched, those with low helpfulness scores (below 3) were not invited back
 - Those with helpfulness scores between 3 and 4 were provided with a short training course
 - Superusers could compare themselves not just on the quantity of responses, but on their helpfulness rating
- Resulting in slow but steady improvements.

Within 7 months, the performance of all superusers had significantly improved. The lowest on the scale

was a 3 instead of 2, and the majority of members had increased. (The superusers who weren’t invited back caused problems for a few weeks—and then faded away.)

However, the biggest impact was among the group who were already scoring well on helpfulness but low on the quantity of responses. When some of the biggest superusers stopped engaging, it created a void that better superusers filled. They began responding to more discussions. The time to first response dipped slightly, but the helpfulness score rose significantly.

THE OVERALL RESULTS

By setting the graphs to their highest upper and lower values, the improvement becomes clear (Fig.8).

A data-driven approach enabled us to take this community from its lowest-ever satisfaction rating to its highest within a year.

The secret sauce? You set your own biases aside, and ruthlessly follow the data. Even if the results show you something you didn’t expect, you still follow the data. It shows you what to prioritize to deliver the best impact for your community.

Once you know what to work on, you need expertise to execute each activity. If you don’t have that, consider getting some support from a community consultant.



FOR MORE TACTICAL, IN-DEPTH GUIDES TO COMMUNITY BUILDING, YOU CAN PURCHASE MY NEW BOOK, BUILD YOUR COMMUNITY, ON AMAZON TODAY. LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK AT WWW.FEVERBEE.COM

Richard Millington will be speaking at CLIX in Memphis April 4/5 2022 For more information click here



WHAT COMMUNITY LEADERS CAN LEARN FROM CUSTOMER-CENTRIC COMPANIES

Across industries and around the world, organizations are making a shift. What was once enough to sustain good performance no longer meets the mark. They need to stretch to meet consumers' evolving needs and expectations. They've turned their attention from customer *service* to customer *experience*.

WHAT IS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

Customer experience (CX) is a consumer's perception of their experience with a business or brand. It's driven by every interaction, from clicking through a website to chatting with customer service to using a product/service.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR COMMUNITIES?

Communities can take inspiration from CX trends and translate them to shape their member experience. Why? Because prioritizing relationships over transactions helps achieve new levels of member growth, retention and engagement.

Chances are, you've noticed today's professionals are seeking more and different solutions. Advances in technology have increased their expectations of digital experiences in their professional communities. A quest for fast and frictionless access to expertise, knowledge, and resources has them asking for more. How you respond to these changing needs can help you shift from providing transactional to transformational experiences.

Customer experience research validates the importance of adopting a CX mindset. Here's 5 lessons from CX leaders to help shape the best experience for your members and create significant ROI:

#1: UNDERSTAND THE BAR IS BEING RAISED

73% of customers say that one extraordinary experience raises their expectations of other companies. And their perception of what "extraordinary" looks like is increasing across the board.

Be mindful that while members' expectations are rising, the lines are also blurring. Look beyond competitive

organizations and think of all the types of media, communities, and businesses your members interact with: they can effortlessly subscribe to streaming services and expect to access your resources just as easily.

#2: GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

50% of Americans would choose word-of-mouth if they were asked to pick only one source of information. If there's any reason to shift from providing satisfactory service to motivating enthusiastic advocacy, it's this.

Referrals are vital in recruiting new members -potential members are more willing to join when they hear about your community from peers. An exceptional member experience will get enthusiastic members talking and have you welcoming new members eager and ready to engage.

#3: REALLY GET TO KNOW YOUR MEMBERS

High-performing companies are 2.3 times more likely to research the drivers of their buyers. That research enables them to create personas that identify the common characteristics of potential customers and customize experiences accordingly.

Consider what your members want and acknowledge it's more than a book, a course, or a certification. The most customer-centric organizations understand people's needs on an emotional level and strive to deliver what they're looking for with unmatched ease, convenience and expertise.

#4: WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT WITH PURPOSE

Customers report the leading reason for their limited engagement with some

companies is that marketers send them too much irrelevant content - leading to content fatigue and (worse still) brand avoidance.

The organizations doing it right deliver meaningful content that resonates with their customers by providing solutions to a problem or meeting a deep-seated need. Think about what your members struggle with and how you can help. What can you do to provide them with information and answers proactively? How can you make them heroes in their organizations?

#5: SHOW THE IMPACT OF THE MEMBER EXPERIENCE ON THE BOTTOM LINE

Consider this: Experience-driven businesses see almost two times higher year-over-year growth in customer retention, repeat purchases, and customer lifetime value than other businesses.

These organizations are clearly doing something right. It begins with leadership and comes to life throughout your organization—in every department and team member. Moving the member experience from transactional to transformational requires a deep understanding of your members' wants and needs, and a serious and long-term investment of your focus, time, and resources.



Forj is a Member Experience and Virtual Event platform purpose-built for associations and professional community organizations. Forj powers personalized, enriching virtual events and online engagement to fuel interest and connections for the long-term. To learn more, visit: www.forj.ai



MAKING COMMUNITIES COUNT



Explore the Forj Difference

Forj is a leading virtual events and member experience platform for associations and professional community organizations. With our platform and Client Success team, you'll attract more members and sponsors, deepen their commitment, and grow your community.

We're here to ensure every voice is heard, everyone learns, bonds are strengthened, and long-lasting relationships are forged. It's where empathy and belonging meet good business sense.

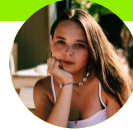
www.forj.ai





COVID: THE COMMUNITY CATALYST

By Emily Brounger



2 020 really was the Year of the Community. Enforced lockdowns across the globe meant millions of people around the world went looking online for that connection and interaction they were missing out on, in real life. Added to that, hundreds of thousands of jobs were lost and people were furloughed or saw their in-person business models decimated and therefore needed to find alternative ways to reach customers or make money. Creating a community, for some, became a lifeline not only for mental health but to replace lost income.

We spoke to 3 entrepreneurs about the facebook communities they launched during lockdown.

LOCKDOWN LAUNCHERS

Fiona Dalziel started Women Together, a 'networking community for women who run their own business', at the beginning of lockdown after moving to a new area. She was isolated from family and friends and unable to get to know local business women due to lockdown restrictions. Kiana Jones started her

business Happening Hands in April 2020, a community which supported Makers to run thriving profitable businesses. After spending a lot of time on Etsy and finding the forums increasingly empty, she felt there was a gap in the market for a company that was in her words 'part market place, part agency and part community.' The third community leader we spoke to, Lisa Williams, known as the Vision Board Queen, also set her community up in the depths of lockdown. As a qualified vision board-coach she set up a Facebook community tailored around the ideas of 'Vision boards, gratification, positive attitude and mind set' - all things people were struggling with after months stuck in their houses.

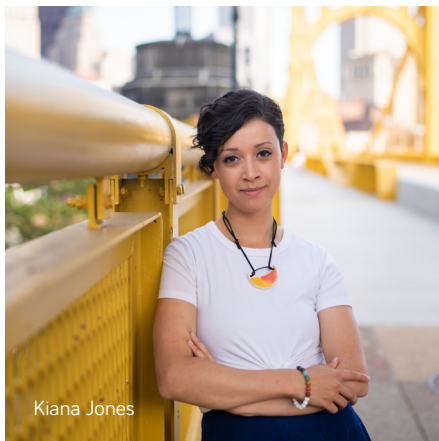
IF YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE - ASK A BUSY PERSON

One thing each of these new community owners have in common is how incredibly busy they are - and were, even before they launched their communities. Kiana, owner of Happening Hands is working a part time job, caring for a toddler AND

trying to build a marketplace and community. She is the sole owner of Happening Hands which brings together quality makers and gives them a platform to sell their goods. As well as helping them increase their income she is creating a community where makers can learn and grow with the help of her virtual events and workshops. 'The balance is hard, I am doing pretty much everything, I'm handling customer service, I'm handling all the technical aspects of the market place, I'm managing the social media as well as all the aspects of the community.' Similarly, Lisa Williams, owner of the Vision Board Community group and a networking group for women in business, has had to balance her work and home lives. She managed to set up one of her two Facebook communities 4 days before giving birth and told us she has the attitude of 'If you're constantly busy and running on adrenaline you get more done.' The saying 'If you want something done ask a busy person' should probably be changed to, If you want something done ask a community manager!



Fiona Dalziel



Kiana Jones



Lisa Williams



MONETISING FACEBOOK COMMUNITIES

Each of these entrepreneurs successfully monetized their communities from the outset. It doesn't cost a dime to belong to Fiona's Women Together community, but she runs regular networking events which members pay for. The networking sessions are an opportunity for women to meet and converse with other female entrepreneurs and gain insight into how to improve their businesses from other business owners. But the real value for Fiona has been the intrinsic benefits 'I have learnt a lot from my members and I also enjoy sharing my own knowledge' she commented – and the group has provided a tremendous opportunity for lead generation for her wellness business.

Kiana is developing a community

CREATING A COMMUNITY, FOR SOME, BECAME A LIFELINE NOT ONLY FOR MENTAL HEALTH BUT TO REPLACE LOST INCOME.

membership to Helping Hands rather than just a makers' membership. This will enable her to teach creators new business skills such as how to market themselves online, how to get good at photography to best showcase their products and how to use Pinterest for maximum effect. By developing the marketplace she's created a natural sideways opportunity to share and monetise her skills, and she has big plans to serve this sector with high value educational content.

Lisa estimates that 40% of her revenue is now generated through the community aspect of her business, with 60% coming from 1:2:1 vision board sessions. It's clear that all 3 of our entrepreneurs are generous with their expertise, knowledge and skills and it's that generosity which is paying-back. Being visible, curious, supportive and consistent means they're each growing their network which in turn grows their own businesses as their expertise and authority is visible and desirable.

JUST ADD WATER

It seems Facebook is the pot-noodle of community – just add water. A group can be set up quicker than you can boil the kettle and with consistent and intentional engagement can quickly grow to hundreds, even thousands of members. They're clearly monetizable with each of these entrepreneurs having found ways to create revenue

streams from bringing people together – whether it's directly through membership programs, or indirectly as lead generation for other services and offerings.

But ever-changing algorithms are frustrating many group owners – with less than 10% of members seeing some of the posts – and data ownership and access issues can be a problem for more corporate groups – check out our CLIX Conference Chair, Marjorie Anderson's take on this issue. Facebook also lacks the integrations and automations of membership platforms, which can handle payments and organize member content in an LMS. Many community owners therefore use their facebook group as a funnel, or as the forum-only element of a broader community offering.



Next edition, we'll be talking with Samantha Harradine who runs Tribes for Home Business - a 9,000 strong Facebook community and membership which helps community owners grow and monetise their own Facebook groups.



COMMUNITY 2.0: REDEFINING COMMUNITY WITHIN A DIGITAL WORLD



Susan Kabani, Ugenie, looks forward to the advent of Community 2.0 where Community Managers can get back to the basics of what a community really means

Difference is a beautiful part of human nature. We all have different interests, purposes and needs, but most people share one important trait in common. We share the need to connect with those who have something in common and the need to feel like we are a part of something important.

In the past, we have been limited to belonging to communities within geographic and socioeconomic boundaries, but with the advent of the internet all that changed and communities took on a new definition.

The internet, and even more so with social media, has made it incredibly easy to find like-minded individuals with the same interests and passions without leaving the comfort of our homes, on Facebook, Reddit, Quora and many more. Today, in order to find a community where we belong, all we need is a good internet connection! No one would argue that online communities have been a huge saviour for many people during the COVID-19 pandemic when real-world interaction was simply not possible.

Despite all the benefits, and there are many, the notion of online communities has also led to a lot of pressure for community leaders, especially on popular platforms like Facebook and Instagram where I have noticed an almost toxic culture.

And it's not just me. A recent study conducted by a top marketing agency in Boston reported that 41% of those polled in Gen Z reported 'that social media makes them feel sad, anxious, or depressed.'



There's a strong need for likes and followers on these traditional forms of social media, and it can often burden people with stress and feelings of inadequacy. Many of the community leaders that I work with express their frustration with a lack of engagement and immediate chatter in their communities.

Although I understand the role 'vanity metrics' play, I feel that prioritising the 'let's get as many likes and followers as possible' strategy can hide true performance and cause a community leader to lose focus on what's actually important.

So, I feel that there's a growing need to not only redefine what an online community is but to emphasise that a 'successful' community is entirely subjective, not statistical.

**A SUCCESSFUL
COMMUNITY
IS ENTIRELY
SUBJECTIVE, NOT
STATISTICAL**

At Ugenie, an online community and membership platform, we are leading a movement that we call Community 2.0. We want to encourage community leaders, both online and in the real world, to really understand why they are building their communities or membership groups and what their community members want from them.

We don't think it's about the number of people in the community or how often they return to the platform. In fact, some of our most impactful communities are as small as 10 people! The real value of a community is bringing people together and giving them a place where they can grow a passion and connect with other people who share the same.

I think Community 1.0 has now become plagued with distractions, confused messaging, undecipherable algorithms, privacy concerns and the blind belief in likes as a social currency.

I also don't think I am the only one who feels this way as there are millions of community leaders choosing private platforms that boast the same features of a social networking platform as dedicated online environments to help to build, grow and engage communities of all types.

I mention all types as I believe that the vast majority of communities deserve the same treatment and not just communities which are favourable in the eyes of Facebook or Instagram bots.

As Community 2.0 materialises, it would be brilliant to see community managers and members free themselves from the clutches of comparison-driven social statistics and go back to the basics of what a community really means.



COMMUNITY BUILDING TACTICS FOR ASSOCIATIONS

Associations are the very epitome of Communities - brought together by shared interests and common goals. Their unification makes them "stronger together" for advocacy and campaigning, they have regular events and members are typically senior staffers. Yet, truth bomb: Associations often aren't *that good* at the community bit. They tick the boxes - regular updates and industry reports, campaigning, event calendars, networking, training. But creating and fostering community and connection amongst their membership is not always a strength. They operate at a "broadcast" level, rather than an interactive one, missing invaluable opportunities to add value for members.

1 CONSIDER ADDING AN ONLINE NETWORKING AREA OR FORUM

Covid decimated live events for most associations, removing the ability to come together physically to discuss issues that impact members. Yet the impact of Covid itself likely caused new nuances and challenges that require discussion and collaboration through your industry. Online events can channel some of this, but having a 365 presence in the form of a discussion board or networking forum can also help - the nature of your Association will determine the best platform and forum for this - be careful not to make assumptions about what members want and need, engage with them to find out. Sometimes a dedicated forum behind a login area is needed, for others a dedicated private Facebook or LinkedIn group, or even Slack or regular Twitter-handle chat streams at specific

3 CREATE MORE OF A NARRATIVE THAN A SERIES

Creating a series of events is what associations are good at. Adding a narrative around these events, helps tip the balance toward a community approach. This tactic is nuanced and subtle but its impact can be considerable. A series of events woven together with a narrative creates more of a dialogue, it takes your audience with you on a journey and they participate, collaborate and connect through that journey.

4 GET BETTER AT INCLUSION

Many Associations only really offer discussion/networking opportunities for a hand-picked few from each business. Consider broadening your offer to more of each members' staff. How might that change the level of engagement, discussion, networking and value that your association offers?

5 DELEGATE, EMPOWER, FACILITATE

The best communities take a "by the community, for the community approach." Your members are experts in their fields, so put their expertise to good use by getting them to moderate and facilitate discussions.

2 CREATE SUB-GROUPS FOR NETWORKING AND DISCUSSION

Most industries have quite specific topics or challenges - areas in which they need to deep-dive, that won't be relevant to all members. You might create groups by job functions, for example a sales group, a marketing group, or by issues, for example health and safety or the introduction of a new piece of legislation and how it will impact your industry. Creating these groups separately and setting members up to manage and moderate them helps meet your members specific needs. Regular engagement in sub-groups through online forums or virtual meetings works well, enabling members to get their issues and questions answered on an on-going, as-needed basis.





WHAT IS

Community Based Marketing (CBM)?

Ashley Friedlein, Founder Guild & Econsultancy kicks off his regular column in Community Leaders magazine, by asking whether CBM could be just the ticket to revive B2B marketing

Most marketers will be familiar with account based marketing (ABM), an approach that sees sales and marketing teams work together to engage with highly targeted accounts. However, fewer are aware of the term community based marketing (CBM), yet adopted correctly, it could be the revival that B2B marketing needs.

To fully understand what community based marketing is and what it means, we first need to define 'community' in a B2B context:

"A B2B community is a group of professionals drawn together by a shared interest and held together over time by mutual support or benefit."

To give this a marketing focus we refine this to define CBM as follows:

"Community based marketing brings professionals together around a shared practice or area of expertise to create closer, and more valuable, relationships with prospects and customers."

By building connections in a professional environment, in digital forums, networks or apps for example, individuals are drawn together around an area of expertise or shared special interest. Marketers can use this to create closer, more valuable relationships with prospects and customers. The focus being less on pushing out promotional messages, and instead on building deeper relationships and facilitating

meaningful engagements through conversations and networking.

WHY IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME FOR COMMUNITY BASED MARKETING (CBM)?

Online communities themselves aren't new, of course, but they are seeing a renewed surge in popularity and interest. The remote and hybrid workplaces that are forming in the wake of the pandemic require more emphasis on digital means of professional connection and digital forms of belonging. Meanwhile, as the way we work is evolving and increasingly tech-enabled, some typical B2B channels such as LinkedIn risk becoming oversaturated, noisy or prohibitively expensive for marketing.

All of this amounts to something of a comeback for communities. We explore three of the main contributing factors in a little more detail:

AN INCREASED DESIRE FOR TOGETHERNESS POST-PANDEMIC

Fragmented workplaces as a result of

THE SHIFT TO CONNECTING IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY ONLINE IS ONLY SET TO GROW

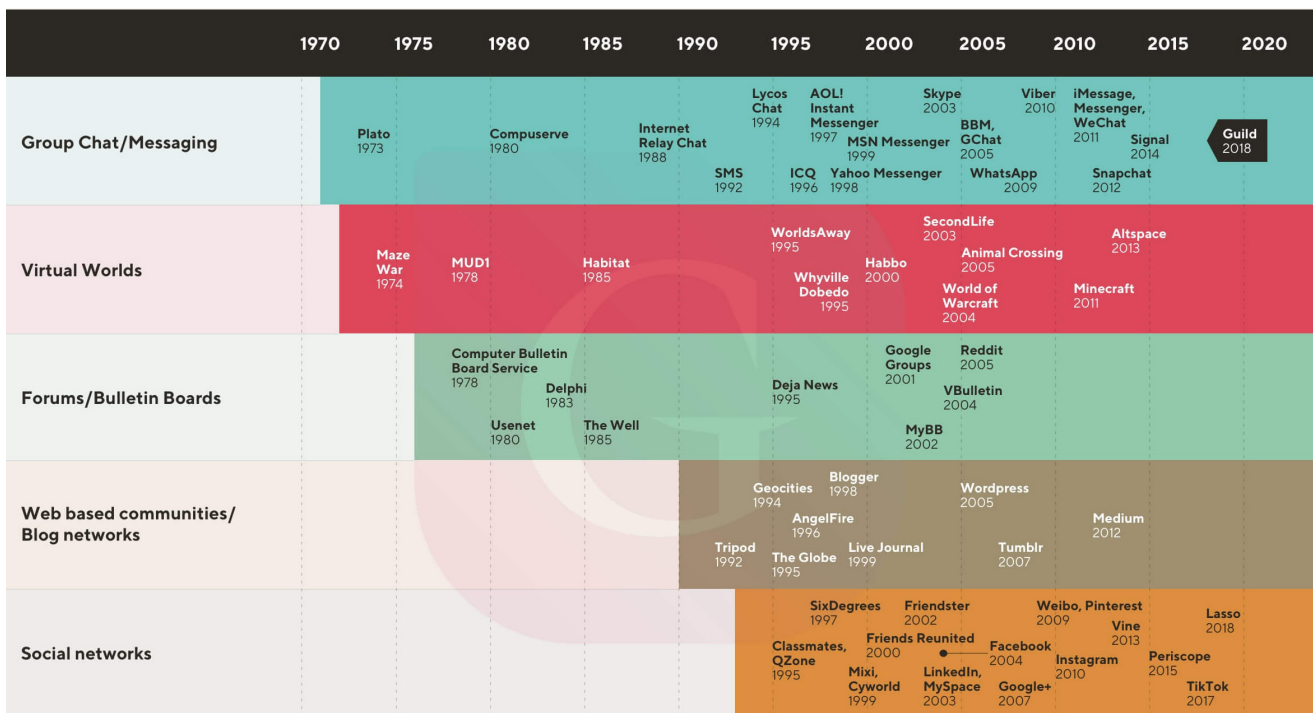
various lockdowns and subsequently shifting working patterns have made us all more isolated in our daily jobs. It's easy to underestimate the value of the day-to-day interactions we get from the office, from team meetings to an impromptu chat around the water cooler, but these are all opportunities to collaborate, swap ideas, get feedback, and learn from other people.

To fill this void, many have gone online in search of virtual ways to communicate – not just with existing colleagues, but other connections in the professional world. Digital communities give these people an opportunity to experience the support, encouragement, and inspiration they are currently lacking. In fact, on Guild we saw a 120% increase in messaging activity during lockdown.

It's about more than just discussing work though. Online communities are also a way of meeting the desire for a sense of belonging that many of us were left with following the enforced alienation of the pandemic. As both life and work became more disjointed, the need to feel part of a group grew, and this is true of our professional lives too.

OVERSATURATED B2B MARKETING CHANNELS

The last 18 months have been challenging for B2B marketers and while it's important to acknowledge



the pressures brought about by the pandemic, and the restricted budgets that have resulted from it, the unavoidable truth is that some B2B approaches were becoming outdated and ineffective long before Covid hit.

Costs of customer acquisition are rising across many digital channels, from social media ads, to paid search, to email marketing, to content marketing. Consumers are inundated with content, in every form, from whitepapers and webinars, to blogs, podcasts, and ebooks, to the point where it's becoming increasingly difficult to cut through the noise.

Response rates are declining, conversion rates are dwindling, all whilst costs are rising with increased competition as more marketing spend has been channelled into digital. With everyone following the same tactics and techniques, it's clear a new approach is needed.

Community based marketing gives marketers the chance to create a more emotional bond, as well as a sense of reciprocity, with both prospects and existing customers, capturing their attention, their action and their loyalty.

THE EVOLVING WORKPLACE

The death of the 'nine-to-five' is well documented, but while the pandemic has sped up the flexibility of modern

working, the evolution has gone further than simply the hours in which we work. More and more people are branching out from traditional employment, starting their own businesses, or using their individual expertise to begin profitable side ventures.

Platforms like Patreon and Substack are allowing these workers to monetise their skills, creating communities of niche professional, or semi-professional, individuals.

At the same time, people's day-to-day jobs are changing too. Larger organisations currently undergoing digital transformation, are adapting to ways of working that are less hierarchical and monolithic, more networked, and increasingly fluid and agile. Traditional command and control approaches are breaking up to be replaced by a more community-led approach.

The shift to connecting in a professional capacity online is only set to grow over the coming years, as more and more Gen-Z join the workforce. These younger, tech-savvy employees bring fresh ideas and new ways of thinking and as digital natives, they have adapted more quickly than most to this new way of working.

Those marketers who tap into the power of CBM now, can get ahead of the curve and develop strong communities that stand the test of time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ashley Friedlein is the CEO & Founder of Guild, a platform for professional communities and networking. Guild is used by professional associations, organisations and businesses around the world to engage their members in special interest groups, networks and communities of expertise. Guild is simple to use, ad free, mobile-first and free unless you want custom levels of support, features or integrations.

Ashley is also the founder of Econsultancy, a community of over 600,000 marketers around the world learning about digital marketing and ecommerce. Ashley has over 20yrs experience in starting and running professional communities. Ashley is a best-selling author, advisor, columnist, commentator, and blogger. Ashley speaks worldwide on digital / marketing trends including the rise of community within marketing.

Ashley is speaking at CLIX, Memphis, 4/5 April 2022 – for more details click here



EVALUATING YOUR COMMUNITY STACK

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

You understand that delivering great products and experiences means your company has to be community-driven. To elevate the voice of your community, you have to invest in the products that bring your internal teams closer to your community members. By Viraj Mody, Co-founder and CTO of Common Room

A critical early step in that process is choosing the right community intelligence stack—because your community is made up of your biggest customer champions, influencers, educators, advocates, and users, along with all the conversations they’re having and content they’re sharing. That data is as critical as the data housed in Salesforce or your customer data warehouse.

The right stack connects and maps your community data and customer data together, enabling you to take content from your community tools and convert it into intelligent, actionable insights to both nurture your community and help your business thrive, all while being able to measure and report on its impact.

It’s daunting to pick a community intelligence stack because the stakes are high— it’s time consuming and costly if you ever need to migrate away. Outside of baseline evaluations about the value that community intelligence software provides to your team and how user friendly it is, this means evaluating your vendor options across their ability to achieve the following objectives:

- 1/ deliver deep member insights**
- 2/ securely store community and customer data**
- 3/ optimize for performance and scalability.**

1

DELIVER DEEP MEMBER INSIGHTS

Provider integrations are the

heart of the stack because it enables you and your teams to understand what is being said and by whom in your community. Native support for a wide array of integrations means you can get a single, unified view of community activity that has historically been siloed.

This allows you to identify members with the most impact, view trending topics and sentiment, and map community activity against your success metrics e.g. product usage, revenue data, etc. Community sources such as Slack, Salesforce, Discourse, and Bevy, etc. are feature-rich and each provide their own set of unique interaction data and insights. An integration that helps securely pull in this information with minimal setup overhead and maintenance cost is ideal—especially one that avoids the need for any custom code or is developed by unknown sources.

You should choose the vendor who integrates with and provides insights from all of your sources, and one that is committed to maintaining support for those sources. This allows you to focus on nurturing your community instead of wasting time performing technical setup and maintenance.

Evaluate the following:

- Integrations with the sources you want - now and in the future. Check their integration roadmap for depth and breadth. (If their roadmap isn’t public, ask them. The right vendor will understand this is a key piece of information)

- The integrations they offer:
 - Pull in historical and ongoing data about both the members in your community and the content they’re creating. This includes platform-specific details e.g. threaded content from a conversational platform like Slack, event registration details from Bevy, pull requests / issues / comments / stars from GitHub, etc.
 - Allow you to connect them in a self-service manner or require minimal engineering resources to set up and maintain.
 - Are directly developed, maintained, and monitored by the vendor.
 - Continue to evolve to support new capabilities of underlying platforms.
 - Comply with the terms of service of the underlying software they connect to.

2

SECURELY STORE COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER DATA

Communities are built on trust. When you evaluate a vendor, you need to consider the core security, compliance, and privacy practices that they follow—these are non-negotiable to earn and maintain your community’s trust. Selecting a vendor that is experienced with handling these complex-but-important requirements for you helps you focus on what matters most—building relationships with your community.

At a minimum, your community intelligence stack should have Service Organization Control (SOC 2) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance. SOC 2 compliance provides assurances that the security practices and policies of the vendor have been independently audited. GDPR compliance enables your business to comply with the need to anonymize content or pass along Right-To-Be-Forgotten requests that you receive from your community members.

Look for:

- An independently audited SOC 2 compliance report
- GDPR compliance, including APIs that handle user requests to be forgotten, or the ability to automatically handle these via integration
- A DPA (Data Processing Addendum) and privacy policy that explains how data is handled
- Ongoing security practices such as penetration testing and automated infrastructure scanning
- Completed privacy and security risk assessment forms such as a CAIQ questionnaire.
- Advertised uptime and SLAs (service-level agreement)
- Their availability to directly engage with your security and compliance teams

3

OPTIMIZE FOR PERFORMANCE AND SCALABILITY

One of the incredible aspects of a thriving community is how it can exponentially grow—hundreds of members can quickly turn into hundreds

of thousands. And, when you aggregate all the engagement and conversations happening online and offline by your members, the volume and scale of data generated and the storage and analysis grows exponentially. That in turn makes significant demands on your resources to convert data into insights. This type of growth is exactly what you want—and it shouldn't mean compromising on the value your community intelligence stack provides to you. Your software must perform at any scale, along with your business and community needs.

To evaluate your vendor's ability to help you scale, ask them:

- Questions around how they deliver user experiences at scale. For example, "what is the speed of search for communities over 10K members?" and "what are page load times and how do they change based on the size of the community?"
- Do the insights and metrics that you provide continue to perform as data in the system increases exponentially?
- Are there advertised limits to how much data is supported? (For example, members, content, history, etc.). Ideally there are none, and the software is developed to scale as your community scales without limiting the capabilities
- What technical restrictions exist today? (For example, how quickly or frequently data is refreshed, the number of provider integrations or concurrent users, etc.).

A CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMMUNITY INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

When selecting a community intelligence platform, here's what you should ask your vendor to evaluate their product and its fit for your community:

1. Deliver Deep Member Insights

- ✓ Do they integrate with all the sources you want?
- ✓ What is the depth of information available from each source e.g., historical, platform-specific?
- ✓ Are integrations self-service or with minimal engineering resources?
- ✓ Are integrations developed, maintained, and monitored by the vendor to ensure quality?
- ✓ Will the integrations evolve to support new capabilities of underlying platforms?

2. Securely Store Community and Customer Data

- ✓ Are they SOC 2 and GDPR compliant?
- ✓ Do they have a DPA and privacy policy?
- ✓ Do they have completed security and privacy risk assessment forms?
- ✓ Do they conduct ongoing security practices e.g penetration tests?
- ✓ What are their uptime and service SLAs?

3. Optimize for Performance and Scalability

- ✓ How do they deliver user experiences at scale e.g. speed of search and page load times?
- ✓ Will insights and metrics provided continue to perform as data increases exponentially?
- ✓ Are there any data limits?
- ✓ What technical restrictions exist today e.g. number of provider integrations?



Join our Uncommon community to connect with community leaders across the industry.

Now showing: Community-Driven Product Development, a 6-week [free educational series](#) about building better products in tandem with your community.



Creating bravery for member-led engagement: how Multiverse have created an engaged community



Zahra Behzadi is the Online Community manager at Multiverse, an education and upskilling business which helps organizations develop apprenticeships and sources candidates to fill them – creating an ‘outstanding alternative to university and college’. By Emily Brounger

COMMUNITY AS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Founded by Euan Blair in 2016 (the son of Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister until 2007), Multiverse is more than a glorified recruitment consultant, it’s an ed-tech social enterprise putting diversity front and center – and one which is turning the traditional model of apprenticeships on its head, by building out apprenticeship programs for knowledge workers not just labor positions.

The Multiverse community launched early in 2020 just as Covid was building, and has quickly grown to 5000 members. “Due to the climate at the time of launching with everyone working from home and the world migrating online a really interesting dynamic was created”. Zahra explains. With apprentices ranging from 16 to 65 serving the needs of this diverse and dynamic community has come with its own challenges. A key

success factor has been bringing groups together - online at first, but increasingly in person, to attend fire-side chats, Q&As and apprenticeship workshops.”

“Our community really showcases the apprentice experience. For businesses this is a great pull as they don’t have to worry about the additional support in-house, because they’ve got this whole network they’re plugging into, with events, networking, training and the curriculum. We know that for a lot of our clients, community is the main reason they chose us, because we’ve got such a well built out and substantial community offering”.

FOR A LOT OF OUR CLIENTS, COMMUNITY IS THE MAIN REASON THEY CHOSE US

COMMUNITY METRICS

Member acquisition isn’t a key metric for Multiverse because successful apprentices automatically enroll in the community. Instead, North Star metrics revolve around engagement, active members and activity, defined as anybody that has had an interaction with the community, be it with their programs, events, someone who’s accessed their platform or redeemed a member benefit.

They also track apprentice satisfaction and success. “We’ve clearly identified that apprentices that are more engaged with our community end up being more successful on their apprenticeship program, so get merits and distinctions, which is an amazing thing to be able to relay back to the business and a key reason for driving engagement in the community.” Further, as Multiverse’s alumni grows, apprentices benefit from seeing and hearing the experiences



of their peers and gain a greater understanding of the benefits of being active in the community.

DATA INSIGHTS

Data insight plays a vital role in the management of the community and really drives the planned engagement, helping the Community team understand what their apprentices and coaches need, and how and when. Zahra explains: “There is a cadence with our programs so we know that, for example for a data program which is pretty vigorous at month 2 there is a lot on for apprentices and we will sometimes see a dip in engagement there. We use that data to say ‘how are we going to plug into that and what are we going to do about it?’ We can specifically target that group with our emails and say things such as ‘you’ve hit month two, we know that you’ll be struggling with keeping up your job hours why don’t you look at these hand-picked events that can help you achieve that.’” With apprentice start-dates continuing throughout the year, across a myriad of different apprentice programs, a dedicated data team is a vital part of driving this strategy.

CREATING A SPACE FOR BRAVERY

The Multiverse community is hosted on Hivebrite, a community portal used by a growing number of universities, alumni groups, corporates and stakeholders. It’s particularly well suited to Metaverse’s complex community structure – with the ability for members to easily access sub-groups including their cohort and specialism, download tools and resources, search for other members

and watch or attend embedded events. A key challenge for Metaverse – particularly with a community who are simultaneously finding their feet in their profession – is encouraging members to take the lead in being active in the community. “Creating a space where members feel brave enough to post is extremely important to the Multiverse team. We get a lot of new apprentices joining every week so on our newsfeed we have intentionally tried to shift the focus to a space where apprentices can actually ask for and receive support from one and other. We’ve worked hard to create a space for bravery to blossom, a place that makes you think, ‘ok, I feel comfortable posting something here.’”

SUB-COMMUNITIES

Zahra also spends time in the community serving members that aren’t as active. “There’s always the community members that comment on everything and speak the loudest but there are also those people who don’t want to. Some people, rather than engaging on our newsfeed, prefer to engage within

APPRENTICES THAT ARE MORE ENGAGED WITH OUR COMMUNITY END UP BEING MORE SUCCESSFUL ON THEIR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

our sub communities where there’s a common link between everybody and it’s less public. They’re able to ask something very specific and get a specific answer.” Multiverse’s ‘Elevate’ program, which creates Ambassadors out of core members of the community, is a core part of this effort, with members specifically charged with engaging new members and being the apprentices’ representatives in the community.

Identifying and serving the needs of the community is clearly an important part of Zahra’s day and her natural empathy and understanding of her member’s pain points means she is finely attuned to the sentiment in the community and sub-communities, looking for ways to pre-empt and remove road-blocks or signpost members to resources or alumni. Product development is also a key part of her role, listening closely and identifying the needs before the apprentices themselves even understand that need. The community also serves as an invaluable tool for the coaches – with one coach describing it as “an assistant coach” where they can direct apprentices for additional resources.

As the Multiverse community alumni expands, the opportunities to create an engaged tribe of professionals who continue in their chosen careers, united by their experiences and committed to helping and supporting each other and continuing that flywheel are truly exciting.

We’d love to feature your community.
Get in touch heidi@365media.com





Growth Tactics: Focus on your Whales

In *A Member is Worth a Thousand Visitors*, Rob Ristagno, Founder and CEO of the Sterling Woods Group talks about the importance of identifying and focusing on your whales.

WHO ARE YOUR WHALES?

According to research from Nielsen, the top 10 percent of your customers—your whales, as Ristagno likes to call them—account for as much as 70 percent of your overall sales. This ultra-engaged group behaves predictably. (When they say they'll buy, they do.) And as your number one fans, they love to be a part of your product development process.

While you might assume that your whales will always be your high rollers and big spenders, that's not necessarily true. Whales are your most enthusiastic consumers, but they're not always the highest-paying ones. You may have some whales who aren't spending a ton with you now but who love your product and could pay more if given the proper

motivation. At the same time, you may have “spender” clients who aren't truly committed to your brand and will easily jump ship if a competitor offers them a lower price. So don't just seek out your top spenders; look for your die-hard fans. These brand fanatics tell everyone they know about your product or content and encourage them to check

WHALES ARE YOUR MOST ENTHUSIASTIC CONSUMERS, BUT THEY'RE NOT ALWAYS THE HIGHEST-PAYING ONES.

you out. That organic word-of-mouth is what leads to similarly passionate whales discovering your company. They don't just make up your customer base; they inspire your company's community.

HOW TO FIND YOUR MOST ARDENT FANS

To figure out which of your customers have whale potential, analyze your user data to find those people who both regularly purchase from you and frequently interact with your brand. This could range from looking at email data to see who opens and clicks on your links to examining social media interactions and event attendance. Through this process, you may even find



that there are groups out there who are reaching out, wanting to communicate with your brand, that you haven't properly engaged yet.

The key is to look for meaningful interactions. Someone who likes your posts on Facebook semi-regularly, for example, isn't necessarily a dedicated fan. After all, all they've done is click the occasional button. But someone who regularly shares your content with their own multi-paragraph analysis added to it is someone who has made their allegiance to your brand clear. They want to carry the torch for you.

CREATE A VALUE PROPOSITION JUST FOR WHALES

Turning customer enthusiasm into real profit is going to take work on your part, of course. You need to make sure you're offering your whales something they truly need and can't get from anyone else at the same level. Monetizing your whales starts by listening to them.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK

Conduct formal interviews with a small

handful of your whales. You'll want to get hard data about their purchasing habits, and you'll also want to talk to them about their emotional attachments to your brand. Why do they love you? What do you offer that no one else can? Is there something they're still missing from their interactions with you?

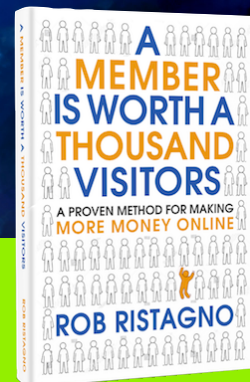
SURVEY THE CROWD

Once you have a baseline for what you're already doing right and where you could stand to improve, survey a few dozen of your whales to validate your interviews or inspire even more fresh ideas

WRITE DOWN YOUR IDEAS

Create an internal value proposition.

SOMEONE WHO REGULARLY SHARES YOUR CONTENT HAS MADE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO YOUR BRAND CLEAR.



[Click here to grab a copy of Rob's book](#)

This is a statement that breaks down who your target audience is, what they desperately need, and how you plan to deliver that to them through your product or service. In short: What problem are you solving?

In order to build this, you need to answer the who, what, when, where, why, and how of your whales' experience. If you don't have the answers to those questions, you need to do more research.

TEST IT OUT

Even after you've established a value proposition based on the data you gathered from your interviews and surveys, you're still not done! You need to test and retest every few months to make sure you're still providing your whales with what they need to continue earning their loyalty.



Everything You Think You Know About Audience & Community Engagement

IS A LIE

By Lev Kaye, CEO of CredSpark

The story about audience and community engagement you've been fed by marketing and media mavens is fiction. In fact, it's complete BS. Clicks, views, likes, and other traditional KPIs have been used as measuring sticks of engagement. In today's reality, they are pretty close to meaningless and valueless. And in many cases, they're not even measuring human activity.

You've been told this story out of necessity. The media and advertising industry needed some kind of yardstick to measure the outcomes of their programs. This doesn't make them bad people; lacking an authentic measure of engagement, they had to pick the least-terrible proxies. I think we all knew deep down that there wasn't much substance to these "metrics," but it was all anybody had to go on.

Spoiler Alert: It's about to get worse.

And now for the unhappy ending. This world—such as it is—is ending. The fundamentals underlying the digital world are rapidly changing. In fact, the basic bargain on which today's web is based

(data in exchange for free content and services) is being renegotiated.

These changes are being driven by a convergence of truly awful factors, including:

- The abuse of mass targeting
- Backlash against cookie-based surveillance
- Untrustworthy data driven by bot activity
- A tightening regulatory environment
- And increasing consumer awareness of—and uneasiness about—data privacy and control of personal data.

'Exploitation' is not a great paradigm for a compelling and rewarding user experience. Online audiences are sick and tired of being stalked; and that's driving real change in how we think about and interact with the Internet, community, and online content. It's going to force your organization to reimagine how you engage with your audience/communities—and how you measure, assess, and monetize that engagement.

YOU'RE BEING HURT AND YOU MAY NOT EVEN KNOW IT.

Your audience isn't the only one suffering in this environment. Your organization

is being damaged by a whole Star Wars cantina cast of malevolent factors:

- Unreliable targeting and advertising KPIs
- Garbage audience data
- Declining performance of banner ads
- Audience fatigue with intrusive and interruptive data capture and advertising
- The ongoing shift from 3rd party data and cookie-based tracking.

These factors are creating a serious drag on your business and marketing performance. It may be the current norm, but it's certainly not acceptable. Aren't you tired of just swallowing this as the usual course of business?

SO, WHAT DO AUDIENCES REALLY WANT ANYWAY?

The coming changes are going to dramatically change how you think about audience experience, engagement, and data. On the bright side, your audience isn't looking for something exotic. They want a more quid-pro-quo relationship with the companies that provide them with online content and services. They want a more human, engaging, and natural relationship with your brand. And they're willing to give you what you need to enable that for them IF you deliver value and relevance in return.

Meet E(x): A Future-Focused Framework for Audience Data & Community Engagement

At CredSpark, we're reimagining audience engagement, measurement, and activation to meet the challenges of the urgently needed changes occurring to the current digital landscape. We've created a new framework that views audience and community engagement through both a quantitative and a qualitative lens, with relevance and value as the core outcomes



for your audience.

This approach engages individual audience members at scale with immersive, personalized experiences that combine interactive content with conversation.

These experiences deliver real-time, first-party data—just in a more natural, human-centered experience that delivers relevance and value in return—much like the give-and-take of chatting in person.

This new framework adds a new dimension to the current one-way, 20th century broadcast style of much of today's digital content and advertising, and it puts shared value and consent at the center of audience interactions and the exchange of data. It levels the playing field between companies, publishers, and advertisers and the individual audience members that they're trying to reach and serve.

E(x)—or CredSpark Engagement Factor—is a composite of several elements that we use to judge the level and the effectiveness of audience engagement. Unlike the current standard which quantitatively measures engagement by the number of audience or community actions, E(x) also considers qualitative factors, as well as audience and business outcomes. This more holistic approach puts audience engagement in context with its purpose. We don't think engagement is just for the sake of engagement. It has to be purposeful, providing the audience with tangible value while delivering on business objectives.

The Elements of E(x)

LENGTH OF ENGAGEMENT

Unlike Time on Page, we view engagement length as how long an audience or community member actively engages with an experience. We think online experiences should be more tactile and interactive, consistently rewarding users as they make their way through content. This “discovery process” keeps them engaged and encourages them to spend more time with your content, products, and services.

DEPTH OF ENGAGEMENT

An effective interactive experience should include multiple paths of discovery and content elements for users to explore. We view depth of engagement as measuring and understanding how many of these elements a user spent time engaging

with—the percentage of the content experience that was completed.

PROGRESSIVE ENGAGEMENT

We feel that engagement shouldn't be a “one and done” action. You want your audience to return again and again to interact with what you have to offer. We measure progressive engagement as the number of discrete times a user returns over time to interact with one or more interactive experiences. We view this as a vital element in the collection of first-party audience data as it allows your audience to provide you with valuable data and insights through smaller, more manageable and engaging experiences over a lengthier period of time.

QUALITY OF DATA AND INSIGHTS

The beauty of compelling interactive experiences is their unparalleled ability to collect valuable data. Appropriately structured and designed experiences deliver far more—and far more accurate—data and insights than traditional registration pages. They make data collection a natural and cohesive part of the user experience—not an intrusive interruption of it. And that higher quality experience keeps your audience engaged and creates new opportunities for additional data such as lead qualification, purchase intent, demographics, user interests, opinion, and more.

EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES

Traditional advertising and content experiences are generally built around what the business or advertiser wants the audience member to do. At CredSpark, we start with an audience outcome or expectation and design an experience that delivers on that while integrating business objectives as a cohesive part of the experience. In terms of E(x), we measure how many of the desired “next steps” were taken by the audience in their completion of the interactive experience. We feel strongly that this better aligns audience experience and expectations with goals and objectives of businesses, sponsors, and advertisers.

INSIGHTS AND CLARITY

Ask ten people what audience/community engagement is and you'll get ten completely different answers. It's been so loosely defined by the industry

and it's been the hapless victim of every hot-new-jargon-of-the-week marketing “influencer” across the planet.

As we implement this new model at CredSpark and start socializing it throughout the broader industry, we're already seeing impressive results and gaining deeper insights into audience behavior. Our interactive experiences that leverage E(x) principles have:

- Lengths of engagement that are 2.5x the average time spent on traditional content and advertising
- An 83% completion rate (depth of engagement)
- Generated an average of 2,770 first-party audience data points per experience

FINAL THOUGHTS

We think this new model for audience engagement can set a standard for the industry. It adds rigor to what has been—to be charitable—a squishy concept without much definition. And with its alignment of business objectives with audience experience and outcomes, it can serve as a model for how a more human-centered, next-generation Internet interacts with the people it's supposed to serve.

And we think that's something to get excited about.

Learn how
CredSpark
enhances
communities.





CREATING VIDEO CONTENT

LIGHTING

Dazzne D50

£ £ £

These kits are fantastic quality and work well for many different lighting scenarios. The inclusion of a wireless remote means you can change the brightness and colour quickly and the way you can save different settings as presets is extremely efficient.

Razer Ring Light

£ £

This ring light packs all the power you'd want from a 12 inch USB product. The light quality is excellent and the build quality is just as good, most notably the tripod is sturdy and substantial.

LED Bulbs for your lamp

£

If you don't want to splash out on new lighting equipment then putting LED bulbs in your desk lamp is for you. It imitates sunlight creating a brighter look for your video footage.

Daylight – Pro tip? For good lighting on a budget, simply face a window – make sure the sun isn't glaring at you or you'll squint, but simply getting daylight on your face is transformative, removing shadows and smoothing skin tones.



Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark III

£ £ £

The Canon PowerShot G7 Mark III is powerful convenient and easy to use. It is a compact camera with a fast and versatile 24-100mm f/1.8-2/8 lens which means it is extremely flexible for shooting. It also has live-streaming capabilities so you can broadcast straight to the internet.

GoPro Hero9

£ £

If you want a camera that you can take out on the road on high adrenaline adventures, this one is for you. It sports a useful front screen to make recording easier and has class-leading image stabilisation to record in any conditions.

Your Smart Phone

£

Something you probably already own. It doesn't require a lot of technical knowl-edge and most phones can create great quality videos without investing a lot of money.

Pro-tip – make sure you have a decent tri-pod or phone stabilizer/positioner so you can get a steady and straight to camera shot

T FOR YOUR COMMUNITY - A COMPLETE GUIDE



SOUND

Shure MV7 Podcast Microphone



Shure's first hybrid XLR/USB microphone which combines pro-grade sound with minimal set up time. The Shure MV7 is a great tool that captures excellent audio in any situation.

Blue Yeti X



Continues to be the top choice for many podcasters, the Blue Yeti X updates the classic with a new features including, LED metering, a four-condenser capsule array and BlueVoice recording software. The Yeti X uses no DSP which allows greater flexibility after recording.

HyperX SoloCast



The best of a slew of new budget-oriented microphones. It's Plug n Play making it simple to use whilst also having convenient features like the tap-to-mute sensor and LED mute indicator.

EDITING TOOLS

Re-purpose and re-fine your video with our 4 must-have video and editing tools:

rev.com - Rev is a transcription service which offers clear and accurate transcription services as well as high quality captions and subtitles.

otter.ai - Otter will type your meeting notes in realtime. It uses artificial intelligence to create notes that are shareable, searchable, accessible and secure.

Parrot Teleprompter - Parrot Teleprompter is a portable and affordable teleprompter. It is easy to set up so you can use it on the go.

Adobe Premiere Rush - Adobe Premiere Rush is a free mobile and desktop video editing app which you can use on the go. From wherever you are you can shoot, edit and share your videos.





INTERVIEW

GROWING A COMMUNITY

Sarah Porter spoke with Ricardo Molina of BrightBull Marketing about how Inspired Minds rose from the ashes to achieve such incredible growth and success.

Sarah Porter is the CEO and Founder of Inspired Minds, a global community working in emerging technology and Artificial Intelligence, specifically to accelerate progress towards things like the United Nations Sustainable development goals. In just 5 years, this community-led business has grown to a community of over 200,000 people across 167 countries. Sarah spoke with Ricardo Molina of BrightBull Marketing about how Inspired Minds have achieved such incredible growth and success.

Tell us how Inspired Minds came about.

I took a role in a corporate organisation where I was looking at mergers and acquisitions and I fell out of that role quite badly; I belong in a situation where I'm creating my own things. As a result of this I lost my home, my job, my marriage fell apart very quickly and I found myself in a situation where I had a nervous break down. I had to completely reset everything I thought about myself, the world and what I was going to do next. Out of that is where Inspired Minds came from. I wanted to build a community that would make substantial change in the world. One of the first things I did was try to get funding and investments and everybody I spoke to just said no. I probably spoke to about 200 people and in the end I sold my home, took the money from that sale, backed myself and got some traction with what I was doing. Subsequently two people that I originally talked to actually invested.

How would you define Inspired Minds as a community.

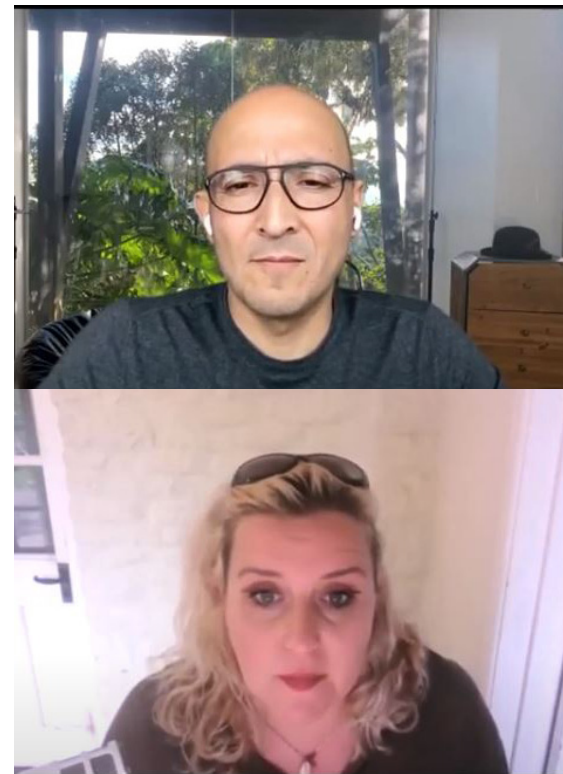
Initially I wanted to build a community where we were able to bring together people that had commonalities. Specifically in terms of who they were in that community and the parts they had to play. I also wanted to engage the people that were going to potentially not want to be involved in the community but had a role to play. This could be a head of Government or a big tech organiser. So I built a holistic view of this ecosystem and what I believed it should look like. I saw inspired minds as being the connecting tissue between these people. This is how we then created moments in time, which, for us translated into summits, products, media articles and lots more.

Can you explain a bit more about the moments in time?

Our first moment in time was the World Summit AI. We hired a disused gas works in Amsterdam to hold the event. Everything I did was about triggering emotions through the experience that people had and building connections in the community. I then set about finding specific people in the community who became emotional contagion actors and who started to build the community.

How did you go about finding the emotional contagion actors/influencers?

I identified the people that actually clashed heads in this field, why they were clashing heads and how we should go about changing that friction



ABOVE: Ricardo Molina talks to Sarah Porter

into something positive so that it was actioning change. We took some of these people as pillar heads and positioned them within our community. We then found that the subsets beneath them would start to follow. I learnt everything I could about the key people I knew were the conduits to that successful ecosystem. When you break down each of the individual people in your ecosystem in terms of the reasons they are doing what they are doing and why it is important to them then you can work on how to help them achieve that.

What have been your key milestones in the last 5 years?

One was when we formed a group called Aider AI. This is a not-for-profit which brought together 18 interdisciplinary folk who were the biggest people in Artificial Intelligence and other areas that we thought were important. We had Professor Gary Marcus, Johanna Bryson, and The World Economic Forum join that board. When building a community you need a collective wisdom behind you. The next milestone was when got an angel investor on board early on, they saw what we were doing and wanted to be a part of it. It gave us belief in our organisation that someone else shared our vision and were willing to put money into it.



Whereabouts on your journey did you reach 200,000 members, when did it start to become something big?

Our first summit attracted about 3,500 people. On the morning of that summit we didn't have a clue if people were going to show up. When we saw the gas works packed with people, that was the proof that we needed that people were following us. The two to three months after that everything went really well. Very quickly we found people had started subscribing. We had a dataset of 116,000 within those three months. The other significant points where we have seen big doubling's in numbers is when we have tackled big causes. As an organisation we campaigned against Donald Trump for the All Girl Afghan Robotics team. When that went across the Times and people saw what was happening we saw another big jump in community members.

Chasing big causes has led to death threats - why?

There was a team of girls in Kabul who were trying to compete in the Washington DC Robotics Competition. They had created their Robot from recycled bits and pieces and they had managed to gain a place in that final against all odds. They were then unfortunately told that they were being banned from travelling under the Muslim travel Ban implemented by Donald Trump. We started a social media campaign and people got behind

I SET ABOUT FINDING SPECIFIC PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY WHO BECAME EMOTIONAL CONTAGION ACTORS AND WHO STARTED TO BUILD THE COMMUNITY

that cause because it triggered so many emotions for them. Due to our campaigning we were able to get the visa over turned. As a result I started getting these death threats which were firstly just messages across social media to stop what I was doing or my life was endanger. Then I got a delivery to my home which was a Casino chip that said 'Next time you're betting we are betting on your life.' That's when the police got involved. It was at that point as a business we decided that was exactly what we wanted to do. In a world of uncertainty we almost felt like we needed to be the people that were willing and able to be a voice for change.

How important has social media been in growing your community.

I have very strong opinions within the organisation but sometimes I think there is too much skirting around issues due to the fear of corporate backlash. We don't have that, I can be unbridled on social media and I try and do that in an instructive way. I want people to understand what Inspired Minds is about and, yes, we have commercial goals but we also have another part of us which is not afraid to tackle those big issues. That's our role at Inspired Minds to platform the discussions that need to happen and we have that unique holistic overview to be able to do that.

How is Inspired Minds creating revenue?

I am completely transparent about the fact that as a business we now turn over around 6 million pounds a year in terms of revenue. I would say 60%-70% of that traditionally came from our summits but that has changed due to Covid. The rest comes through subscriptions to our community and individual projects. We will sometimes work on behalf of some of our partners to look at big diversity projects and how we can help to set up global communities. Our revenue with Covid has been challenging, we haven't run any events physically since January 2020. We have run podcasts and

webinars, some of those are charged and some of them aren't.

You don't have a marketing department, but you do have a data scientist, why is that

Marketing is an integral part of what we do but it is interwoven into our business and everybody is constantly doing it. As for the data scientist I have a vision in my mind about what I want to create within our community. I want individual profiles with granular level detail about our individuals, not just their job function and what they're looking for but the triggers that make this critical for them. The data scientist has created a framework which looks at different categories and segments of people and who should therefore match, connect and help each other. We are building algorithms around that, it's not in its finished form but it is giving us great insight about our individuals.

You've also hired a poet to help articulate your messages, tell us a bit more about that?

It was really by chance, Amanda Palmer, a musician posted something about supporting women throughout the pandemic. One of those artists was a young lady called Megan Beech who is an up and coming rising star in a thing called Slam Poetry which is the art of telling stories by prose and doing it in a Rap style. She brings to life stories and really gets people to sit up and listen. She has joined our team and is rewriting the way we talk to our community.

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MEET THE COMMUNITY MANAGER

Shannon Emery is the Program Manager of Community Recognition at Alteryx, a company that helps businesses jumpstart their analytics - from improving sales, to automating tax and audit, Shannon spoke with Emily Bronger about what being a Program Manager of Community Recognition entails.



TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE

I work in a team of 16 community experts supporting the Alteryx Community. I focus primarily on running our ACE Program which a community of the top tier users and top product users. They are very product centric, high-end users who love Alteryx and it's a group of around 50. These members are really focused on the intrinsic rewards of being involved in the community and improving our products, supporting each other - and my role is to support them and make sure they get what they need.

IS THE COMMUNITY AS OLD AS THE COMPANY?

No, the community itself just celebrated its 6th anniversary (whereas Alteryx launched in 1997) but Alteryx has always

KEEPING PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF YOUR FOCUS IS THE JOB OF ANY COMMUNITY WHETHER IT BE A COMMUNITY FOR PARENTS OR AN 'I NEED HELP WITH MY ALTERYX PRODUCT' COMMUNITY.

been very customer focused. Some of our super community users have been around since day 1 of Alteryx. You can tell there's always been this focus on the customer, bringing them in, getting their feedback, they have always been very community-centric. It's a joy to work for a company that really focuses on and knows the importance of their community. For Alteryx associates internally, the culture is very open, with an emphasis on 'use your voice and use it loudly'.

WHAT DOES YOUR AVERAGE DAY LOOK LIKE? WHAT DO YOU SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME DOING?

I spend around a third of the day making sure everyone in the community is taken care of - responding to emails, messages and posts, and answering questions. Then right now because the program is evolving, I'm focusing a lot on the strategy, getting to know everyone one-to-one, hanging out with them, chatting on a phone call, as well as handling some higher level projects for the team. At the moment we're redoing their space which involves making the reporting cleaner and easier to get out to them when they need to know where they are in their ACE journey. We're restructuring the whole program from the mission and vision all the way to the requirements to remain in the

program. I really enjoy getting into the strategy so that's taking up most of my time right now.

THE ALTERYX COMMUNITY IS USER FOCUSED, BUT YOU'VE ALSO RUN EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES. HOW EASY DO YOU THINK IT IS FOR COMMUNITY MANAGERS TO SEGUE BETWEEN COMMUNITY TYPES?

When I talk to people who run different types of community, like communities of passion, it's so funny how similar they are if you change the verbiage; they all revolve around bringing people together and providing value. Keeping people at the center of your focus is the job of any community whether it be a community for parents or an 'I need help with my Alteryx product' community. Fundamentally, it's the same thing - bringing people together over a shared purpose. Is it easy to move from industry to industry? Not always. There are a lot of things working inside of a tech space that could be hard to learn if you didn't 'grow up' here, an entire language and culture and way of doing things which might be quite alien to those working in passion or B2B communities. Equally, I think Community Managers have a high EQ and are used to soaking up a culture and adapting their style to fit which is what makes Community Managers unique and easier to move between roles.



TURBO-CHARGING NETWORKING IN YOUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

by Yakov Filippenko

Business communities have three key elements: Activities (such as content and events), community members, and connections between community members. Connections are the most important part, and are essential for community growth.

That's why it's so important for community owners to foster connections within a community as soon as possible. However, that can be a real challenge when business people don't have enough time or energy to invest.

These are three key ingredients that help to set up networking within your business community:

1. NETWORKING IS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

It's as simple as that. The people you meet have the power to change your life. When someone introduces you to their high-ranking boss at work, or helps you land an important partner, it all comes back to that person and how he or she introduced you.

Most people know this very well – and that's why they want to be a part of a community with successful people. **The problem of most digital community management platforms is they don't provide a mechanism to highlight peoples' background, achievements, and so on. This makes it tricky for community members to evaluate the power of a specific community in terms of other members.**

Your Community is far more valuable if members' areas of expertise, connections to each other and shared interests are visible and easy to identify.

2. ICEBREAKING IS KEY

Icebreaking is the core of networking, both in traditional offline events, but also online. Traditional offline events solve it via networking parties. Atmosphere, drinks, and personal contacts make it easier.

But everything changes when people meet each other in the digital world. All they see is an avatar and a short bio. All members are in different locations, in different moods, and have different tasks in their heads. **So, the key to cutting through and creating digital networking is generating emotions. Emotions drive engagement and trigger strong relationship building.**

Modern community management platforms have a host of features to set up events and post content, but most don't have anything that boosts engagement between members.

Emotions are typically driven by something in common:

The same school, city, common friends, and other shared characteristics. Social media platforms use this psychological drive to find people similar to us. They trigger users' emotions and involve them. So, make sure your community's networking activities do the same.

3. SAVE YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS' TIME

As community owners, we love user-generated content. It's engaging, motivates people to promote it, and invites others. But think about it from the members' perspective. People are busy. When you 'ask' them to spend more time with you - they need to cut something else.

In the case of networking within a community, you need to meet people with shared, relevant interests.

Modern communities are built on the paradigm of the feed - which means a lot of scrolling to find something interesting – and most people lack time.

Social media attempts to solve this using data. They know what engages every single user. Community owners need to adopt this same approach to ensure users are engaged and members are able to make the best use of their limited time.

IN CONCLUSION

Adding a networking component to your community is complex. But it always pays back. Your members start to refer their friends and peers, because for them, your community not only drives great content and events, but also valuable connections and a way to achieve their business and career goals.

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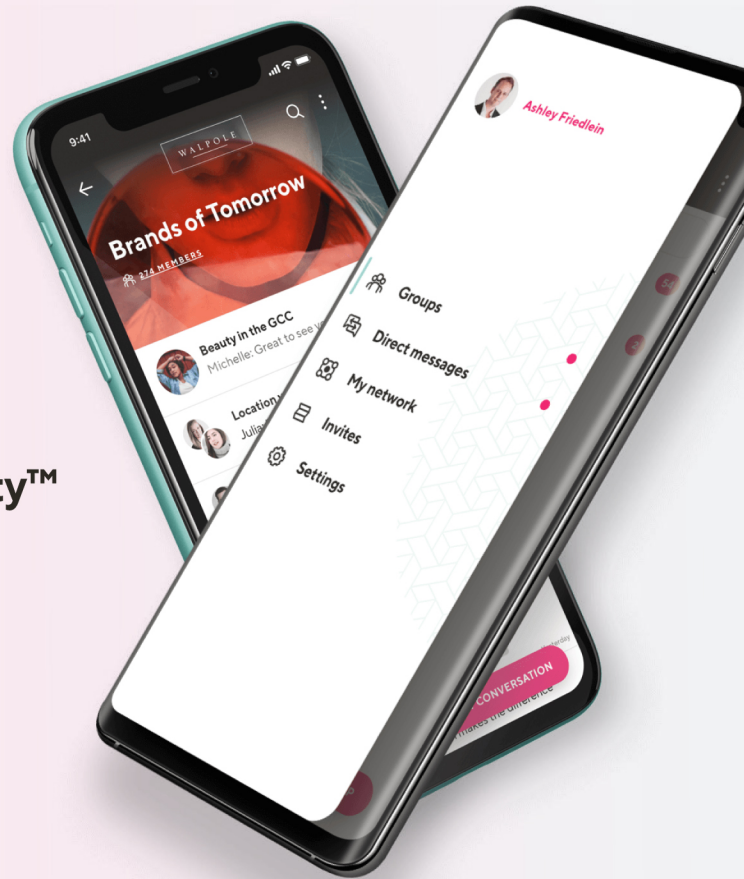


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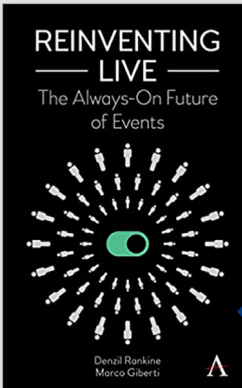
Elegant user experience – simple to set up, clean design, mobile-first, custom branding

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

Data protection – no ads, privacy by design, GDPR compliance, you control your data

Trusted by





READ THIS

REINVENTING LIVE

Forget the traditional one-off, in-person event. There is a new future, where event organisers no longer see themselves as only organisers, their role has become multifaceted - business, connections, education and advocacy. Events are all about building communities and nurturing customer relationships with the use of event technology at its core. Digital platforms with already highly engaged communities are adding event as a seamless extension of their services. The authors Denzil Rankine and Marco Giberti have seen it all in their 30 years of consulting, operating and investing across the global exhibitions and events industry. This book is packed full of practical case studies that will equip readers with new strategies, tools and insights they can apply into their day-to-day roles making it a must read for marketing and events professionals or anyone looking to participate in the events industry.



Each edition, we'll share one of our reader's reading lists, to help widen your Community reading repertoire



Janice James (She/Her) • 1st

I help brands build people-first digital spaces. Ask me about how I can help ...
2w • 🌐

Quick reading list for anyone looking to grow as a leader in the community field. There are a lot of great resources out there, but these are the books I felt had the most impact on my own development.

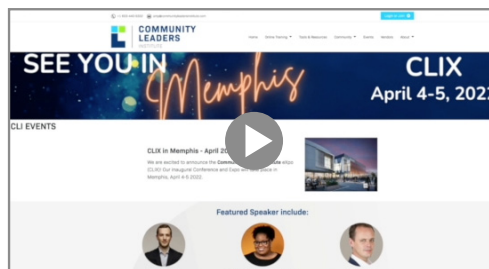
- Open Leadership by Charlene Li
- Uncommon Service by Francis Frei
- Switch by Chip Heath and Dan Heath
- Talking to Strangers by Malcolm Gladwell
- The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life by Erving Goffman
- and last but not least (a staple for anyone in community work)
- Tribes by Seth Godin < I also share this with those leaders who are stubborn or resistant to my work in the community when I run into them. :p

👍 🌱 13 • 4 comments

Reactions



Join www.communityleadersinstitute.com and get access to all this

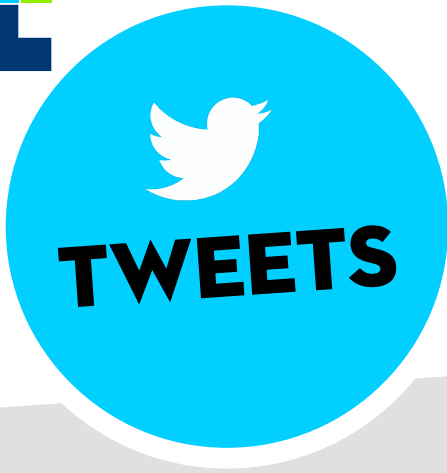


Community Leaders Magazine is the ONLY magazine serving the entire ecosystem of Community

Advertise your software, solutions and services to our audience of Community Leaders, Launchers, Builders and Managers.

Get in touch with Amy on amy@communityleadersinstitute.com to discuss your requirements today





Orbit's Rosie Sherry, Community Extraordinaire set up #100DaysOfCommunity to bring your insights, tips, successes and findings together. Here's a snapshot...

David Spinks
@DavidSpinks

The #1 networking mistake people make: Trying to connect w people who are already successful.

Deep relationships are built when someone is at a low point and you help them even though there's no "value".

One day they'll be successful, and they'll remember.

#100DaysOfCommunity
6:26 PM - 13 Sep 2021

Rosie Sherry 🗣️ #100DaysOfCommunity
@rosiesherry

Lurkers are not lurkers, they are people who consume and participate in different ways.

Let's redefine lurkers, they are:

- readers
- learners
- introverts
- neurodiverse
- finding courage
- can't be publicly visible
- time or tech constrained

What else?

#100DaysOfCommunity
4:03 PM - 16 Sep 2021

Erin Mikail Staples 🗣️ #100DaysOfCommunity
@erinmikail

Don't say community when you mean marketing.

It's not about what your community can do for you — but what is possible when we work together.

How can we establish a collective sense of belonging?

#100DaysOfCommunity #Tweet100
5:00 PM - 15 Sep 2021

Simon Tomes
@simon_tomes

Need an excellent example of community curation?

Check out @maguay's carefully curated tweet thread.

1. Includes a common theme
2. Amplifies individual community members
3. Offers a call to action

Love it!

#100DaysOfCommunity <https://t.co/9Bcyj1ZAvM>
3:31 PM - 17 Sep 2021

Jeremy Evans-Smith
@jerevanssmith

It's easy to get overwhelmed and forget that the journey of building community starts with creating connection for ONE 👉 person—

#100DaysOfCommunity
3:46 PM - 17 Sep 2021

Amanda Petersen
@amandarhiann

I like the Minimum Loveable Community. We think a lot about scaling, but communities scale when there are enough MLC's rafted together.

#100DaysOfCommunity <https://t.co/hAYIR3dsjC>
1:03 PM - 17 Sep 2021



Simon Tomes @simon_tomes

The Community Emotion Path captures how a community member feels at any stage of their community journey. A member could join, step off or fall off at any point.

A good community helps a member get back on the path on their own terms.

#100DaysOfCommunity <https://t.co/DpxCr2qvHi>

12:30 PM - 13 Sep 2021

Joanna Capati @jmariecap (21/100)

Content strategy + community building from @christialmero:

Focus on what's working and remove what's not.

Study how the goals are met. Where do conversions come from?

Reactivate members using direct-response to get their pulse and implement.

#100DaysOfCommunity

5:12 AM - 17 Sep 2021

Erin Mikail Staples @erinmikail #100DaysOfCommunity

The best part about community?

Creating things, together. 💜

Here's a notion resource of 600+ community tips (and counting!)

We're just getting started 🔥

Wouldn't be possible without @rosiesherry + @OrbitModel + all the amazing humans participating in #100DaysOfCommunity



Deepak @Deepak910k · 6h

Exceptional communities are built on some ground values like

- A. Vulnerability
- B. Honesty in the stories shared
- C. Commitment to a goal
- D. Successful conflicts

D is under-valued.

#100daysofcommunity

3 4





**COMMUNITY
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